

NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S. Webster St, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707
Phone: 608-267-2773 TDD: 711
dnr.wi.gov www.wisconsin.gov

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CONTACT: Tami Ryan, DNR Wildlife Health section chief, 608-266-3143

SUBJECT: After over a month in Jackson County, elk from Kentucky continue to adjust to their new surroundings

MADISON -- After over a month in Jackson County, elk from Kentucky continue to adjust to their new surroundings with help from Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources staff and their partners.

Prior to **arriving safely in Wisconsin March 26**, the elk were held for 45 days in Kentucky for initial disease testing as part of a 120-day quarantine period. The elk currently reside in a quarantine pen in Jackson County, where they will remain until at least mid-June. When the quarantine period has ended and final disease testing is completed, they will be released in Jackson County.

For the duration of their captivity in Kentucky and Wisconsin, the elk have received expert care. Precautions taken include 24-hour monitoring, veterinary care and oversight, routines to limit exposure to stress, and daily monitoring and observations for any injuries or additional concerns.

In mid-April, a mortality event involving four calves and one adult cow was promptly identified due to diligent 24-hour surveillance protocol. Following a thorough investigation, the cause of death was attributed to acute Babesiosis, a disease caused by a tick-borne parasite. While this parasite has previously been identified in Wisconsin and other states, its impact on both wild and captive elk is unknown.

Outside of this acute disease event, all five animals were in good nutritional and physical health. DNR and partner staff will continue to consult with specialists and work together to determine the best courses of action available. The 21 elk currently housed within the Jackson County quarantine pen will continue to receive 24-hour

care, and the department will monitor these elk with the animals' health as top priority.

While captivity can be stressful for wild animals, the department is taking measures to assure that these elk continue to receive the best care possible for the duration of their stay. The ultimate outcome of the first year of translocation efforts will play out in the months ahead as the department and partners continue to provide caretaking during quarantine and monitor the herd after their release.

The department's agreement with Kentucky provides for a multi-year effort, which will provide for flexibility in working with key partners to achieve the ultimate goal of bringing a total of 150 elk to Wisconsin.

For more information regarding elk in Wisconsin, visit dnr.wi.gov and search keyword "elk."