2020 Elk Shoulder Seasons Master List and Justifications Commission-Revised

Note: During its Dec. 5 meeting the Fish and Wildlife Commission voted to modify some of FWP's original proposals by removing or not implementing shoulder seasons in 18 hunting districts (HDs 390, 391, 411, 417, 419, 445, 447, 502, 510, 520, 575, 511, 530, 540, 560, 570, 580 & 590). The original FWP proposals had been posted on-line before the Dec. 5 meeting. FWP changes to its original proposals in response to commission direction are highlighted in yellow below.

Summary of 2020-21 proposals for Montana hunting districts with elk shoulder seasons by population objective status, harvest criteria, change/no-change or removed.

Meet all ha	objective, rvest criteria, to continue	Above objective, NOT Meeting all harvest criteria, Proposed to continue	At/below Proposed	Shoulder seasons being removed	
with no change	with adjustment	with adjustment	with no change	with adjustment	removed
Page 2	Page 3	Page 6	Page 9	Page 10	Page 12
<u>(4 HDs)</u>	(14 HDs)	(11 HDs)	(3 HDs)	(7 HDs)	(18 HDs)
312	210/211	204	101/109	217	<mark>390</mark>
317	212/213	216	451	240	<mark>391</mark>
446	215	410		291	393
500	261/262	422		292	<mark>411</mark>
	290/298	620/621/622		293	<mark>445</mark>
	412	630/631		309	<mark>447</mark>
	421/423	680/690		311	502/510/520/575
	449/452				<mark>511/530</mark>
					<mark>540</mark>
					<mark>560</mark>
					<mark>570</mark>
					<mark>580</mark>
					<mark>590</mark>
					632

Montana shoulder seasons proposed in HDs that are <u>above objective</u>, <u>meet all harvest criteria</u>, <u>proposed</u> <u>to continue with no change</u> for the 2020-2021 biennium summary.

	Status	Current S	eason	Proposed Sea	son	
HD	Number & %	License Type	Season Dates	License Type	Season Dates	Notes
312	701 or 116% Over	Part of 312, 390 & 393 Bundle. 397-00 OTC B Licenses valid in all. General License valid late season	Aug 15 - Sep 6 Dec 2 - Feb 15	Part of 397-00 OTC B License bundle (309, 311, 312 & 390) valid in all. General License valid late.	Change with calendar rotation	Meets all harvest criteria, proposed to continue.
317	514 or 57% Over	300 317-00 B Licenses. Also valid in 313 N of Dome Mtn WMA	Oct 26 - Feb 15	No Change	Change with calendar rotation	To address over-objective, distribution and brucellosis concerns. Meets all harvest criteria, proposed to continue.
446	1,234 or 130% Over	General plus 004- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Sep 6, Oct 26 - Feb 15	No Change	Change with calendar rotation	Meets all harvest criteria, proposed to continue.
500	210 or 350% Over	General and 005- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Feb 15	No Change	Change with calendar rotation	Only 1 year of shoulder season. Meets all harvest criteria, proposed to continue.

Montana shoulder seasons proposed in HDs that are <u>above objective</u>, meet all harvest criteria, <u>proposed to continue with</u> <u>adjustment</u> for the 2020-2021 biennium summary. Proposed changes are in red.

