















Hunt ID: WY-CELK-CKSO2NJA-S1OW-I1EL

Cow elk hunting how you always wished it would be is here today for a limited number of hunters for the first 2 weeks in December.

If you have ever wondered how the elk population is controlled and thought regular season hunting, archery, muzzleloader and rifle there are things that the people that manage our elk herds do that are a low key affair but done regardless so that disease doesn't run rampant and habitat is not damaged beyond existence. A biologist once told me that people think 25 elk together is a beautiful sight and enjoyed by all, but 26 or more is a damaging menace wherever they travel. Elk have very, very few enemies except man. Once they reach 1 year of age, the natural enemies by count even get smaller. Mountain lions would rather take on a deer because the risk of an injury that later causes death are smaller with a deer than an elk. In addition with the elk's thick neck hair, it makes it more difficult

for the lion to pinch off the wind pipe or jugular vein. The bulk of the population of people in areas with large elk herds takes the stand that if you leave them alone, they will be ok. Winter kill on an elk herd is a minor issue because an elk will go wherever it needs to find food. Burying their head in the sand is not the right answer as an Ostrich knows.

Herds of 3,000, 4,000 head of elk build up in the late fall to winter in areas that are controlled by the park system. The park system is required to not only protect the elk, but also the habitat. Elk of this magnitude can be destructive to the habitat with just its travel, let alone what they eat while they are there and traveling. That part is not our problem, we are just the tool used to keep these animals in check so that the tourists can see them in the fall, and not see us controlling the herd number in the fall and winter months. Since this is a population control measure this particular hunt is for cows only.

First of all the outfitter of record is registered by the federal park system to be allowed to bring hunters on the federal ground and shoot, yes shoot the number of elk that the federal management folks biologists deem required to keep the herd numbers in check. All hunting and shooting is done in controlled environment much like regular cow elk hunting would be, but with some additional rules. The outfitter must be with you at all times, there are no vehicles allowed off the maintained roads when touring, hunting and even retrieving the elk. Some areas are restricted to archery only, short range weapons being a muzzleloader or shotgun, and regular rifle areas. This area is marked lightly with common posts hundreds of yards apart and showing no distinction to any other post. Because the question would be, "what are those blaze orange post for?" this is what the tour guides and the feds don't want to be asked, so it is extremely easy to get on the wrong side of the invisible line and see the other side of the feds and the state and the sheriff and all their marry men. The skimpy post markers are the boundary between hunting and shooting one weapon or the other and areas that you are not allowed to walk with or without a weapon.

Of course all of the Wyoming hunting regulations stand, 1 blazed orange garment, and you must have a cow elk license of course. Then there are some unique rules like if you have a Wyoming cow elk license from anywhere in Wyoming for this year it can be used during this hunt, if you didn't fill it already, If you buy one for the adjacent unit you can hunt inside and outside the park. Then again if you wish, you can buy a Wyoming cow elk license over the counter and use it also, up to 2 cow elk can fit well in the back of your pickup. In some areas you need to put in for a 4 day span to hunt elk, but with the outfitters season duration permit, you are with him and don't even need to take the risk of not drawing the permit and being able to use your elk licenses and after you spent a day on the road to get there. Let me throw another rule at you that can allow the feds to write a ticket. You can only have 7 bullets on your person for every cow license that you have. If you shoot all 7 and don't have an elk, you can go back to the truck and get 7 more. Also if you shoot and hit or miss, you can only shoot 1 shot while the elk is moving.

If all of this sounds confusing, I must say I have hunted elk for over 50 years and find this the most successful but also the most confusing of any elk hunting I have ever done. Depending on the weather you may see small herds or you may see thousands of elk, and where you hunt them and the weapon you use, if you can hunt them at all in the area they are in, spells out you will be close to the outfitter. He knows the rules and the boundaries. You will be out of any problems as long as you are hunting with him. That is what he is licensed to outfit the park hunts.

