

Montana 2022 Elk Counts

In 2022 several hunting districts were combined, renamed, or eliminated (see footnotes). In some cases counts aligning to new district boundaries were not available (indicated by "-") and FWP commission has not yet approved objective ranges (indicated by ""). Elk are counted in winter or spring by aircraft. It is not possible to count all elk in a management unit and elk plan objectives are based on "Observed Elk", which may be elk observed on trend areas in some cases. Counting elk is an inexact exercise subject to a multitude of weather and timing variables and elk movements between hunting districts. Therefore, counts in some years may not accurately reflect elk numbers and better counts from previous years are reported.

Hunting District(s)	Elk Management Unit (EMU)	Elk Plan Objective	Objective Range	Most Recent Elk Count (as of 2022)	Year of Count	Status - Over, At or Below Objective (as of 2022)
100	PURCELL	Surveys discontinued due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover				
101	SALISH	Surveys not flown due to urban low altitude flying constraints				
103 ¹	SALISH	260	208-312	181 ¹	2019	Below ¹
104	LOWER CLARK FORK	Surveys discontinued due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover				
110	WHITEFISH	Surveys discontinued due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover				
120	SALISH	Surveys discontinued due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover				
121	LOWER CLARK FORK	1,355	1,084-1,626	1,497	2022	At
122	SALISH	Surveys discontinued due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover				
123	LOWER CLARK FORK	365	292-438	311	2022	At
124	LOWER CLARK FORK	130	104-156	138	2008	At
170	NORTH SWAN	No numerical objective. The Elk Plan objective is "a small elk population"				
130, 140, 141	BOB MARSHALL	150-320 ²	150-320	102	2019	Below
150	BOB MARSHALL	310-500	310-500	198	2019	Below
Region 1 Total³		2,870-3,130³	2,388-3,712³	2,246		At³
200	LOWER CLARK FORK	300	240-360	265	2021	At
201 ⁴	NINEMILE	*	*	2,164	2022	*
N Portion of 202 ⁵	LOWER CLARK FORK	350	280-420	350	2022	At
204	ROCK CREEK	600	480-720	636	2022	At
210, 211	ROCK CREEK & SAPPHIRE CREEK	1,450	1,160-1,740	2,127	2022	Over
213 ⁶	FLINT CK ⁶	1,150	920-1,380	1,873	2022	Over
214	SAPPHIRE	450	360-540	170	2022	Below
215	DEER LODGE	1,400	1,120-1,680	1,709	2022	Over
216	ROCK CREEK	325	260-390	225	2022	Below
217	FLINT CK	600	480-720	781	2022	Over
240 ⁷	BITTERROOT	*	*	971	2022	*
250	WEST FORK	1,400	1,120-1,680	750	2022	Below
260	BITTERROOT	50	40-60	205	2022	Over
261, 262	ROCK CREEK	700	560-840	733	2022	At
270	SAPPHIRE	3,800	3,040-4,560	4,386	2022	At
280	BOB MARSHALL	No wintering elk				
281	BOB MARSHALL	500-700	500-700	463	2022	Below
282, 285 ⁸	BOB MARSHALL	900-1,100	900-1,100	863	2022	Below
291	GARNET	600	480-720	654	2022	At
292	GARNET	800	640-960	540	2022	Below
284, 293	GRANITE BUTTE	Counted with 339 and 343, see below				
290, 298	GARNET	600	480-720	1,006	2022	Over
Region 2 Total		19,215-19,612	15,625-23,178	20,871		At
301, 309	GALLATIN/MADISON	500	400-600	714	2022	Over
302 ⁹	TENDOY	*	*	2,768	2022	*
303 ¹⁰	TENDOY	800	700-900	813	2022	At
304 ¹¹	NORTH SPANISH PEAKS	2,500	2000-3000	2,063	2022	At
310	GALLATIN/MADISON	1,500	1,200-1,800	757	2022	Below
311 ¹²	GALLATIN/MADISON	*	*	1,146	2021	*
312	BRIDGER	600	480-720	1,347	2022	Over
313	NORTHERN YELLOWSTONE	4,000	3,000-5,000	5,473	2022	Above
314	GALLATIN/MADISON	3,000	2,400-3,600	3,961	2022	Over
315	CRAZY MOUNTAINS	1,000	800-1,200	2,500	2022	Over
316	NORTHERN YELLOWSTONE	No wintering elk				
317	ABSAROKA	900	720-1,080	1,747	2022	Over
318	DEER LODGE	500	400-600	666	2022	Over