	Status	Current	Season	Proposed Sea	ason	
HD	Number & %	License Type	Season Dates	License Type	Season Dates	Notes
210/211	451 or 31% Over	002-00 OTC B License	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Remove from 002-00 bundle and include in new 210, 211, 212 & 216 bundle with 800 210-03 antlerless permits. A new, larger 211 that includes old W 214.	Aug 15-Nov 29 Remove late SS. Respond as needed to damage on private land after general season.	Anticipating a similar or higher harvest in 2019 than in 2018 on stable or slowly decreasing numbers, while maintaining pressure on private lands to avoid or minimize game damage.
212	800 or 200% Over, but does not reflect this portion of "old" 212	002-00 OTC B License	Aug 15 - Feb 15	A new, smaller 212 made of old W 212. Remove from 002-00 bundle and include in new 210, 211, 212 & 216 bundle with 800 210-03 antlerless permits.	Aug 15-Nov 29 Remove late SS. Respond as needed to damage on private lands after general season.	Anticipating a similar or higher harvest in 2019 than in 2018 on stable or slowly decreasing numbers, while maintaining pressure on private lands to avoid or minimize game damage.
213	At Objective Proposed 'new" HD 213 is over objective.	002-00 OTC B License	Aug 15 - Feb 15	A new, larger 213 with old E 212 + old 213. Remove from 002-00 bundle and replace with 350 213-01 B-Licenses specific to HD 213.	Aug 15-Nov 29 Remove late SS. Respond as needed to damage on private lands after general season.	Anticipating a similar or higher harvest in 2019 than in 2018 on stable or slowly decreasing numbers, while maintaining pressure on private lands to avoid or minimize game damage.

215	1,250 or89% Over	002-00 OTC B License	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Remove from 002-00 bundle and replace with 400 215-02 B- Licenses specific to HD 215. (Replace antlerless general license general season opportunity with 250 215-01 antlerless permits)	Aug 15-Nov 29 (Not valid S of Browns Gul.) Remove late SS. Respond as needed to damage on private lands after general season.	Anticipating a similar or higher harvest in 2019 than in 2018 on stable or slowly decreasing numbers, while maintaining pressure on private lands to avoid or minimize game damage. Decrease hunter congestion on Spotted Dog WMA to improve harvest efficiency there.
261/262	157 or 22% Over	002-00 OTC B License	Aug 15 - Sep 6, Oct 26 - Feb 15	1,500 regional 002-00 B Licenses by drawing valid in HDs 201, 260, 261, 262, 270, 285, 290, 292, 298.	Aug 1 - <mark>Jan 15</mark>	Focuses harvest on private lands and subdivisions for population control/ redistribution. High residential density so harvest must be low frequency and requires an extended season. Meets all harvest criteria, proposed to continue.
290/298	265 or 44% Over	002-00 OTC B License	Aug 15 - Feb 15	1,500 regional 002-00 B Licenses by drawing valid in HDs 201, 260, 261, 262, 270, 285, 290, 292, 298.	Aug 15- <mark>Jan 15</mark>	Anticipating a similar harvest as in 2018 on relative stable numbers living almost entirely on private land, where continued pressure harvests and redistributes elk over an extended time period with high landowner support. Addresses problematic distribution in 298.
412	228 or 76% Over	General plus 004- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Sep 6, Oct 21 - Feb 15	General plus 004-00 B Licenses (during early shoulder and dead week these are only valid on private land).	Change with calendar rotation	Meets all harvest criteria, proposed to continue.

421/423	1,61 or 33% Over	General plus 004- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Sep 6, Oct 26 - Feb 15	General plus 004-00 B Licenses Plus 200 422-00 B Licenses in 422	Aug 15 - Sep 4, Jan 1 - Feb 15	Consistent regulations and try to find balance between various perspectives. Begin moving away from full shoulder season while keeping some for harvest needs; allow landowner/hunter rest from the hunting season; allow elk rest to settle them; start hunting again Jan 1 - Feb 15; accommodate some landowners and hunters that don't like shoulder seasons.
449/452	607 or 101%Over	General plus 004- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Sep 6, Oct 21 - Feb 15	A new, larger 452 includes old 449 + old 452 Old 449 goes away No Change	Change with calendar rotation	Consolidates Castle Mtns HDs

Montana shoulder seasons proposed in HDs that are <u>above objective</u>, NOT meeting all harvest criteria, *proposed to* <u>continue with adjustment</u> for the 2020-2021 biennium summary. Proposed changes are in red.

