

# **Agenda Item 12**

**2012 – 2014 Elk General Seasons  
and**

**2013 Elk Special Permits**

**WAC 232-28-358**

**WAC 232-28-360**

**Briefing and Hearing**

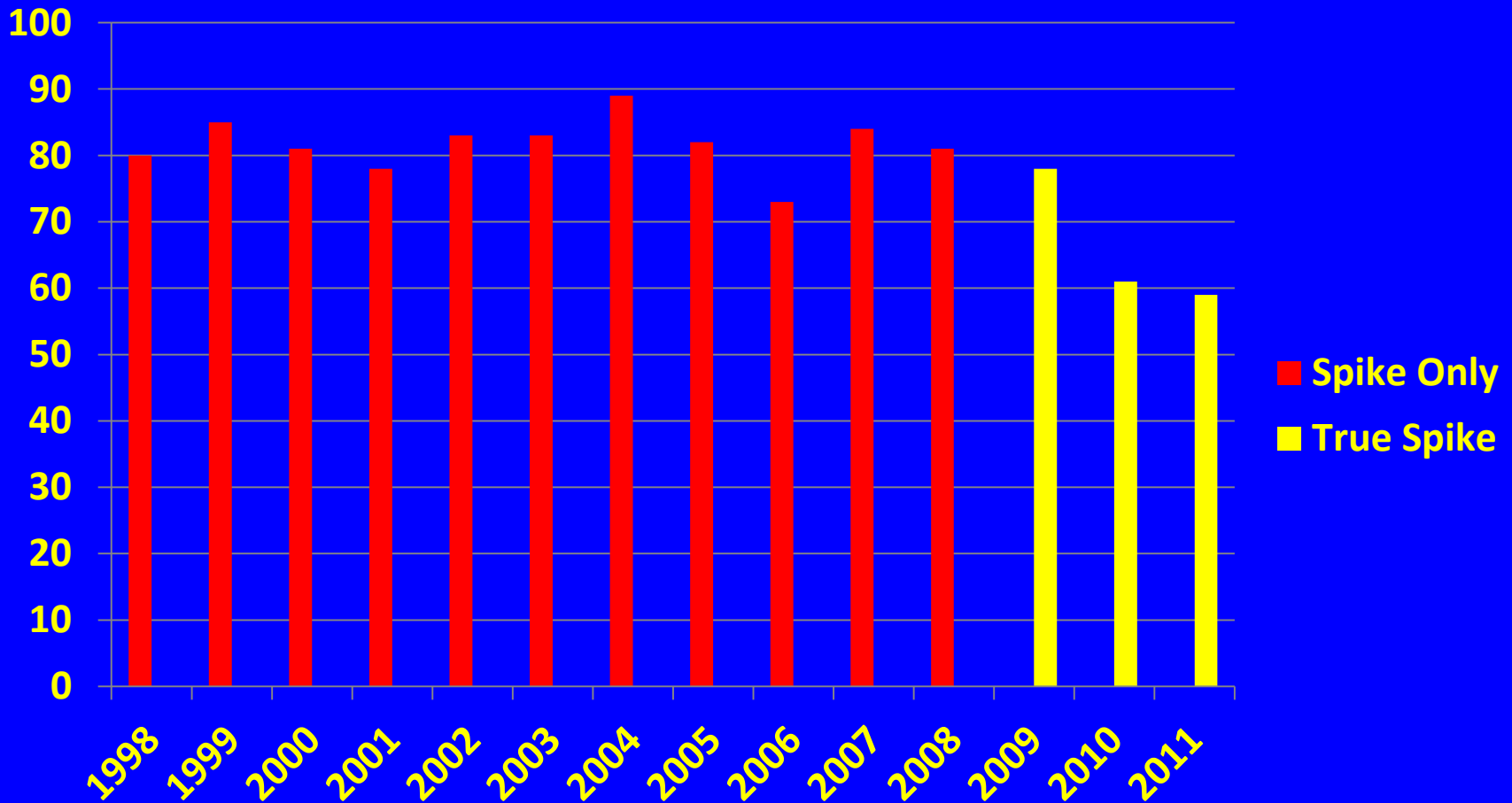
# Status of Elk Populations

Elk Herd	Status	Hunting Season
Mount St. Helens	Above Objective	Pending Survey Flights
Yakima	At Objective	Status Quo Harvest Targets- Bulls; Restore Antlerless Archery General in Nile and Bumping
Colockum	Above Objective; Bull Ratios Below Objective	Pending Survey Flights
Blue Mountains	At Objective	Pending Survey Flights Reduce Bull Permits
Olympic	Working on Estimates	Status Quo
Willapa Hills	Harvest Data	Status Quo
Nooksack	Below Objective	Pending Survey Flights
Selkirk	Harvest Data	Status Quo
North Rainier	Harvest Data	Status Quo
South Rainier	Harvest Data	Status Quo

# Colockum Elk Herd



# Colockum Percentage of Yearling Bulls Harvested



**Elk Hoof Disease  
in  
Southwest Washington**

# Hoof Disease

- Dozens of hoof diseases
  - Many specific to the species
  - All have different causes (infectious, metabolic, toxic, nutritional, physical), and different modes of transmission, prevention, treatment, prognoses, etc.
  - The type observed in SW WA elk does not appear to match with any known hoof diseases in domestic or wild animals
  - Does not seem to be affecting domestic livestock in the area
- Males and females
- All ages
- Any hoof



# Elk Harvest

- Does not appear to be affecting harvest
  - Have not detected any changes in hunter success and harvest
  - Increase in hunters reporting hoof disease on harvested elk
- Mount St. Helens Elk Herd
  - Under herd reduction strategy
  - Sightability/Mark Resight Study
    - Results expected summer 2013
    - 4 years of surveys – provide better population estimate & understanding of herd in 5 core GMUs

