

the lower drainages, primarily in conjunction with timber removal operations on national forest lands. The removal of timber in heavy, extensive coniferous stands is not, in itself, detrimental to elk.

However, the access provided by roads associated with timbering operations has resulted in the reduction of use in these areas by summer resident elk herds. The Rocky Mountain elk will not tolerate human activity if they have inaccessible areas into which they can move or reestablish populations.

We collect information annually on the dates and locations of elk killed in the Wind River hunting area. Dates of kill in the Horse Creek-Wiggins Fork area were formerly spread over the entire season in relatively equal 2-week periods.

In comparing 1959 kill dates with 1967 kill dates, most of the present harvest in these drainages occurs near the end of the season. This kill is primarily taken from migratory herds which move into these lower elevations late in the season dependent on weather conditions. Relatively few elk are killed during the early part of the hunting season in these drainages today compared with just a few years ago. Less resident elk are available in these areas for early season hunter harvest.

Extensive access roads have been recently built in the Wind River drainage above Dubois, Wyo. These roads are built primarily to aid in timber removal operations. These operations are in the Warm Spring Creek, Lava Creek, Sheridan Creek, Crooked Creek, and Brooks Lake Creek drainages.

During 1963 and 1964 approximately 27 percent of the entire Wind River elk harvest came from these drainages. This percentage of harvest has declined to approximately 9 percent of this by 1967. Again available resident elk populations have declined in these areas.

The access roads in much of the Wind River area have already been built. Extensive road developments will continue to open areas for varied human activity and pursuits. It is realistic to assume that elk will have to take a back seat in these areas.

I would like to discuss migration and their importance to Wind River elk.

MIGRATIONS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE TO WIND RIVER ELK

We are fortunate that in the upper Wind River area we have some excellent winter range areas for elk. These areas, including the Whiskey Basin and East Fork winter range units, provide natural winter forage for elk, mule deer, moose, and bighorn sheep.

There are no artificial big game feeding programs in this drainage. We are primarily concerned with the East Fork unit, an area of approximately 11,000 acres which includes fee lands purchased with game and fish funds combined with lands formerly controlled by the Bureau of Land Management.

This unit and surrounding national forest and Bureau of Land Management lands have proven most valuable in providing sufficient winter forage to winter from 2,000 to 3,000 head of elk over the past 10 years.

Elk damage complaints from private landowners have been almost eliminated by acquisition of this winter range unit. The use of this