

The Starkey project: history, facilities, and data collection methods for ungulate research.

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The Starkey project: history, facilities, and data collection methods for ungulate research.



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Date: 1997

Source: Gen. Tech. Rep. PNW-GTR-396. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station. 62 p

Publication Series: General Technical Report (GTR)

Station: Pacific Northwest Research Station

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2737/PNW-GTR-396>



PDF: [View PDF](#) (7.8 MB)

Description

In the 1980s resource managers were increasingly concerned about effects of timber harvest on ungulates in National Forests. Land and resource management plans incorporated restrictions on timber harvest to maintain cover for Rocky Mountain elk (*Cervus elaphus nelsoni* V. Bailey) and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus hemionus* Rafinesque), and habitat models were used to predict effectiveness of various habitat components for these ungulates. Many of the assumptions on which these models were based were untested, however. The Starkey Project, in northeastern Oregon, was begun to address some of these issues through manipulative experiments in a landscape representative of inland National Forests in the West. A 25,000-acre (10 125-ha area was surrounded with game-proof fencing to support studies on elk, mule deer, and cattle (*Bos taurus*). A newly developed telemetry system, using loran-C (long range navigation-C) signals, tracks distribution of the three species in relation to common land management activities and habitat variables. Four primary research projects are underway: animal-unit equivalencies, intensive timber management, effects of roads and traffic, and breeding efficiency of bull elk. Activities at Starkey include trapping, feeding, and handling of deer and monitoring, hunting, timber harvest, cattle grazing, and vegetation monitoring. An intensive technology transfer program is also an integral part of the Starkey Project. The physical site, including handling facilities and telemetry-related structures, and chronology of events related to the Starkey Project are described. A bibliography of project publications also is included.

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Citation

Rowland, Mary M.; Bryant, Larry D.; Johnson, Bruce K.; Noyes, James H.; Wisdom, Michael J.; Thomas, Jack Ward. 1997. The Starkey project: history, facilities, and data collection methods for ungulate research. Gen. Tech. Rep. PNW-GTR-396. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station. 62 p

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Keywords

Cattle, deer, elk, forest management, ungulates, Blue Mountains, Oregon, radio telemetry, habitat, Starkey Project, technology transfer, wildlife research

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