

Montana 2021 Elk Counts

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	Year of Count	Status - Over, At or Below Objective
100	PURCELL	300	240-360	138	2009	Below
101	SALISH	Surveys not flown due to urban low altitude flying constraints				
102	SALISH	Surveys discontinued due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover				
103	SALISH	260	208-312	230	2017	At
104	LOWER CLARK FORK	Surveys discontinued due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover				
109, 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	1,418	2019	At
122	SALISH	Surveys discontinued due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover				
123	LOWER CLARK FORK	365	292-438	428	2019	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	150-320	102	2019	Below
150	BOB MARSHALL	310-500	310-500	198	2019	Below
Region 1 Total ¹		2,870-3,130 ¹	2,388-3,712 ¹	2,652		At ¹
200	LOWER CLARK FORK	300	240-360	265	2021	At
201	NINEMILE	600	480-720	790	2021	Over
N Portion of 202	LOWER CLARK FORK	350	280-420	349	2021	At
203	NINEMILE	950	760-1,140	949	2021	At
204	ROCK CREEK	600	480-720	855	2021	Over
210, 211	ROCK CREEK & SAPPHIRE CREEK	1,450	1,160-1,740	2,274	2021	Over
213 ²	FLINT CK ²	1,150	920-1,380	2,050	2021	Over
214	SAPPHIRE	450	360-540	178	2021	Below
215	DEER LODGE	1,400	1,120-1,680	2,476	2020	Over
216	ROCK CREEK	325	260-390	557	2020	Over
217	FLINT CK	600	480-720	688	2020	At
240	BITTERROOT	1,000	800-1,200	923	2021	At
250	WEST FORK	1,400	1,120-1,680	806	2021	Below
260	BITTERROOT	50	40-60	158	2021	Over
261, 262	ROCK CREEK	700	560-840	837	2021	At
270	SAPPHIRE	3,800	3,040-4,560	4,052	2021	At
280	BOB MARSHALL	No wintering elk				
281	BOB MARSHALL	500-700	500-700	608	2021	At
W 283 (N. Hills/Evaro)	GARNET	300	240-360	198	2021	Below
Central 283 (Jumbo)	GARNET	90	72-108	87	2021	At
E 283 (Gold-Belmont)	GARNET	300	240-360	233	2021	Below
282, 285	BOB MARSHALL	900-1,100	900-1,100	584	2021	Below
291	GARNET	600	480-720	734	2021	Over
292	GARNET	800	640-960	679	2021	At
284, 293	GRANITE BUTTE	Counted with 339 and 343, see below				
290, 298	GARNET	600	480-720	902	2021	Over
Region 2 Total		19,215-19,612	15,625-23,178	22,232		At
300	TENDOY	800	700-900	1,112	2019	Over
301, 309	GALLATIN/MADISON	500	400-600	495	2020	At

