



Oregon Sea Grant Extension
Sustainable Tourism &
Outdoor Recreation Program

Interpretative Fact Sheet

Elk, Roosevelt (*Cervus canadensis*)



The following short article is from the [Oregon Coast 101 Species](#) collection used by the Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional (GORP) training program. These articles are intended to provide interesting facts you can share with your clientele and add value to your services.

An Interpretive Fact Sheet has been written about each species. We are currently uploading these blogs and creating the links.

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Tourism and Business Development College of Business,
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Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional Program

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For more information about the GORP training program see:

<https://www.gorpguide.org/become-a-gorp-certified-guide>

Roosevelt Elk (*Cervus canadensis roosevelti*)

 tourism.oregonstate.edu/roosevelt-elk-cervus-canadensis-roosevelti/

By colliiek2

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Royalty free; Thank you Edward Taylor, Unsplash

In the grassy field, two bull elk posture, bugle, and antler-wrestle for herd dominance and to attract cows. The herd casually look on as these nearly 1,100 pound beasts duke out ritualized mating behaviors and risk dangerous injury from the nearly six foot antler racks.

Almost enough to lose your antlers over.

Actually, the antlers are shed each year and people hunt for them. Shed hunting (or angler hunting) closes during the winter to protect big game, and reopens in April (see <https://myodfw.com/articles/responsible-shed-hunting>).

In the early summer, the antlers grow rapidly and become polished. During this time, the larger males (which are solitary most of the year) join together. By July, the antlers become polished and males begin searching for untended cows or those tended by less formidable males.

Herds

Cows form herds that include adults and juveniles which tend to stay in relatively small and distinct areas. An older cow with offspring will typically provide the leadership. Younger mothers will fill-in as needed. There is considerable exchange of individuals among adjacent herds.

Food

Most of the year, Roosevelt elk feed on grasses and sedges. In the winter, they will eat more woody plants such as berries (highbush cran-, elder-, salmon-, and blue-), devil's club, mushrooms, lichens, and other young seedlings.

Nuts & Bolts

Roosevelt Elk are one of the four surviving races of elk (which are a species of deer) in Oregon. These elk are the third largest land mammal in North America and have a population in Oregon of around 59,000. Elk are found in temperate Pacific Northwest rainforests and throughout northern California. They are also called Olympic Elk.

How they got their name....

In 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt created what originally started out as an elk reserve in Washington state. but now the Olympic National Park in Washington state. Later, in 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt visited the region and named the elk after his relative "Teddy" and created the Olympic National Forest the following year.

Elk are hunted as a game species; the meat is leaner and higher in protein than beef or chicken. See the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife for permits and restrictions.

Want to see them?

Check out the Dean Creek Elk Reserve, just three miles east of Reedsport, Oregon on Highway 38 (<https://www.blm.gov/visit/dean-creek-elk-viewing-area>). This year-around reserve is home to about 60-100 Roosevelt Elk which are visible almost every day. While there is no overnight camping, there are many turnouts on the highway, restrooms, and no fees. Before you go, be sure to download the Dean Creek Viewing Area brochure at <https://www.blm.gov/or/resources/recreation/files/brochures/Dean%20Creek%20Elk%20Viewing%20Area.pdf>

REFERENCES:

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Wildlife Viewing at: <https://myodfw.com/wildlife-viewing/species/hoofed-mammals> and [/big-game-hunting/species/roosevelt-elk](https://myodfw.com/wildlife-viewing/species/big-game-hunting/species/roosevelt-elk)

USDI Bureau of Land Management, Dean Creek Viewing Area
(<https://www.blm.gov/visit/dean-creek-elk-viewing-area>)
Wikipedia, Elk (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roosevelt_elk)