319 ¹³	FLEECER	1,475	1250-1700	1,311	2022	At
320 ¹⁴	TOBACCO ROOT	1,000	800-1,200	1,296	2022	Over
321	SAPPHIRE	No wintering elk				
322 ¹⁵	GRAVELLY	8,000	6,400-9,600	10,771	2022	Over
329 ¹⁶	PIONEER	*	*	831	2022	*
331 (East)	PIONEER	1,290	1,180-1,400	810	2022	Below
331 (West)	PIONEER	830	760-900	453	2022	Below
334	SAPPHIRE	No wintering elk				
335	DEER LODGE	600	480-720	1,174	2022	Over
339, 343, 284, 293	GRANITE BUTTE	2,150	1,720-2,580	2,858	2022	Over
340	HIGHLAND	1,000	800-1200	830	2022	At
350, 370	HIGHLAND	600	480-720	586	2022	At
N 360	GALLATIN-MADISON	1,200	960-1,440	1,323	2022	At
S 360	GALLATIN-MADISON	3,500	2,800-4,200	4,884	2022	Over
361	GALLATIN-MADISON	Few wintering elk, no stated objective.				
380	ELKHORN	2,000	1,700-2,300	1,794	2022	At
388	GRANITE BUTTE	No stated objective, no wintering elk or no survey flown.				
390	BRIDGER	900	720-1,080	1,338	2022	Over
391	BRIDGER	975	780-1,170	1,233	2022	Over
392	WEST BIG BELT	400	320-480	325	2022	At
393	BRIDGER	1,500	1,200-1,800	3,415	2021	Over
Region 3 Total		44,805	36,640-53,920	59,187		Over
400, 403, 404, 405, 406, 419, 444, 471	GOLDEN TRIANGLE	No stated objective, no wintering elk or no survey flown.				
401	SWEETGRASS HILLS	350	280-420	600	2022	Over
410	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	2,000-2,300	2,000-2,300	2,735	2022	Over
W 411, W 535	SNOWY	400	320-480	833	2022	Over
E 411, E 535	SNOWY	400	320-480	8,300	2021	Over
412	SNOWY	300	240-360	992	2022	Over
413 ¹⁷	LITTLE BELT	825	660-990	940	2022	At
415	BOB MARSHALL	200	160-240	169	2022	At
416 ¹⁸	LITTLE BELT	725	580-870	2,321	2022	Over
417	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	375	350-400	2,545	2022	Over
418	LITTLE BELT	150	120-180	288	2022	Over
420, 448	LITTLE BELT	1,200	960-1,440	1,136	2022	At
421 ¹⁹	BIRDTAIL	500	400-600	742	2022	Over
422	BOB MARSHALL	500	450-550	1,042	2022	Over
424, 425, 442	BOB MARSHALL	2,500	2,250-2,750	2,307	2022	At
426	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	75	75-75	314	2022	Over
441	BOB MARSHALL	500	400-600	627	2022	Over
445, 455	DEVIL'S KITCHEN	2,200	1760-2640	4,742	2022	Over
446	EAST BIG BELT	950	760-1,140	3,608	2022	Over
447	HIGHWOOD	700	560-840	1,637	2022	Over
450	TETON	87	75-100	589	2022	Over
451	BRIDGER	275	220-330	162	2022	Below
452	CASTLE MOUNTAIN	600	480-720	1,009	2002	Over
Region 4 Total		16,263	13,660-18,865	37,638		Over
502	MID-YELLOWSTONE	50	50	181	2022	Over
515 ²⁰	MID-YELLOWSTONE	160	128-192	1,045	2022	Over
525 ²¹	ABSAROKA	1,000	800-1200	2694	2022	Over
535 ²²	SNOWY	Counted with HD 411 - see above				
540	LITTLE BELT	600	480-720	1,739	2022	Over
555 ²³	MID-YELLOWSTONE	200	200	90	2022	Below
565 ²⁴	MID-YELLOWSTONE	300	240-360	87	2022	Below
575	MID-YELLOWSTONE	225	180-270	1,172	2022	Over
580	CRAZY MOUNTAINS	975	780-1,170	4,215	2021	Over
590 Bull Mtns	BULL MOUNTAINS	750	600-900	2,690	2019	Over
590 Pine Ridge	BULL MOUNTAINS	300	240-360	442	2021	Over

