



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Elk grazing on private property east of Sedro-Woolley in Skagit County, Wash., along Highway 20.

Valley of frustration

Elk herd grows into a nuisance, disrupting farming in NW Washington

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

SEDRO-WOOLLEY, Wash. — In the Skagit River Valley rippling through a tiny portion of northwest Washington, farmers and ranchers say they are overrun by elk, the consequence of a continuing effort by wildlife managers to enlarge the North Cascades herd.

Efforts to increase the number of elk in northwest Washington go back more than a century. In 1912, Skagit County brought in 46 elk from Yellowstone National Park to increase the herd. Poachers took the elk, according to state Department of Fish and Wildlife records. In the late 1940s, the state released 22 elk from King and Yakima counties. They became the foundation of today's herd.

The most recent importation of elk came between 2003 and 2005, when 98 elk from the Mount St. Helens area in southern Washington were rounded up by the Department of Fish and Wildlife and Indian tribes. The animals were herded by helicopter through livestock chutes, loaded on horse trailers and driven north to Skagit County.

Turn to **ELK**, Page 12

Roosevelt elk

Of the 22 elk subspecies recognized globally, four are found in North America — the Roosevelt elk being the largest. Elk that inhabit areas west of the Pacific Crest are typically Roosevelt elk or a mixed lineage of Roosevelt/Rocky Mountain elk.

Trinomial name: Cervus elaphus roosevelti

Height: 3-5 feet at the shoulder

Weight: 600-1,100 pounds

Average life span: 12-20 years

Diet: Grazers during spring and summer, eating meadow grasses, sedges and flowering plants. In fall, they increasingly become browsers eating sprouts and branches of shrubs and trees.

Habitat: Productive grasslands, meadows, and clear-cuts, with closed-canopy forest nearby for cover.

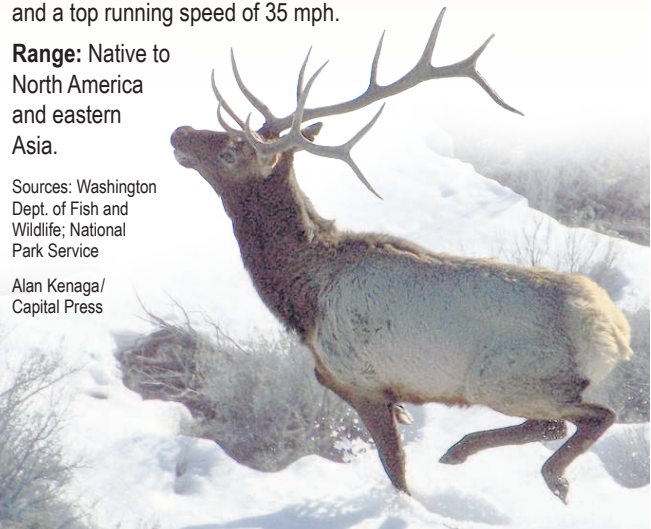
Social structure: Elk are social animals, living in herds most of the year. During the fall rut, dominant bulls will gather and defend breeding harems of 4 to 24 cows.

Known for: A superb sense of smell, excellent hearing, and a top running speed of 35 mph.

Range: Native to North America and eastern Asia.

Sources: Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife; National Park Service

Alan Kenaga/Capital Press



Oregon grants rancher's request to kill wolves

By KATY NESBITT
For the Capital Press

HALFWAY — Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has killed one of a pack of eight wolves preying on livestock in Baker County.

The action was taken under a permit granted to a Baker County cattle rancher whose livestock

has been repeatedly attacked on private grazing ground.

According to an ODFW press release, the agency provided a kill permit to allow the taking of two wolves. Under the terms of this permit, the producer can kill up to two wolves on the private property he leases where the depredations occurred, when his livestock is present on the property. The permit expires on May 4.

ODFW staff members were also authorized to kill the wolves.

On Tuesday, ODFW staff — who were already in the area hazing wolves — shot and killed one uncollared yearling female from the Pine Creek pack on private land where the previous depredations had occurred.

The rancher had requested that the state kill all eight wolves in the Pine Creek



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife This May 25, 2014 photo shows OR-26, a 100-pound adult male, after he was fitted with a GPS tracking collar outside La Grande. The state has granted a Baker County rancher's request to kill wolves involved in livestock attacks.

pack, but the state is using what it calls incremental take

Turn to **WOLVES**, Page 12

Anti-competition worries persist about Bayer-Monsanto merger

Deal cleared by U.S. government requires sell-off of seed assets

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Selling off assets has apparently cleared the way for agribusiness giants Bayer and Monsanto to merge, but the deal still raises anti-competitive concerns in agriculture.

When Bayer agreed to buy Monsanto in a \$66 billion transaction a year and a half ago, the combination faced scrutiny from antitrust authorities around the globe.

With the U.S. Department of Justice reportedly agreeing to sign off on the deal recently, the merger has crossed a major domestic hurdle shortly after winning approval from Eu-



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

Concerns about the anti-competitive effects of the Bayer-Monsanto merger persist despite recent regulatory clearance for the deal.

ropean regulators.

Permission for the deal was apparently secured because the new colossus will shed several seed lines to BASF as well as a decision-making data platform for farmers.

Buying those seed assets will increase the prominence of chemical company BASF without necessarily easing competition-suppressing

effects in the seed industry, said Peter Carstensen, a professor specializing in agricultural antitrust law at the University of Wisconsin.

Now that BASF has a bigger in-house seed business, it's less likely to partner with smaller and mid-size seed firms to offer

Turn to **MERGER**, Page 12



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