



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
National Elk Refuge

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## **NATIONAL ELK REFUGE ANNOUNCES TWO OPEN HOUSES RELATED TO THE HUNT PROGRAM**

Manager Steve Kallin announced today two public open houses have been scheduled to provide information and answer questions regarding upcoming changes to the National Elk Refuge hunt program. Both open houses will be held at the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center, located at 532 N. Cache Street in Jackson, from 7:30 to 9:00 PM.

On Thursday, September 13, refuge managers will provide information pertaining to the bison hunt scheduled to begin later this month. An area bison hunt on the Bridger-Teton National Forest was expanded to include the National Elk Refuge this year in order to reduce herd size and mitigate affects by bison on elk distribution, increased risks of disease transmission, and damage to essential wildlife habitat. The bison population, estimated at approximately 1,200 animals, has continued to grow at a rapid rate since 1990 and is increasing annually by approximately 15%.

A second public open house is scheduled for Tuesday, September 18 to increase awareness of a new elk hunt unit located near the south end of the refuge. A south unit hunt will begin on Saturday, October 13, coinciding with the refuge's general elk hunt. However, hunters utilizing the south unit will be restricted to limited range weapons only, including archery equipment, muzzleloaders, and shotguns with slugs. The new hunt unit was added this season to influence movements and distribution of elk that arrive on the refuge early, specifically the Grand Teton National Park segment of the herd. Elk distribution is expected to improve with a south unit hunt because elk may spend more time in transition areas, potential wintering areas in Grand Teton National Park, the northern part of the refuge, and areas eastward. Decreasing elk numbers in the southern end of the refuge during October and November will reserve critical forage for later in the season, helping to delay the initiation of supplemental feeding.

Information brochures and maps of the hunt areas will be available at the open house. For further information on the open house programs, please call the National Elk Refuge Headquarters at 307.733.9212.

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