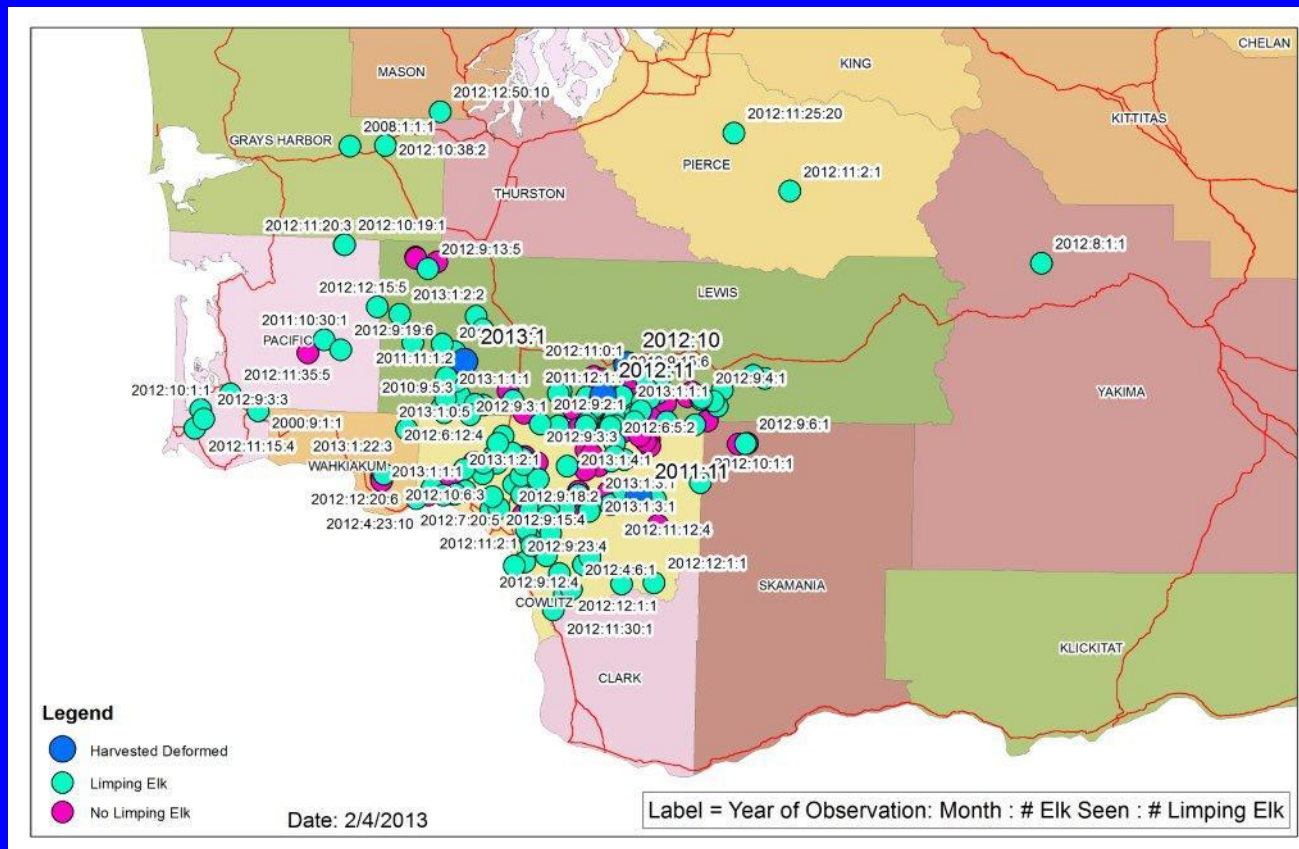
# Preliminary Results

- **Primary hoof disease**
  - **Chronic–active laminitis**
  - **Copper deficient**
  - **Selenium deficient**
- **The geographical distribution of current problem in elk spread from 2000-2009**
- **Possible Causes of Hoof Deformities?**
  - **Infectious**
  - **Non-Infectious**
  - **Multiple factors**



# Information Dissemination

- Public Meeting September 12, 2012
- Developed On-Line Hoof Disease Reporting Form
- Increased outreach efforts



# Next Steps

- Coordinating with other agencies and universities, both here and abroad, to prioritize the work needed
  - Working with researchers from WSU
    - Developed protocol on next collection

# Next Steps

## ■ February-March 2013 Effort:

■ Collection of young animals to narrow the search for the cause

## ■ Region 5

■ Collect 7-10 mildly symptomatic YOY (born June 2012) from the affected area.

## ■ Region 6

■ Collect 3-5 “normal” YOY (born June 2012) from a herd or herds in similar habitat and with similar behaviors, but distant from the known disease affected area.

## ■ Region 3

■ Collect 3-5 “normal” YOY (born June 2012) very distant from the above, from east of the Cascades.

# Next Steps

- Understanding the cause of elk hoof disease in southwestern Washington is an important step in understanding and managing its impacts
- If cause is determined; there are likely very few, if any, treatment options for wild elk
- Management direction will depend on cause
  - Examples of possible options could range from:
    - Focused removal of affected animals if determined to be effective
    - Reduction in antlerless harvest to compensate for hoof disease loss if mortality is additive
    - Reduce overall herd density if disease is density driven

# Elk Season Recommendations

- **Status Quo for Most Seasons**
- **Restore Archery General Antlerless Opportunity in GMUs 352, 356**
- **Reduce Blue Mountain Bull Permits**
- **Adjust  $\uparrow\downarrow$  Special Permits via Special Permit Allocation Formula**
- **Adjust Antlerless Special Permits to Address Agricultural Damage Issues**
- **Adjust Special Permits in Response to Elk Population Numbers (e.g., stabilize MSH)**

# Questions