

2001 Nevada Bull Elk Age Study

During the 2001 hunting season, the Division of Wildlife conducted a bull elk aging study to evaluate the age distribution of harvested bull elk in Nevada. The study was designed to learn more about our growing elk herds and the age structure of the harvested bulls. We need to know how to best sustain bulls of a certain age and antler class, and are there opportunities to increase quotas, or conversely, do we need to decrease the harvest of a particular age class to have a proper age structure. Each hunter was asked to extract two incisors from their harvested bull. The Division cleaned, processed and submitted the teeth to Matson's Laboratory in Milltown, Montana. Matson's sectioned the teeth and read the cementum annuli to determine ages. A total of 210 hunters returned data packages to the Division out of 325 successful bull hunters. A total of 205 samples were usable for age analysis.

The following Table 1 shows the age data from the 205 bulls by hunt unit group. The ages are described by average, minimum age, maximum age, unit bull harvest and the sample size for the unit. Figure 1 displays the age frequency distribution of harvested elk statewide.

Table 1 – Bull Elk Age Data by Hunt Unit Group

Unit Group	Avg. Age	Min. Age	Max. Age	Bull Harvest	Sample Size
072	6.1	5	7	12	7
075	5.0	4	7	4	4
079	4.3	4	5	3	3
131	4.0	4	4	1	1
231	5.4	2	13	29	19
262	4.0	2	8	7	5
104,105	5.0	4	6	8	3
061, 071	4.3	2	7	19	13
077, 081	5.4	2	12	30	19
111-115, 221, 222	5.0	1	14	181	113
161-164	5.2	2	11	31	18
Total	5.0	1	14	325	205

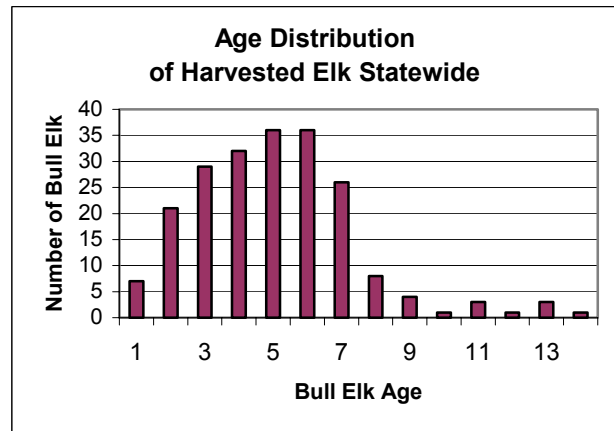
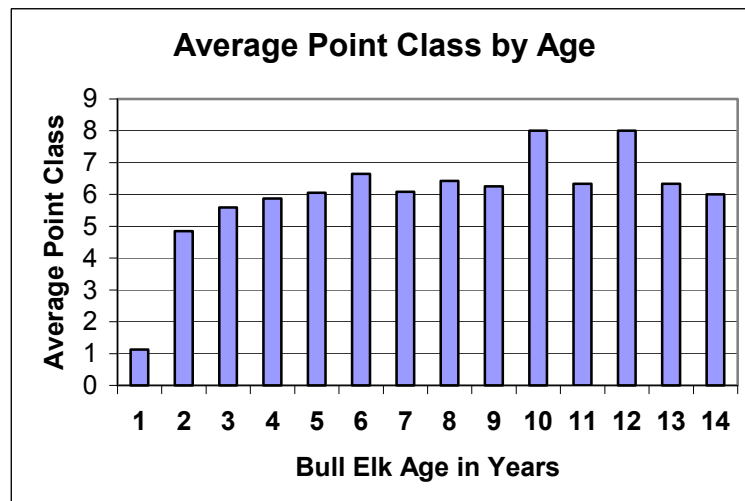


Figure 1 - Age Distribution of Harvested Bulls

Point class of each bull that was aged was compared to see what relationship exists between bull age and point class. Point class data is typically used to describe the quality of the bull harvest. We found that point class is a very poor predictor of elk ages. Nearly 80% of all bulls harvested over the age of one were 6-points or better.



The remaining Figures display the bull elk ages by unit group. Only those unit groups with 10 or more harvested bulls are shown.

