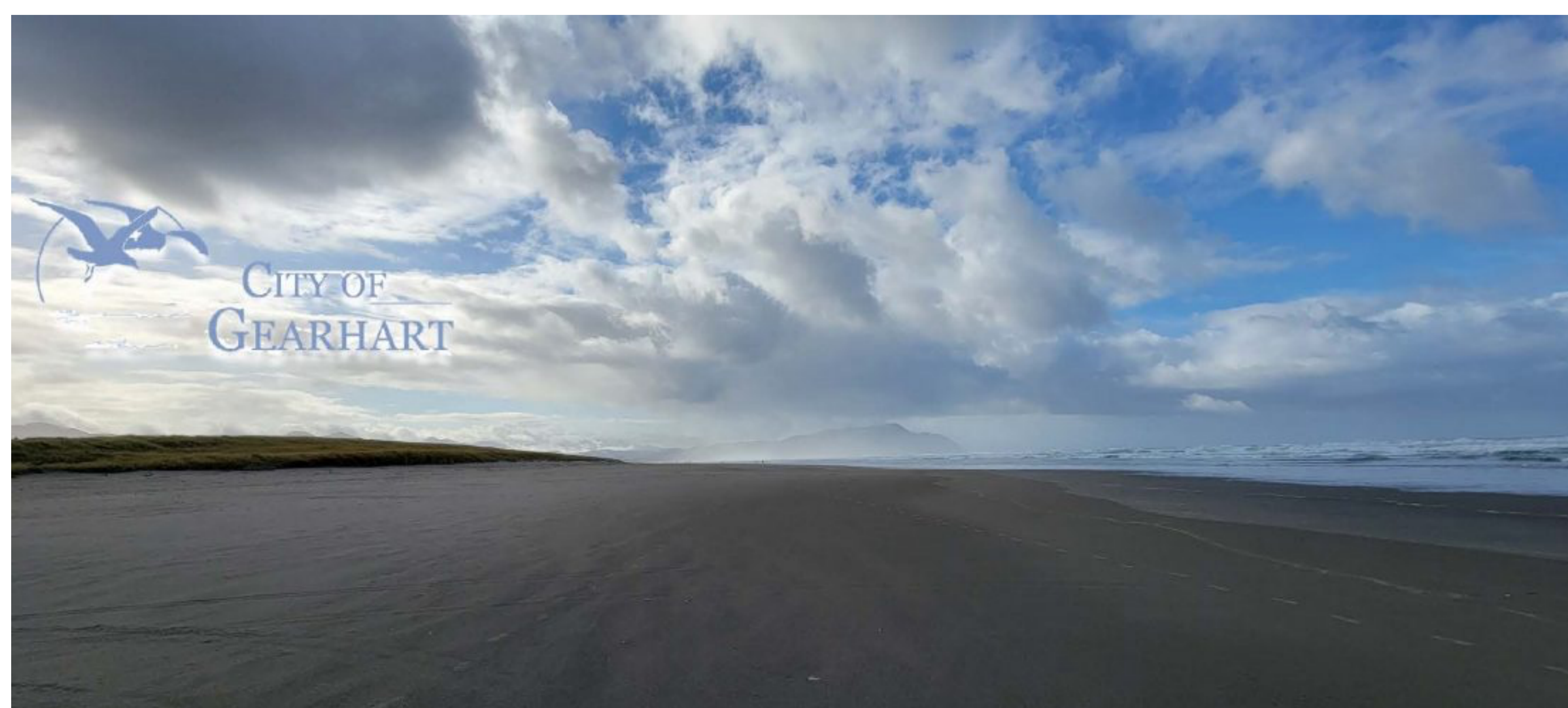


Keeping our residents informed while maintaining the quality & livability of our community.



**PLEASE BE AWARE: It's Rutting Season!**

September 6, 2024 by Gearhart City Staff






A reminder to the Gearhart community that it's elk rutting season. We urge the public to be aware of their surroundings, keep their distance from elk, and never feed wildlife. While bull elk will become more aggressive during rutting season, habitation to humans can lead to increased aggression. Keep pets leashed and at a safe distance.

Aggressive behavior is when an elk charges a human or vehicle and is actively threatening them. The mere presence of elk is not a cause for alarm, but please use caution, keep your distance and share this information with your neighbors.



**Safety tips to follow around elk in Oregon:**



-  **ENJOY WATCHING FROM A DISTANCE.** Keep pets on a leash at all times. Try not to disturb elk with sudden movement or loud noises. They are large animals and can pose a danger to themselves and others when startled.
-  **BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS** to avoid surprising a herd of elk by walking into the middle of them.
-  **Elk are most active at dawn and dusk and most aggressive during breeding and calving seasons.** Watch out for them at dawn and dusk along roadways and migration routes. Stay away and keep pets away at all times but especially during the breeding season (September/October) and calving season (May/June) when elk become more territorial.
-  **NEVER PICK UP AN ELK CALF OR ANY OTHER YOUNG WILDLIFE. It's against the law and bad for the animal.** If you encounter a young animal that appears to be in distress, leave it alone, and if you are concerned, call the police or nearest ODFW office.
-  **NON-NATIVE VEGETATION ATTRACTS ELK,** especially in the winter when other food sources are scarce. To move a herd off your property, calmly approach the herd, making your presence obvious. Avoid surprising or being aggressive toward any wildlife.

For more information, contact the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Wildlife Division, 503-947-6000 | [www.odfw.com](http://www.odfw.com) or contact your local ODFW field office.



If you experience or witness elk aggression here in Gearhart/Seaside specifically, please phone our dispatch at 503-738-6311.



**Q: WHAT IS THE ELK RUT?**

A: Occurring from mid-September through mid-October, the elk rut is a time when male elk are looking to mate with female elk, also known as cows.

**Q: WHAT IS THAT NOISE THE MALE ELK ARE MAKING?**

A: Also known as bulls, male elk make very distinct noises during the rut—it's called bugling! As the male elk's mating call, the bugle sounds start off as a high-pitched cry before turning to a low groaning noise. Bugling is a way of alerting female elk that a male looking for a mate is nearby, and also offers as a deterrent for other male elk competing for mates.

**Q: WHAT IS A HAREM?**

A: Elk usually stick to same-sex groups, but during the rut they form groups called harems, which consist of one dominant bull elk and a large group female elk. During this time, the bull elk becomes very aggressive towards challenging male elk and is very protective of his harem. While it may seem like an episode of The Bachelor, its not all fun and games for the bull elk. Since he is so focused on defending his group, he has little time to eat and loses up to 20 percent of his body weight during this time, making surviving the winter very hard.

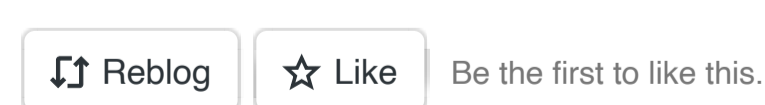
**Q: WHAT ELSE DO ELK DO DIFFERENTLY DURING THE RUT?**

A: While elk are generally mild-mannered animals, their attitudes change during the rut. Male elk become more aggressive towards each other because their goal is to establish dominance and win over a mate during this time of year. It isn't uncommon to see elk sparring during the rut, meaning they lock antlers with each other and fight over territory and harems.

**Q: HOW CAN I BE SAFE WHILE WATCHING THE ELK RUT?**

A: As always, watch any wildlife from a great distance. Use a zoom lens on cameras or have binoculars. Especially during the elk rut, bull elk become very aggressive and dangerous to humans observing.

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