Depending on the area that the elk are in during the time of the year you are there, you will find the elk easier to get to with the horses that they provide you. If it is easier to

fill your tag, the horses will stay in the trailer all saddled up ready if you need them. Most of the area is easy riding, but remember these are wild free ranging elk; this is not, "just a walk in the park." Some days it is much easier than others, but like any elk hunts, some days the elk win and some days you win. That is why it is a 3 day hunt, so you have your day. The outfitter and guide will take as many as 5 hunters per day, all meeting at a prearranged location, you driving from your motel of choice in the area and them arriving with horse trailers in tow.

Any weapon that is legal in Wyoming is legal on this federal land. Archery includes a crossbow. The "short range weapon area" is for using a Muzzleloader or a shotgun with or without a rifled barrel. No scopes on either weapon. The unlimited or what they call regular rifle areas is the largest and allows any rifle short of a 50 Caliber modern day rifle. In the rifle area there are areas that provide short range shooting and areas that require long range shots. The outfitter motto is where ever the elk are at that time sets the requirement for whatever it takes. Because of the long range shooting possibilities, I would place a 7mm Mag 150 grain or a 270 with a 140 grain bullet the bare minimum. Your rifle of choice should be topped with at least a 3x9 scope but a 4-12 or 16 even better. The area where the long rang shots the elk feel safe enough that they will stand out there and just out walk the hunters. It is a great place to fill your tag but you must be prepared. I am one that says in almost all hunting dead on at 200 yards is perfect combination but in this case I would recommend dead on at 300 yards, and practice shooting it so you know that your rifle does at 300 and the drop at 400. Many of the areas have an abundance of grass about 12-14 inches so it is best to plan to shoot off a backpack, shooting sticks or bipods. I have 3 dowel rods that are about 3 feet long and wrapped tight at the top with bicycle inner tube. Much like what you use to shoot in Africa but their sticks are 6 feet so you can shoot standing up. For long range shooting the lower you can get to the ground the steadier you are. At ranges over 200 this gets real important, I usually sit flat on my butt, wrap my forearm hand around the top of the tripods while holding the forearm and making it all to come together as one.

Later in the season as in December there is usually snow and colder temperatures to deal with then the November hunts, but the elk populations also increase the colder and snowier it is. The usually bed in cover and come to the park areas for the grass in the evening and stay in the fields all night then leave sometime in the morning depending on the pressure from shooting. The season usually runs from November 1 to December 16th or so, it is set each year by the federal Government. They are 3 day hunts and so far they have been a 100% success for harvest. Opportunity or seeing elk is not even calculated because the numbers are so high. That is why you are there.

The 3 day guided hunt is only \$2200 reduced down to only \$ 1495 for a single and \$1395 if 2 or more hunters are in the party. This is for 1 cow elk, but if you want two and have the licenses to do so the second elk is only \$ 250 more. Also with 2 licenses in your pocket you can have 14 instead of 7 bullets on your person. The hunts run Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday or Thursday, Friday, Saturday, with each group arriving the day before their hunt and meeting up with the outfitter that evening to be prepared to hunt the next morning. You will be staying in town, in a motel, no drafty tent and chuck wagon meals by a camp fire to throw your stomachs into indigestion shock. The towns the outfitter will give you the lodging phone number are large enough to have many lodging and meal options along with room vacancy is good because it is after the high summer season.

The altitude you will be hunting in will be between 6000 and 7000 feet so it is usually quite easy to adjust to for most hunters. It is labeled as a "Low Impact" and is, but in some of the mountain areas if walking it can become a higher impact but most likely

if you go back in there you will be on horseback, so the walking will be at a minimum. Other than that, the hardest part is getting on and off of the horse. If you don't want to ride, advise the outfitter early so he can plan accordingly. Many times they hunt and shoot elk as part of the plan to push them to the other hunters and do very well doing it.

Meat can be processed locally or taken home to butcher locally or personally because usually the weather is cool enough to do so. There is no elk hanging area in the park of course, so if it happens to be warm when you are there, you will have to plan accordingly.

Scheduling

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday

12/4, 5, 6

Thursday, Friday, Saturday

12/7, 8, 9

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday

12/11, 12, 13

Thursday, Friday, Saturday

12/14, 15, 16

November dates should become available after season dates are set.

Detailed Licensing can be handled by us for you. Just advise if you want to shoot 1 or 2 cow elk. Depending on the hunt date you select and the location the elk are in normally at that time of the year you will be licensed accordingly.

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