302	TENDOY	625	550-700	1,295	2019	Over
310	GALLATIN/MADISON	1,500	1,200-1,800	599	2021	Below
311	GALLATIN/MADISON	2,500	2,000-3,000	2,560	2021	At
312 ³	BRIDGER	600	480-720	1,102	2021	Over
313	NORTHERN YELLOWSTONE	4,000	3,000-5,000	4,609	2021	At
314	GALLATIN/MADISON	3,000	2,400-3,600	3,975	2021	Over
315	CRAZY MOUNTAINS	1,000	800-1,200	2,191	2021	Over
316	NORTHERN YELLOWSTONE	No wintering elk				
317	ABSAROKA	900	720-1,080	1,897	2021	Over
318	DEER LODGE	500	400-600	628	2021	Over
319	FLEECER	955	812-1,100	835	2021	At
320, 333	TOBACCO ROOT	1,000	800-1,200	1,712	2021	Over
321	SAPPHIRE	No wintering elk				
322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 330	GRAVELLY	8,000	6,400-9,600	11,917	2021	Over
328	TENDOY	625	550-700	796	2019	Over
329	PIONEER	830	760-900	1,728	2021	Over
331	PIONEER	1,290	1,180-1,400	1,290	2021	At
332	PIONEER	830	760-900	511	2021	Below
334	SAPPHIRE	No wintering elk				
335	DEER LODGE	600	480-720	780	2018	Over
339, 343, 284, 293	GRANITE BUTTE	2,150	1,720-2,580	2,313	2021	At
340	HIGHLAND	1,000	850-1,150	1,014	2021	At
350, 370	HIGHLAND	600	510-690	799	2019	Over
341	FLEECER	525	438-600	498	2021	At
N 360	GALLATIN-MADISON	1,200	960-1,440	1,503	2021	Over
S 360, 362	GALLATIN-MADISON	3,500	2,800-4,200	4,010	2021	At
361	GALLATIN-MADISON	No stated objective.				
380	ELKHORN	2,000	1,700-2,300	2,416	2020	Over
388	GRANITE BUTTE	No stated objective, no wintering elk or no survey flown.				
390	BRIDGER	900	720-1,080	1,803	2019	Over
391	BRIDGER	975	780-1,170	1,250	2021	Over
392	WEST BIG BELT	400	320-480	289	2018	Below
393 ³	BRIDGER	1,500	1,200-1,800	3,415	2021	Over
Region 3 Total		44,805	36,640-53,920	59,342		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	515	2020	Over
410	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	2,000-2,300	2,000-2,300	3,253	2020	Over
W 411, 511	SNOWY	400	320-480	1,035	2021	Over
E 411, 530	SNOWY	400	320-480	8,300	2021	Over
412	SNOWY	300	240-360	779	2021	Over
413	LITTLE BELT	500	400-600	490	2021	At
415	BOB MARSHALL	200	160-240	212	2021	At
416	LITTLE BELT	475	380-570	1,560	2021	Over
417	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	375	350-400	3,442	2021	Over
418	LITTLE BELT	150	120-180	274	2021	Over
420, 448	LITTLE BELT	1,200	960-1,440	1,116	2021	At
421, 423	BIRDTAIL	500	400-600	698	2020	Over
422	BOB MARSHALL	500	450-550	1,088	2020	Over
424, 425, 442	BOB MARSHALL	2,500	2,250-2,750	2,328	2021	At
426	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	75	75-75	367	2020	Over
432	LITTLE BELT	325	260-390	453	2021	Over
441	BOB MARSHALL	500	400-600	525	2021	At

445, 455	DEVIL'S KITCHEN	2,500	2,000-3,000	4,032	2020	Over
446	EAST BIG BELT	950	760-1,140	2,545	2021	Over
447	HIGHWOOD	700	560-840	1,563	2021	Over
452	CASTLE MOUNTAIN	600	480-720	1,282	2021	Over
450	TETON	87	75-100	557	2021	Over
451	BRIDGER	275	220-330	469	2020	Over
454	LITTLE BELT	250	200-300	256	2021	At
Region 4 Total		16,263	13,660-18,865	37,139		Over
500	MID-YELLOWSTONE	60	48-72	372	2020	Over
502, 510	MID-YELLOWSTONE	60	48-72	153	2021	Over
511	SNOWY	Counted with W 411 - see above				
520	ABSAROKA	1,050	840-1,260	879	2020	At
530	SNOWY	Counted with E 411 - see above				
540	LITTLE BELT	600	480-720	1,766	2021	Over
560	ABSAROKA	700	560-840	1,577	2021	Over
570	MID-YELLOWSTONE	100	80-120	690	2020	Over
575	MID-YELLOWSTONE	225	180-270	873	2021	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		4,820	3,856-5,784	13,657		Over
600, 640, 650, 652, 670	HI LINE	Elk Plan Objective is "As low as possible"		No surveys are flown		
620, 621, 622	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	1,400-1,650	1,400-1,650	1,991	2020	Over
630, 631, 632	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	300-350	300-350	405	2020	Over
690	BEARS PAW	250	225-275	1,026	2021	Over
Region 6 Total		1,950-2,500	1,925-2,275	3,422		Over
700, 701	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	200-300	200-300	1,237	2020	Over
702, 704, 705	CUSTER FOREST	500	400-600	2,104	2020	Over
703	HI LINE	No stated objective, no wintering elk or no survey flown.				
Region 7 Total		700-800	600-900	3,341		Over
STATE TOTAL		92,138		141,785		Over

¹Only includes objectives for EMUs where elk are countable

²New boundary of HD 213 subsumes most winter range previously in HD 212

³Counts in these HDs may not be directly comparable to previous years' due to survey boundary changes informed by radio-telemetry studies