FACTORS AFFECTING THE SURVIVORSHIP OF MALE ELK IN SOUTHWESTERN MANITOBA

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Abstract: Factors causing low bull:cow ratios in the Spruce Woods-Shilo elk population of southwestern Manitoba are under investigation. Preliminary results of seasonal range use, range size and dispersal of radio-transmittered male elk suggest that immature (1 1/2 - 2 1/2 year) male elk have larger seasonal ranges than mature elk. Mature male elk use traditional seasonal ranges. Immature males are known to disperse long distances from the area. Many elk observed in outlying areas are bulls. No significant hunter harvest of males occurs. Native harvest of male elk is significant. The level of illegal harvest of male elk is unknown. The combination of native and illegal harvest plus natural dispersal appears to be the greatest reason for the loss of male elk from this population.