	Status	Current	Season	Proposed Sea	ason	
HD	Number & %	License Type	Season Dates	License Type	Season Dates	Notes
204	451 or 31% Over	002-00 OTC B License	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Remove from 002-00 bundle and replace with 500 204-01 B- Licences.	Aug 15-Nov 29 Remove late SS. Respond as needed to damage on private land after general season.	Anticipating a similar or higher harvest in 2019 than in 2018 on stable or slowly decreasing numbers, while maintaining pressure on private lands to avoid or minimize game damage.
216	800 or 200% Over	002-00 OTC B License	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Remove from 002-00 bundle, include in new 210, 211, 212 & 216 bundle with 800 210-03 antlerless permits.	Aug 15-Nov 29 Remove late SS. Respond as needed to damage on private land after general season.	Anticipating a similar or higher harvest in 2019 than in 2018 on stable or slowly decreasing numbers, while maintaining pressure on private lands to avoid or minimize game damage as part of the larger block.
410	1,377 or 60% Over	300 410-02 B Licenses Valid only on private and DNRC lands. Not valid on BLM or CMR Refuge.	Sep 7 - Oct 20, Oct 26 - Feb 15	1000 410-02 B Licenses Valid only south of Valentine/ Crooked Creek Rds. Not valid on CMR Refuge.	Change with calendar rotation	Additional harvest where highest densities occur, redistribute elk to northern half with more public land, and give landowners more management flexibility, while maintaining hunt quality for 410-00 antlerless elk hunters.

411	411/511/530 Complex 6,404 or 801% Over	General plus 004- 00 & 400 411-00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Sep 6, Oct 21 - Feb 15	General plus 004-00 & 800 411-00 B Licenses	Change with calendar rotation	Eliminate east-west split. Make regs consistent with 511 & 530
422/444	483 or 97% Over (No stated objective in 444)	General plus 004- 00 B Licenses Plus 200 422-00 B Licenses in 422	Aug 15 - Sep 6, Oct 26 - Feb 15	General plus 004-00 B Licenses Plus 200 422-00 B Licenses in 422	Aug 15 - Sep 4, Jan 1 - Feb 15	Consistent regulations and try for balance between perspectives. Start away from full shoulder season while keeping some for harvest needs; allow landowner/hunter rest; allow elk rest to settle them/allow them to become more accessible (migratory); start hunting again Jan 1 - Feb 15; accommodate some landowners/hunters/outfitters that don't like shoulder seasons; find balance in numbers/distribution between these same elk in HD 280 (early season) and where they winter in HDs 422/444 (private lands).
620/621/ 622	12 or Almost at objective	500 699-00 B Licenses valid in 620, 621, 622, 630, 631 & 632 off CMR bundle	Dec 15 - Jan 15	500 699-00 B Licenses valid in 620, 621, 622, 630 & 631 off CMR. Remove 698-00 antlerless permit and expand 699-00 to archery, general and longer shoulder season. Drop 632 from bundle.	Dec 15- Feb 15	After discussions with Breaks Elk Working Group, other landowners and sportsmen this spreads pressure across seasons and landscapes, helps reduce a just-over- objective population, and provides more opportunity while reducing an LPT.

630/631	282 or 81% Over	500 699-00 B Licenses valid in 620, 621, 622, 630, 631 & 632 off CMR bundle	Dec 15 - Jan 15	500 699-00 B Licenses valid in 620, 621, 622, 630 & 631 off CMR. Remove 698-00 antlerless permit and expand 699-00 to archery, general and longer shoulder season. Drop 632 from bundle.	Dec 15 -Feb 15	See above notes for 620/621/622. Keeps regs consistent with these HDs.
680/690	397 or 159% Over	100 696-00 B Licenses valid in both HDs	Dec 15 - Jan 15	Combine HDs 680 + 690 into new larger HD 690. 150 690-01 B Licenses in new 690. Remove 690-00 & 696-00 B Licenses and 697-00 antlerless permits. Reduces 6 LPTs to 3.	Dec 1 - <mark>Feb 15</mark>	Combine 680 + 690 into new larger 690. Also, general license valid antlerless-only during general but not archery or shoulder (this a big step). Keep shoulder season on B-license. Vetted with landowners that allow public access. Above combined give landowners many tools.

