

Parks face overpopulation of elk

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Growing elk herds are causing problems for other animals by eating a majority of the greenery at national parks in Colorado and the Dakotas, park officials say.

Officials at the parks must decide on a method of culling their growing elk herds, The Washington Post reported Monday.

Brian Richards, who studies elk for the U.S. Geological Survey, says the combination of healthy habitat and few predators spells a continuing elk problem for Colorado's Rocky Mountain and Theodore Roosevelt parks and Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota.

"If there are not tools implemented to keep those populations in check, the populations will spin out of control," Richards told the Post.

Steve Torbit, the Colorado-based regional director for the National Wildlife Foundation, says the U.S. is "paying the price for these smaller parks that do not allow for the animal herds to have seasonal movement."

Torbit says parks should have buffer zones where hunting and wildlife management are permitted.

Subdivisions and ranches should not be built right up against park boundaries, Torbit told the Post.

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