

Elk

The National Park Service introduced elk to the Great Smokies Mountains National Park (GRSM) in 2001. Since then, elk have expanded their range outside of the (GRSM) boundaries. This expansion presents additional recreational opportunities for residents and tourists but also increases human-elk conflicts. If you have a sighting please report it to the Wildlife Helpline at (866) 318-2401 or wildlifehelpline@ncwildlife.org.

What kind of damage is caused by elk? Elk can impact agriculture crops, ornamental plants, forest and livestock fences.

Can a WCA write a depredation permit? No, wildlife damage control agents are not authorized to write depredation permits for elk. If you receive a request for an elk depredation permit, refer individual to their local [district biologist](#).

Can elk be relocated? No, elk cannot be relocated.

What can I do with a sick or injured elk? If you receive a report of a severely injured or dead elk, please contact the NC Wildlife Helpline at 866-318-2401 (Mon.-Fri. 8 am-5 pm) or the Wildlife Enforcement Division at 800-622-7132.

Are there safety concerns? Yes, elk are powerful animals and can be unpredictable during mating season. Elk are usually wary of people unless humans feed or provoke them. Never feed, approach, surround or corner an elk.

Non-lethal Options:

Education

- See the [General Considerations for Handling Wildlife](#) document for general ways to prevent damage from wildlife.

Exclusion

- Fencing should be six feet high (1.8-m) with woven-wire, topped with two strands of smooth or barbed wire (Fig. 1). This type of fence is effective but can be costly.
- High-voltage (3,500- to 7,500-volt) electric fences have proven to be a relatively inexpensive and effective alternative to woven-wire fences. They feature 8 to 11 smooth strands of triple-galvanized, high-tensile steel wire supported by conventional fence post systems (Fig. 2).
- 6-ft cylinders of welded wire (Fig. 3) can be used to protect individual trees.

For additional assistance about elk, contact the local [district biologist](#).

