



What is a bonus point?

A bonus point is an extra chance for a hunter to draw a license or permit in a Montana drawing. These bonus points can be accumulated at the rate of one per year by hunters who are unsuccessful in a drawing. They are accumulated by hunters per available license or permit. For instance, a hunter can have three bonus points for antelope, five for moose, one for antlerless elk, and fifteen for a deer A permit.

How do you get one?

- Bonus points can be purchased in one of two ways:
 - At the time of application. If you don't purchase one at the time of application, it can't be purchased later.
 - In years that you don't apply for a license, a bonus point can be purchased separately between July 1 and Sept. 30.
- You can only purchase one bonus point per species opportunity per year.

How do you lose your bonus points?

- The only way to lose your bonus points is to either be successful in your first-choice license or permit drawing or be convicted of a wildlife crime and have your hunting privileges revoked.
- You don't lose bonus points for successfully drawing your second or third choice permit.
- You can choose not to participate in the bonus point system on any given year. Your bonus points won't be used in the drawing, and if you're successful in drawing a license or permit, you won't lose your bonus points.

How do bonus points work?

- The use of bonus points is directed by state statute.
- When a hunter enters a drawing, they can use their accumulated bonus points **plus** that year's application.
- The bonus points are squared for the drawing.
- **EXAMPLE: Larry**
 - Larry has five bonus points for the 2024 deer A permit drawing.
 - Larry's number of chances in the drawing: $5^2+1=26$.
- Each of Larry's chances are combined with all the other applicants in the drawing. Think of these chances as raffle tickets. Each ticket is assigned a number. The lower the number the better. During the drawing, permits are assigned to numbers in order starting with the lowest number first.



I've been applying for 20 years and still haven't drawn a permit. How is that possible?

- When you look at drawing statistics for permits, which are published in the regulations, they can be a bit misleading because they only consider applicants, not the number of bonus points for each applicant. If FWP issues 10 permits and there are 1,000 applicants, you might think you have a one percent chance of drawing the permit, but with the bonus point system that isn't necessarily true
- Remember drawings are random. That means someone without a single bonus point can still draw a license or permit over someone with 20 bonus points.
- **EXAMPLE: Elk 380-20 permit**
 - In 2023, FWP issued 100 380-20 elk permits. 10,668 hunters applied.
 - Those 10,668 hunters had a total of 57,772 bonus points.
 - If you square the bonus points, that equals 612,605
 - Then add in all of the 2023 application (10,668).
 - The total number of chances in the 2023 drawing for 380-20 elk permits were 623,273.
 - If you had been applying for 20 years, and had 20 bonus points, you would have 401 chances in the 2023 drawing.
 - Of the 100 permits issued, 95 permits went to residents and 5 went to non-residents.
 - Of the 95 permits that went to residents, 15 permits went to resident landowners.

What's the difference between bonus points and preference points?

- Preference points are used only for drawing Nonresident Combination Licenses. If you are a Montana resident, preference points don't apply to you. Preference points move you ahead in line for the drawing. Hunters with the most preference points are drawn before hunters with fewer preference points. However, 25 percent of Nonresident Combination Licenses are issued through a random drawing to applicants who have no preference points. Any accumulated preference points are lost when the hunter draws a Nonresident Combination License or if they do not apply in consecutive years.
- Bonus points are used in drawings for first-choice licenses or permits. Bonus points are not used in second- or third-choice drawings. Bonus points give you more chances in a random drawing.

What's the maximum number of bonus points a person can have?

- It depends on the species. There is no maximum set in law, but the maximum number a person can hold depends on the year the Montana law changed allowing for bonus points for a given species.
 - Moose- 2001
 - Sheep- 2001
 - Goat- 2001
 - Elk Permit- 2003
 - Deer Permit- 2003
 - Swan- 2003
 - Deer B- 2004
 - Antelope- 2004
 - Mountain Lion- 2008
 - Antelope B- 2010
 - Elk B- 2010
 - Antelope 900 Archery- 2018
 - Paddlefish- 2020
 - Smith River - 2024
- This means that in 2023 the maximum number of bonus points one person could hold for a moose permit was 23.

