

Carrying Capacity of Summer Elk Range  
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The spring and summer months of 1969 initiated the data collection of the first phase of a proposed five year research project designed to determine carrying capacity of a portion of summer elk range in Teton County, Wyoming. Data collection for the first two years of the study will be primarily associated with type classification, animal numbers and use patterns, and forage production and utilization.

The area under study at this time includes all summer elk range in Teton County with particular interest on the Huckleberry ridge area. This area was selected because of logistic reasons and provides essentially comparable resources to that of other areas of summer elk range. Management decisions concerning the Huckleberry ridge summer range could in effect be employed for other similar elk summer ranges.

Survey trips were made to the area during May of 1969 to study elk migration and numbers as well as their effect on the early spring flora. This was followed by type classification mapping and unit measurements from aerial photographs of the Huckleberry ridge area. Animal numbers and use patterns were studied by sightings, tracks, and pellet groups. Forage production was achieved by use of a square foot microgrid placed at random on various types seen previously to be used extensively by elk. A double sampling procedure was employed in conjunction with the microgrid which estimates individual species weight. Utilization percentages were also estimated at the same time the other sample measurements were made.

During the summer of 1969 approximately 1200 samples were taken to determine utilization and production. The area was also typed and classified and observation notes were kept on animal numbers and their pattern of use. The sample results are currently being compiled and analyzed so they may be compared to a similar set of data which will be collected during spring and summer months of 1970.

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