



2015 Minnesota Elk Harvest Report

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Introduction

A limited number of licenses are offered to Minnesota residents to hunt elk. In 2015, there were two established zones: 1) Zone 20 - Kittson County Central and 2) Zone 30 - Kittson County Northeast (Figure 1). Zone 10 near Grygla, Minnesota, has been closed since 2013 because the population is below goal (Figure 2). In 2015, there was one regular season hunt (September 12-20) held in both zones. The hunt was structured to fall within the breeding season when bull elk are most vulnerable and elk can be located by vocalizations.

Methods

All elk hunters are required to attend a mandatory orientation session the day before the hunt begins. At this session, DNR staff also provide hunters with their license, and a kit to collect biological samples from their harvested animal. Field samples collected by the hunter include ticks (if found), whole blood, hair with skin, muscle tissue, and a small sample of lung and liver tissue. Hunters are required to register their animal in person at the local DNR office. DNR staff map the harvest location, provide a possession tag, and take the hunter-collected biological samples. DNR staff also collect lymph nodes, the obex (brain stem), and a tooth so an accurate age can be determined at a later date. DNR staff submit all biological samples to Wildlife Health for disease testing and other monitoring projects.

Results

A total of 7 licenses were available and 1,439 individuals or parties applied for the opportunity to hunt elk (Table 1). A first random drawing was held for landowners who applied for the one landowner license available in Zone 20. All remaining landowners were then placed into the general drawing for remaining elk licenses. Licenses were distributed through a second random drawing conducted per Zone. In 2015, a total of 5 elk were harvested in the zones (Table 2). Long-term elk harvest for the zones is depicted in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 1. License allocation and application numbers for two elk hunting zones, 2015.

Zone	Either-Sex	Antlerless	Bull-only	Total	Total Applicants
20 – Kittson Central	0	0	5	5	846
30 – Kittson NE	0	0	2	2	593
Total	0	0	7	7	1,439

Table 2. Distribution of the 2015 Minnesota elk harvest.

Kittson County Central Hunt Zone (20)

Season	Bulls-only Licenses	Antlerless Licenses	Bulls taken	Antlerless taken	Total elk taken
September 12 - 20	5	0	3	0	3
Total	5	0	3	0	3

Kittson County Northeast Hunt Zone (30)

Season	Bull-only Licenses	Bulls taken	Total elk taken
September 12 - 20	2	2	2
Total	2	2	2

Table 3. Grygla elk harvests, 1987-2015.

Year	Grygla			
	Bulls (or Either-Sex)		Antlerless	
	Permits	Harvest	Permits	Harvest
1987	2	1	2	1
1996	2	2	7 (1 alternate)	6
1997	5 (2 alternate)	1	5 (2 alternate)	2
1998	4 (2 alternate)	2	0	0
2004	1	1	4	2
2005	1	0	4	0
2006	2	2	6	2
2007	0	0	6	6
2008	2	2	10	6
2009	2	3*	12	11
2010	2	1	5	3
2011	2	2	3	0
2012	2	1	3	0
2013	Closed	0	Closed	0
2014	Closed	0	Closed	0
2015	Closed	0	Closed	0
Total	27	18	67	39

*One bull was a sub-legal spike and was legally tagged as an antlerless animal.

Table 4. Kittson County elk harvests, 2008-2015.

Kittson County (Combined)				
Year	Bulls (or Either-Sex)		Antlerless	
	Permits	Harvest	Permits	Harvest
2008	1	1	10	10
2009	12	9 ^a	4	5
2010	1	1	3	3
2011	2	3 ^b	8 ^c	4
2012	5	4 ^d	13	3
2013	8	6	15	6
2014	9	6	0	0
2015	7	5	0	0
Total	45	33	53	31

^a One additional bull (6x7) was wounded but not retrieved in 2009. It was found dead later and is counted in the total.

^b One bull was a male calf and was legally tagged as an antlerless animal.

^c Three unsuccessful hunters from the Grygla zone were invited to participate in the January extended season in Kittson County, however only 2 participated and were included in the number of antlerless permits issued.

