

Elk

- There are six subspecies of elk; Rocky Mountain (mountainous), Roosevelt (coastal), Tule, Manitoban, Merriam's & Eastern (* both now extinct).
- Bull elk refer to males.
- Bulls can weigh up to 900 lbs depending on the subspecies; the Roosevelt being the largest.
- The bulls have antlers. They grow a new set of antlers every year. When a new set of antlers grow, they have velvet on them. It takes several years for a bull to develop "branch" antlers. By the time he is six, a bull can have up to 7 branches from the main stem of his antlers. When a bull has a large "rack" (as it is often nicknamed) you can be certain he has a large food source and eats a lot!
- To get the attention of a female, bulls often bugle. To hear this magnificent sound you can log onto <http://www.rmef.org/ElkFacts.aspx>
- Female elk are referred to as cows. A mature cow can weigh up to 600lbs. Often times when spotting for elk, you will see cows in large groups, while bulls tend to live as bachelors.
- A baby elk is referred to as a calf. Calves are born in mid spring sometime between May and June. Just like a fawn, calves are born with spots.
- Elk are vegetarians and graze on grains and grasses.

Reflection questions for students:

If you were an elk, would you rather be a bull or a cow? Would you live near the coast like the Roosevelt elk or high up in the mountains like a Rocky Mountain elk? Why do you think it is important to help preserve elk habitat? What kinds of things can you do to help?