



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
National Elk Refuge

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## **42<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL ANTLER AUCTION HELD IN JACKSON, WYOMING**

The 42<sup>nd</sup> annual Boy Scout Elk Antler Auction was held in Jackson, Wyoming on Saturday, May 16, an event that highlights shed antlers collected from the National Elk Refuge. This year, 10,317 pounds of antlers were sold at the auction, compared to 10,669 pounds in 2008. Though the total number of antlers sold at the auction was down only 3% from 2008, the price per pound decreased by 16%, this year averaging \$8.52 per pound for a total revenue of \$88,010. Lot #117, a 9x9 matched pair of elk antlers that recorded a Boone and Crockett score of 389 points, brought in \$1,980, the day's largest amount paid per pound. A total of 132 bidders representing 30 states registered for the event, with 57 registered bidders making purchases.

Shed antlers are routinely removed by National Elk Refuge personnel throughout the spring in order to minimize damage to feeding and farming equipment and to prevent trespassing by antler poachers. Through a special use permit, the Jackson District Boy Scouts assist in collecting the antlers and preparing them for public sale. On one Saturday each year, just weeks prior to the auction, over 100 Scouts and leaders converge to canvas the refuge for any remaining antlers. The antlers must then be sorted, bundled, weighed and labeled. In addition to preparing the antlers for sale, the Boy Scouts assist during the auction by carrying the individual lots up to the stage for viewing during the bidding process, while Scout leaders register bidders and record the sales.

The majority of proceeds from the auction (80%) are donated to the National Elk Refuge, which maintains approximately 25,000 acres as winter range for the Jackson Elk Herd. The funding assists with habitat enhancement projects on the refuge such as growing grasses, improving irrigation on the refuge, and purchasing equipment used for this type of work. The National Elk Refuge is currently studying an irrigation expansion plan that would increase forage production, benefiting the long-term health of wintering elk and bison by reducing reliance on supplemental feeding and reducing the risk of disease transmission by dispersing concentrations of animals. Information on the proposed irrigation expansion project can be found on the National Elk Refuge's web site at [www.fws.gov/nationalelkrefuge/NERPublicInput.htm](http://www.fws.gov/nationalelkrefuge/NERPublicInput.htm). An open house has been scheduled for May 19, 2009 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM to give the public an opportunity to discuss the Environmental Assessment with U.S. Fish and Wildlife staff from the Region 6 Planning Office and the National Elk Refuge. The open house will be held in the Teton County Commissioner's Chambers located at 200 S. Willow Street in Jackson, Wyoming.

Next year's antler auction is set for Saturday, May 22. However, single antlers are available for sale throughout the year at the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center, located at 532 North Cache Street in Jackson.

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[www.fws.gov/nationalelkrefuge](http://www.fws.gov/nationalelkrefuge)