Montana shoulder seasons proposed in HDs that are <u>at or below objective and *proposed to continue with no change*</u> for the 2020-2021 biennium summary.

	Status	Current S	Season	Proposed S	Season	
HD	Number & %	License Type	Season Dates	License Type	Season Dates	Notes
101/109	162 or 55% Below	50 199-00 permits by drawing	Aug 15 - Feb 15	No Change	No Change	A very limited shoulder season that addresses problematic distribution among many small ownerships. <i>Harvest criteria do not apply.</i>
451	65 or 24% Below	General plus 004- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Sep 6, Oct 21 - Feb 15	No Change	Change with calendar rotation	Elk particularly sensitive to winter weather and hunting pressure. Although numbers likely exceed objective by > 300% during fall seasons, extensive public hunting prior to the shoulder season closure displaced most elk to adjacent HDs during 2017 and 2018.

Montana shoulder seasons proposed in HDs that are <u>at or below objective and *proposed to continue with adjustment*</u> for the 2020-2021 biennium summary. Proposed changes are in red.

	Status	Current S	Season	Proposed Sea	ason	
HD	Number & %	License Type	Season Dates	License Type	Season Dates	Notes
217	Almost at Objective 48 or 8% Over	002-00 OTC B License 200 217-01 B License by drawing	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Remove from 002-00 bundle and replace with 400 217-02 B-Licenses specific to HD 217.	Aug 15-Nov 29. Remove late SS. Respond as needed to damage on private lands after general season.	Anticipating a similar or higher harvest in 2019 than in 2018 on stable or slowly decreasing numbers, while maintaining pressure on private land to avoid or minimize game damage. Addressing problematic concentrations of elk.
240	At Objective	100 240-01 antlerless permits	Dec 2 - Feb 15	200 240-01 B Licenses	Nov 30 - Jan 15	Simplify existing tool for maintaining population at objective and allow late harvest when game damage is widespread and numerous.
291	At Objective	002-00 OTC B License	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Remove from 002-00 bundle. Replace with 350 291-03 B License.	Aug 15-Nov 29. Remove late SS. Respond as needed to damage on private lands after general season.	Anticipating a similar or higher harvest in 2019 than in 2018 on stable or slowly decreasing numbers, while maintaining pressure on private lands to avoid or minimize game damage. Addressing problematic concentrations of elk.

292	At Objective	002-00 OTC B License	Aug 15 - Dec 1	1,500 regional 002-00 B Licenses by drawing valid in HDs 201, 260, 261, 262, 270, 285, 290, 292, 298.	Aug 15- <mark>Nov 29.</mark>	Addresses problematic distribution among many small ownerships. <i>Harvest criteria do</i> <i>not apply.</i> Anticipating similar or higher harvest than 2018 on stable or slowly decreasing numbers, while maintaining pressure to avoid or minimize game damage.
293	478 or 56% Below	002-00 OTC B License valid in S portion	Aug 15 - Feb 15	1,500 regional 002-00 B Licenses by drawing only valid in S portion of HD 293.	Aug 15-Nov 29. Remove late SS. Respond as needed to damage on private lands after general season.	Shoulder season addresses problematic distribution. <i>Harvest criteria do not apply.</i>
309	At Objective	General License & 100 395-00 B Licenses	Dec 2 - Jan 15	Part of 309, 311 , 312 & 390 bundle using 397-00 OTC B Licenses. General License valid late	Aug 15 - Sep 4 , Nov 30 - Feb 15	Greater Bozeman urban area. Consistent with HD 311. To manage exurban elk. <i>Harvest criteria do not apply.</i> Remove 395-00 B License
311	At Objective	General License 1,000 311-00 B License by drawing	Dec 2 - Feb 15 In north portion	Part of 309, 311 , 312 & 390 bundle using 397-00 OTC B Licenses. General License valid late	Aug 15 - Sep 4, Nov 30 - Feb 15 Only in north portion	To address distribution and Brucellosis concerns. Harvest criteria do not apply. Remove 311-00 B License

