

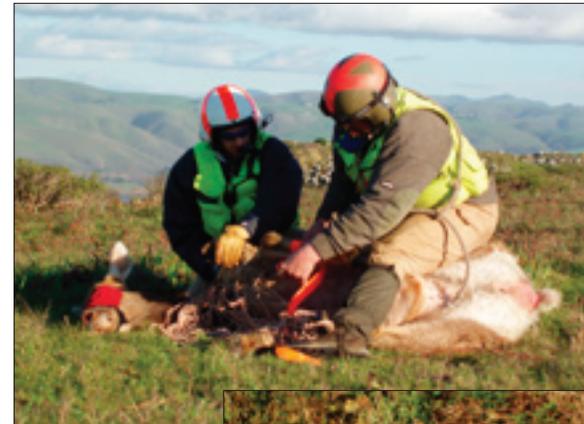
Wildlife Monitoring Continues

Wildlife Branch staff worked on projects involving tule elk, black-tailed deer, non-native deer (fallow and axis), non-native wild turkeys, ravens, as well as occasional incidents involving myriad other species.

In September 2004, and again in February 2005, Wildlife Branch staff and volunteers conducted multiple horseback censuses of the Tomales Point elk herd. In January 2005, staff from all park divisions, three universities, two other NPS units and volunteers cooperated to capture 32 adult female tule elk at Tomales Point and Limantour wilderness areas. The purpose of the capture was to apply radio-collars to the cows and release them as part of a multi-year monitoring program to assess the viability of the Seashore's elk population. In the spring of 2005, researchers and wildlife staff captured elk calves and placed expandable radio-collars in an effort to learn more about survival and recruitment of elk in their first year of life. Throughout FY 2005, for the second year, volunteers and staff monitored visitor impacts to tule elk in the heavily visited Avalis Beach and White Gulch areas of the tule elk reserve.

In February 2005, the Non-Native Deer Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement was released to the public and a two month public comment period ended on April 8, 2005. A public workshop and a number of media interviews accompanied the releases of the draft plan. A cooperative research project with US Dept of Agriculture in April, 2005 will yield information on the presence of an exotic louse in Seashore axis and fallow deer. This exotic parasite has been documented to cause debilitating disease in native black-tailed deer in Oregon and Washington.

Throughout the year, but particularly during fall of 2004 and spring of 2005, wildlife staff continued to study impacts of ravens to threatened western snowy plovers. Increased numbers of wild turkeys in the Seashore has required increased levels of monitoring of these non-native birds. In cooperation with Marin Municipal Water District and California State Parks, staff will begin using radio-telemetry to track turkey movements and habitat use in the Seashore during the spring and summer of 2006.



Taking vital signs from a female elk at Tomales Point