Region 5 Total		4,560	3,698-5,422	14,355		Over
600, 640, 650, 652, 670	HI LINE	No stated objective, no wintering elk or no survey flown.				
620, 621, 622	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	1,400-1,650	1,400-1,650	1,292	2022	Below
630²⁵	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	300-350	300-350	254	2022	Below
690	BEARS PAW	250	225-275	1,026	2021	Over
Region 6 Total		1,925-2,275	1,925-2,275	2,572		Over
700	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	200-300	200-300	1,379	2022	Over
701	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	No stated objective, no wintering elk or no survey flown.				
703	HI LINE	No stated objective, no wintering elk or no survey flown.				
702, 704, 705	CUSTER FOREST	500	400-600	3,046	2021 & 2022	Over
Region 7 Total		700-800	600-900	4,425		Over
STATE TOTAL		92,138	*	141,294		Over

¹As of 2022, new boundary of HD 103 now includes old HD 102. The 2019 count in HD 103 includes only Lost Trail NWR - Fisher River area was not surveyed

²Objective applies only to HD 140

³Only includes objectives for EMUs where elk are countable

⁴As of 2022, new boundary of HD 201 includes part of old HD 283 and parts of 203 and 240

⁵As of 2022, new boundary of HD 202 includes part of HD 203

⁶As of 2021, new boundary of HD 213 includes most winter range previously in HD 212

⁷As of 2022, new boundary of HD 240 excludes an area now part of HD 201

⁸As of 2022, new boundary of HD 285 includes part of old HD 283

⁹As of 2022, new boundary of HD 302 includes part of old HD 328

¹⁰As of 2022, HD 300 was renamed 303

¹¹As of 2022, HD 304 is new composed of southern portion of old HD 311

¹²As of 2022, HD 311 boundary changed

¹³As of 2022, HD 319 is combined with old HD 341

¹⁴As of 2022, new boundary of HD 320 includes old HD 333

¹⁵As of 2022, new boundary of HD 322 includes old HDs 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 330

¹⁶As of 2022, new boundary of HD 329 includes part of old HD 328

¹⁷As of 2022, new boundary of HD 413 includes old HD 432

¹⁸As of 2022, new boundary of HD 416 includes old HD 454

¹⁹As of 2022, new boundary of HD 421 includes old HD 423

²⁰As of 2022, new boundary of HD 515 is new, combining old HDs 500 and 570

²¹As of 2022, new boundary of HD 525 is new, combining old HDs 520 and 560

²²As of 2022, 511 and 530 were combined to form new HD 535

²³As of 2022, HD 555 is new, combining old HDs 520 and 510

²⁴As of 2022, HD 565 is new composed of a portion of old HD 560

²⁵As of 2022, new boundary of HD 630 includes old HDs 631 and 632