

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS

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OFAH FILE: 408E/452
October 4, 2013

Mr. Vince Ewing, Manager
Ministry of Natural Resources
Bancroft District Office
106 Monck Street, Box 500
Bancroft, Ontario
K0L 1C0

Subject: Expansion of Elk Hunting Opportunities for 2014

Dear Vince:

The 2013 elk season marks the third anniversary of the modern day elk hunt in Ontario. Interest in elk hunting has been significant, with over 9,400 hunters applying for tags. In previous discussions with MNR staff, it was indicated to us that three years of data was required prior to making any significant changes to the elk hunting regulations and tag allocations. We believe that this is an opportune time to initiate discussions about expanding elk hunting opportunities in the Bancroft/North Hasting elk harvest area.

Recognizing the need to optimize recreational opportunities from the elk resource, the OFAH, on behalf of its 100,000 members, subscribers and supporters, and 710 member clubs, respectfully requests an evidence-based review of the elk tag allocation for the 2014 elk hunt. In addition to an increased tag allocation for the existing hunt, the OFAH is requesting that the MNR establish a one-week, bows-only elk season immediately prior to the two-week gun season.

Rationale

- This new season would provide dedicated elk hunting opportunities to Ontario's sizeable bowhunting population, similar to existing bows-only opportunities for deer and moose.
- The current hunt is clearly sustainable – in each of the first two hunts, only 20-25 elk were harvested from a population of roughly 500, which equates to approximately 5% of a population that has exhibited an annual growth rate of 15-17%. Given the lower success rate of bowhunters, this new season would likely result in a negligible increase in harvest.
- Thanks to mandatory reporting by elk hunters, annual aerial inventories, and extensive applied research, the MNR is in an excellent position to monitor the sustainability of current and future licensed hunting seasons.
- Finally, the establishment of an additional season will contribute significant revenue to the Special Purpose Account, thereby benefiting wildlife management in general.

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The OFAH recommends an initial allocation of 10 bows-only tags (over and above the existing 70 gun tags) with all relevant regulations in effect (modified party hunting, hunter dress requirements, etc.).

We look forward to discussing the details of this proposal with you in the near future.

Yours in Conservation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Ryckman".

Mark Ryckman, M.Sc.
Senior Wildlife Biologist

MR/gh

cc: Deb Steton, MNR Wildlife Policy Section
Mike Gatt, MNR Southern Region
Erin MacDonald, MNR Bancroft District
OFAH Board of Directors
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