

Culture & History

The Salish and Pend d'Oreille have several words for elk. Tšeć is an elk bull, Sne(ččce?) is an elk cow, and qeyitš is an elk calf. In the Kootenai language, Kitq̓aḥi is an elk bull and Ławu is an elk cow.

Elk eyeteeth are very valuable jewelry material and are still used by tribal jewelry makers today. The Salish term for elk teeth is snq̓wmi, which means 'something to brag about'. Historically, elk teeth could even be used to make teething rings for babies.

Like deer and bison, elk hides and horns were also great crafting material. Women's blankets were often beaded for extra decoration.

Elk meat was often very popular, better tasting than deer meat and comes in larger quantities. Elk is still a popular game meat for many tribes.

Respectful Distance

While you might be tempted to think that elk are simply large deer, in terms of temper, they're more like moose! This is especially true during mating season, when bull elk are pumped full of testosterone and looking for a fight.

For your safety and the safety of our animals, please do not attempt to approach an elk for any reason. If you see one near the road, please remain in your vehicle and take pictures from a distance.

Please do not shout or make loud noises to try and make the animals move or come closer, this may aggravate them. Depending on the time of year, both cows and bulls may be inclined to charge you or your vehicle if they decide that you are a threat.

Like any animal, be respectful and enjoy watching them quietly from a safe distance.

NORTH AMERICAN ELK



Tšeć - Kitq̓aḥi

If you are interested in learning more about our wildlife, contact us at :

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Interesting Facts

Elk are one of largest member of the Cervidae, which includes caribou, deer and moose. While Elk are typically 600 lbs (272 kg) and 4-5 feet tall (1.2-1.5 m) tall, Moose average around 1000 lbs (454 kgs) and 6-7 feet (1.8-2 m) tall.

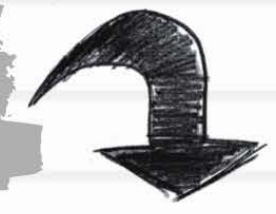
Elk live in herds of up to 400 individuals. During the year, these herds break into loose bachelor herds separated by gender, males forming groups with males and females grouping with females. Male groups are usually around twenty individuals while female groups can have several hundred.

During rut, or mating season, males will compete with each other for territory and females. The dominant male with continue to protect his harem and offspring until making season is finished.

Elk have a unique call called a 'bugle'. While cows can make low pitched barking sounds and specific calls for their calves, only bull elk bugle. Bugling is done during mating season and helps the bull identify and intimidate rivals.

ELK & ECOSYSTEMS

Like bison, elk are a 'keystone' species. Keystone species are species that make a dramatic difference to their ecosystem. When keystone species are removed, the entire ecosystem changes and sometimes ceases to exist.



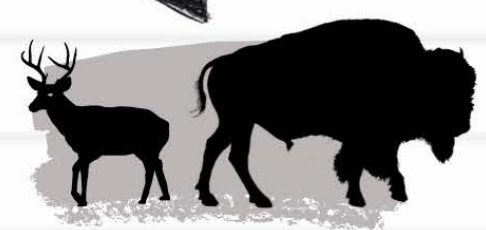
As large herbivores, the number of elk in an area impacts the plants that grow there. When there is a large population, plant growth is suppressed and sometimes entire plant species are removed, unable to grow fast enough to reach maturity before the elk chew them down.



The types of plants that are able to grow impact other species as well, changing the types of food and cover available. Even just the height of the grass can decide which species will move into an area.



Elk are also in direct competition with other large herbivores, such as deer, bison, and pronghorns.



Changes in prey species also impact predators, such as hawks and coyotes.



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North American Elk: A Visitor Guide