Montana shoulder seasons proposed to be removed and/or not implemented as originally proposed (HDs 417 & 419) for the 2020-2021 biennium summary. During its Dec. 5 meeting the Fish & Wildlife Commission voted to modify and/or remove FWP's original proposals. FWP changes to its original proposals in response to commission direction are highlighted in yellow below. Proposed changes are in red.

	Status	Current S	Season	Proposed Seas	on	
HD	Number & %	License Type	Season Dates	License Type	Season Dates	Notes
390	903 or 100% Over	Part of 312, 390 & 393 Bundle. 397-00 OTC B Licenses valid in all. General License valid late season	Aug 15 - Sep 6, Dec 2 - Feb 15	390-00 OTC B Licenses valid in HDs 390 & 391 general rifle to Jan 1. Only valid south of Duck Cr. in HD 391. Not valid on USFS or FWP WMAs.	No Shoulder Season	Criteria not met in 2016 due to weather. 3 of 4 harvest criteria met in 2017 and all met in 2018. A steady decline in observed elk since shoulder seasons. Harvest weather- dependent and elk stay on inaccessible large ranches if it's nice. Shoulder season benefits smaller farms and ranches on the west which bear the brunt of too many elk. Most of those properties allow public access, but unless the weather pushes elk off the larger ranches they don't have much for elk during general season. A lot of elk will show up after the general season if the weather turns. Short season 1st 2 years.
391	564 or 58% Over	400 391-00 B Licenses only valid S of Duck Cr.	Dec 2 - Feb 15	390-00 OTC B Licenses valid in HDs 390 & 391 general rifle to Jan 1. Only valid south of Duck Cr. in HD 391. Not valid on USFS or FWP WMAs.	No Shoulder Season	Only 1 year of harvest data. Harvest down due to weather. Short season 1st 2 years.

393	1,538 or 103% Over	Part of 312, 390 & 393 Bundle. 397-00 OTC B Licenses valid in all. General License valid late season	Aug 15 - Sep 6 Dec 2 - Feb 15	Part of 309 , 311 , 312, 390 & 393 Bundle. Last week of general season antlerless-only. 397-00 OTC B Licenses only valid during archery and general seasons.	No Shoulder Season 397-00 OTC B Licenses only valid during archery and general.	Apparent loss of public access due to SS. Harvest has gone down and pop up.
411	411/511/530 Complex 6,404 or 801% Over	General plus 004- 00 & 400 411-00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Sep 6, Oct 21 - Feb 15	Part of 5,000 595-00 B License bundle only valid from the end of general rifle to Jan 1. Not valid on USFS.	No Shoulder Season	Eliminate east-west split. Make regs consistent with 511 & 530
417	1,595 or 425% Over	No Shoulder Season		500 417-01 B Licenses only valid general rifle to Jan 1.	No Shoulder Season. Note: SS was originally proposed	SS originally proposed to provide more opportunistic harvest for landowners bordering a larger "refuge" property and have elk come on their lands later in the season
419	No stated objective	No Shoulder Season		500 419-00 B Licenses only valid general rifle to Jan 1.	No Shoulder Season. Note: SS was originally proposed	SS originally proposed to provide landowners the tool to harvest antlerless elk in winter when elk from over-objective neighboring districts move into the NW portion of this HD.
445	1,529 or 61% Over	General plus 004- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Sep 6, Oct 26 - Feb 15	2,000 445-00 B Licenses only valid general rifle to Jan 1. Not valid on USFS.	No Shoulder Season	FWP & Devil's Kitchen Working Group working on elk management. Meeting bull harvest criteria; increased antlerless harvest by 165% with SS; winter numbers increase due to influx from neighboring HD's