^d One bull was a sub-legal spike and was confiscated.

Figure 1. Kittson County Elk Hunt Zones.

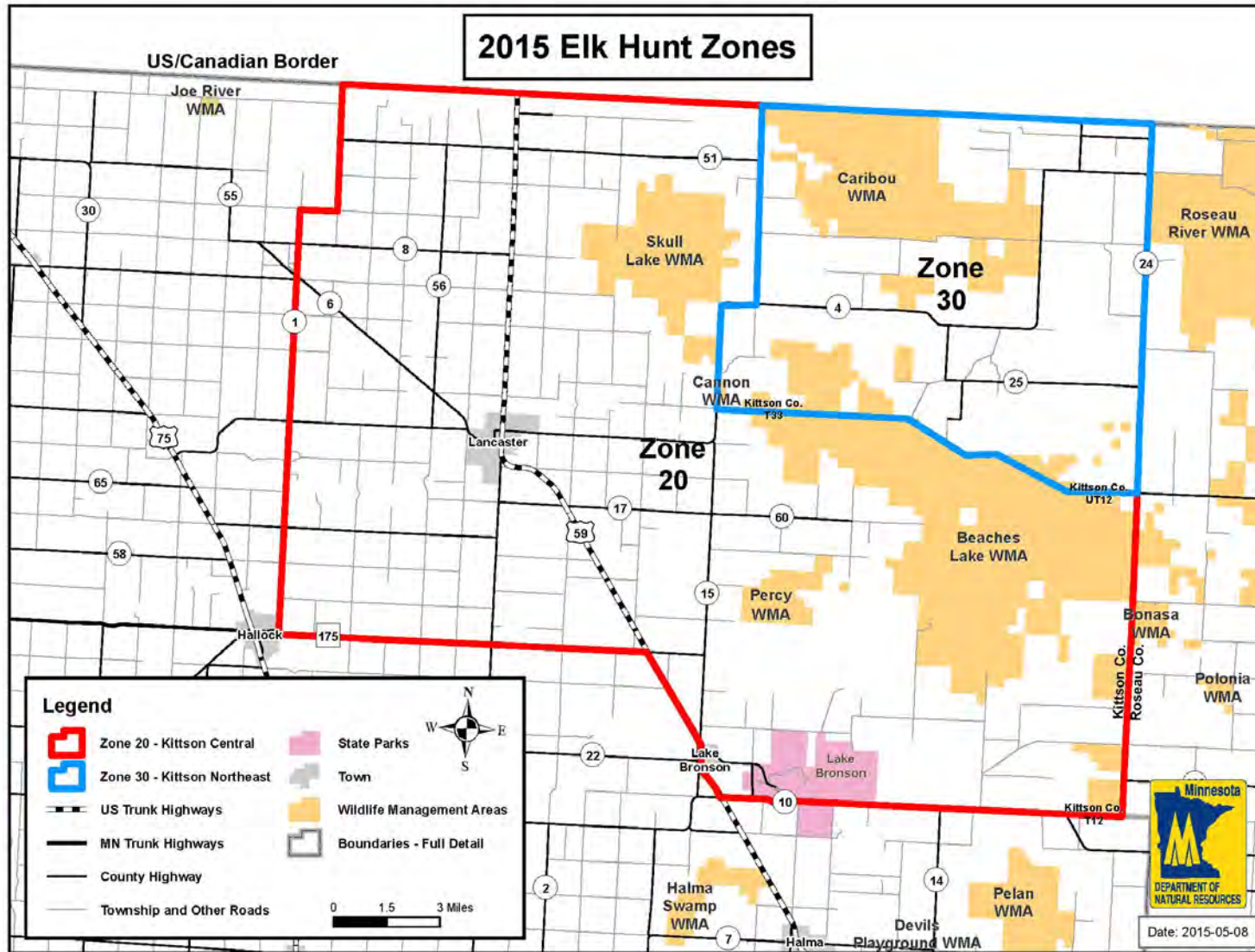


Figure 2. Grygla Elk Hunt Zone.

