



ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK  
CANADA, Saskatchewan  
SEPTEMBER 2016  
MECHISLAV KLIMOVICH



GOLD AWARD  
408 1/8

*Cervus elaphus nelsoni*

**DESCRIPTION** Smaller than the Roosevelt elk, and somewhat lighter in weight than the Manitoba elk although similar in size. Bulls stand about five feet (1.5 m) at the shoulder and average 700 pounds (320 kg). Females average 500-525 pounds (225-240 kg). The antlers are generally longer and slimmer than those of Roosevelt elk, but have greater spread. The coloration is lighter, with less contrast than in Roosevelt elk.

**HABITAT** Summer range is in high mountain meadows and forests. In fall and winter, elk migrate downward in advance of deep winter snows to sheltered lowlands where forage is available.

**DISTRIBUTION** **Canada:** Rocky Mountain region of southeastern British Columbia and southwestern Alberta. Introduced on the Queen Charlotte Islands off the coast of British Columbia (1929) and in southeastern Ontario (early 1930s). **United States:** Washington and Oregon east of Interstate 5; and in Idaho, western Montana, Wyoming, southwestern South Dakota, northwestern Nebraska, northeastern Nevada, Utah, western Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico. Limited introductions have been made in the wild in southeastern Oregon, northeastern California, North Dakota, Minnesota, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas and Florida. In addition, private herds have been established on fenced ranches in many places, and this is an increasing trend.

**REMARKS** The Rocky Mountain elk is the most numerous variety with the widest distribution, and is the one sought after by most elk hunters. Most hunting is probably done on foot or from four-wheel-drive pickups; however, the classic way to hunt elk is on horseback from a packed-in tent camp and, if one can arrange it, this is the way to go. A high mountain hunt with a good outfitter in a good area during the bugling season can be the experience of a lifetime. During the rut, bulls can be bugled in by a good caller. They can also be stillhunted, or glassed and stalked, or shot at long range. Elk are often hunted in up-and-down country, where shots are either pointblank or 300-500 yards (275-450 m) across a canyon. Elk are large, vital animals; therefore, adequate calibers and strongly constructed bullets should be used and shots should be placed well.