447	1,081 or 155% Over	General plus 004- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Sep 6, Oct 26 - Feb 15	, ,	noulder ason	Met obj during archery and general for both cows and bulls. Met all seasons combined obj for cows but missed obj for cows, bulls and calves by 44 elk. Inc cow harvest by 48% w/ SS propose to continue.
502/510	104 or 173% Over	General and 005- 00 B Licenses valid in 502 and W 510	Aug 15 - Feb 15	general rifle to Jan 1. Not	noulder ason	Population beginning to respond b/c shoulder seasons inc harvest of antlerless and ceased pop growth. Very few elk in 510 but ecologically linked to 502. They have one objective and the combined pop is over obj. 510 will become elk refuge w/o shoulder seasons. Short season 1st 2 years.
511 & 530	411/511/530 Complex 6,404 or 801% Over	General and 005- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Feb 15		noulder ason	HDs 411, 511 & 530 complex well over obj. Total harvest has 2X and antlerless harvest >2X with shoulder season. Short season only went to 1/15 first 2 years. Adjustments to bring regulation consistency to all 3 HDs and increase opportunity. Overall landowners are supportive of shoulder season and opportunity it provides.
520	197 or19% Over	General and 005- 00 B Licensesvalid in W portion	Aug 15 - Feb 15		noulder ason	Population beginning to respond b/c shoulder seasons inc harvest of antlerless and stopped pop growth. Short season 1st 2 years.

540	1,315 or 219% Over	General and 005- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Part of 5,000 595-00 B License bundle only valid general rifle to Jan 1. Not valid on USFS.	No Shoulder Season	Harvest has inc slightly, significant decrease in damage complaints and work load until Feb 15th. Damage complaints last year after Feb. 15th, including kill permits. Short season 1st 2 years.
560	1,172 or 167% Over	General and 005- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Part of 5,000 595-00 B License bundle only valid general rifle to Jan 1. Not valid on USFS or south of Falls Creek.	No Shoulder Season	Population beginning to respond with shoulder seasons and inc antlerless harvest. Problematic herds move around. SS allows management flexibility with opportunity when herds are huntable. Very high landowners support for seasons. Short season 1st 2 years.
570	298 or 298% Over	General and 005- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Part of 5,000 595-00 B License bundle only valid general rifle to Jan 1. Not valid on USFS.	No Shoulder Season	Population declining due to shoulder seasons. Within 2 elk of harvest criteria, which is within the error of the estimation methods.
575	923 or 410% Over	General and 005- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Part of 5,000 595-00 B License bundle only valid general rifle to Jan 1. Not valid on USFS.	No Shoulder Season	Population responding b/c shoulder seasons inc harvest of antlerless and ceased pop growth. Short seasons 1st 2 years.
580	3,195 or 328% Over	General and 005- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Part of 5,000 595-00 B License bundle only valid general rifle to Jan 1. Not valid on USFS.	No Shoulder Season	Pop beginning to respond due to shoulder seasons. High landowner support to continue shoulder seasons.

590	943 or 90% Over	General and 005- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Part of 5,000 595-00 B License bundle only valid general rifle to Jan 1. Not valid on USFS.	No Shoulder Season	Well over obj, Population beginning to respond with shoulder season due to increased antlerless harvest.
632		No general license opportunity. Part of 620, 621, 622, 630, 631 & 632 bundle of 500 699-00 B Licenses.	Dec 15 - Jan 15	Drop 632 from bundle	No Shoulder Season	Hunters, the Breaks Elk Working Group and landowners speak to the lack of cow elk and surveys confirm. Few cows harvested during general season (<10/year) and will be less with only 10 632-00 B licenses. Cow harvest in shoulder season is ~0 because few elk and most security habitat is in CMR