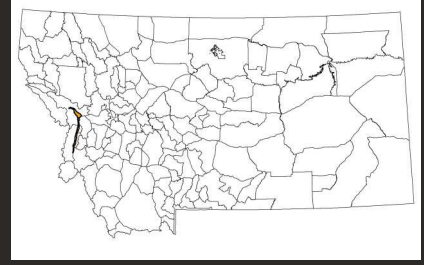


HD 260

Size: 155 mi²

Primary Habitat: Human Land Use

Public Ownership: 13%



Bitterroot/Clark Fork Elk Management Unit

District Summary

Hunting District 260 runs along the Bitterroot River Bottom and is a long, narrow HD spanning the Bitterroot River/Clark Fork floodplains between Darby in the south (Ravalli County) and Frenchtown in the north (Missoula County). In the south, it is bounded primarily by US Highway 93 on the west and Eastside Highway/Old Darby Road on the east, with a few variances to account for river and highway movements. In the north, the HD encompasses most of the urbanized areas around Missoula and Frenchtown.

This HD is 87% private property in active agricultural production and urban/suburban residential development. The remaining 13% public land is comprised of scattered Lolo National Forest, Montana State Trust, Montana FWP (fishing access sites and Council Grove State Park), and local/county government parcels, as well as the 2,800-acre Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Currently, there are 10 private properties open to public hunting access (8 of which are enrolled in FWP's Block Management Program), although most hunting opportunities are generally focused on white-tailed deer.

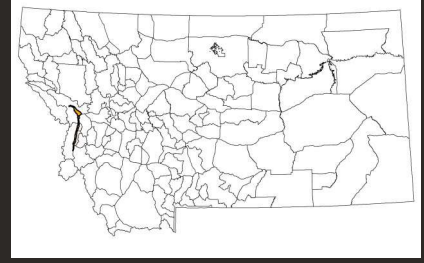
Due to the lack of elk habitat in HD 260, management goals focus on managing and/or preventing agricultural conflicts associated with elk residency. Most of the elk frequenting HD 260 are seasonal, generally unwelcome visitors on agricultural lands that spend most of their lives in adjacent HDs 201, 204, and 240. These herd movements are well known and are included in counts for those districts. However, several herds remain year-round residents in the Bitterroot floodplain, particularly around the Stevensville and Hamilton areas, and these elk are included in HD 260 counts.

In addition, HD 260 has been managed as a special archery-only district for decades due to its flat topography and human density, and generally predates the existence of resident elk herds in the area. Since its inception, HD 260 has become very important culturally to bowhunters. However, the archery-only restrictions present challenges to managing elk that are causing damage to private property and cannot be efficiently hunted with archery equipment. The density of housing and urban development continue to pose safety concerns for longer-range weapons.

Historically, HD 260 hunting regulations have often differed between Missoula and Bitterroot portions to satisfy public demands related to game damage mitigation, safety concerns, and cultural significance. In the 2005 Elk Management Plan HD 260 was combined with HD 240. To recognize the complexity of HD 260 amid the larger landscape, it is now considered a separate entity.



HD 260



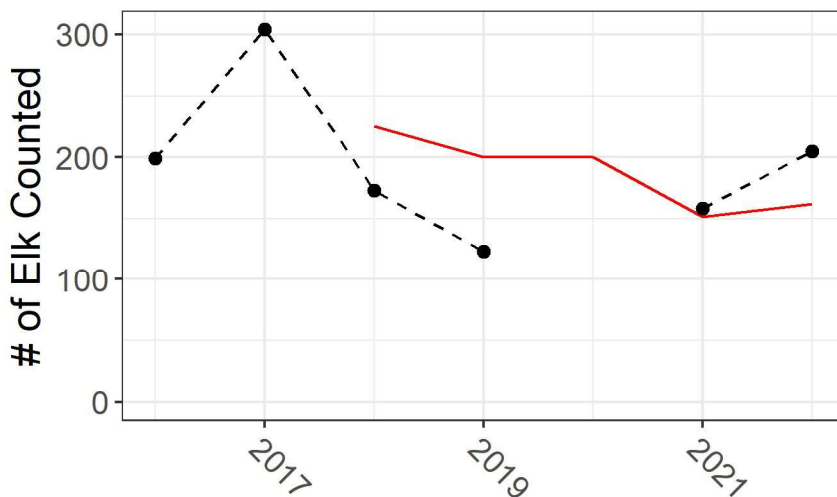
Bitterroot/Clark Fork Elk Management Unit

Management Challenges:

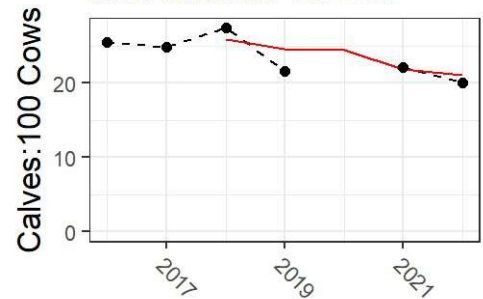
- Inaccessible private land
- Safety concerns (flat land, proximity to homes/businesses)
- Cultural significance as an archery-only area
- Ability to effectively harvest elk with weapons limitations due to safety concerns

Current Population Status & Trend

Total Elk Counted- HD 260



Recruitment- HD 260



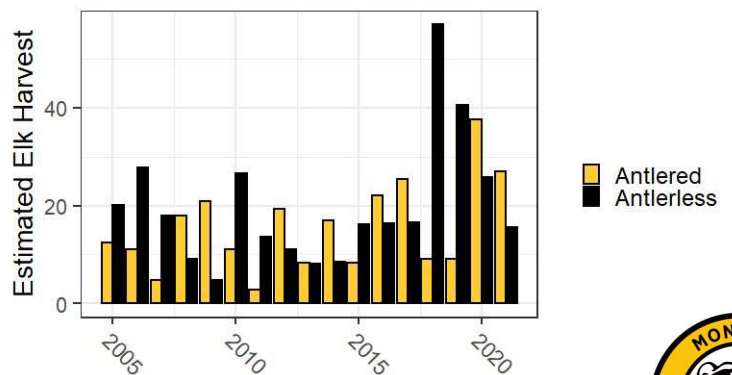
Most of HD 260 is river bottom private land, with few bulls that reside there.

Points show observations from survey flights and the solid red line shows a 3-year moving average.

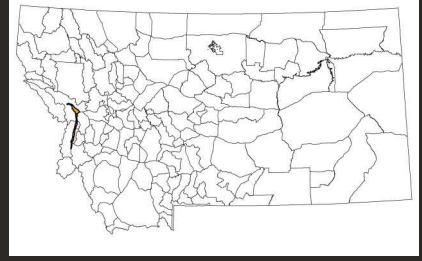
Hunter Effort and Harvest Statistics

Hunting District	License Year	Hunters	Hunter Days
260	2006	332	2,605
	2008	345	3,048
	2010	278	2,196
	2012	202	1,467
	2014	192	1,184
	2016	335	2,984
	2018	348	3,539
	2020	413	3,164

Elk Harvest- HD 260



HD 260



Bitterroot/Clark Fork Elk Management Unit

Objective: Manage toward elk population size and demographic targets

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain spring aerial survey counts between 0-100 elk observed	Most recent elk count is within Goal range for population size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlerless harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas
	If outside Goal range, population is trending toward Goal range	
NO BULL RATIO GOAL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas

Objective: Maintain an acceptable elk distribution

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Minimize year-round residency of elk	Number of resident elk is 0 or decreasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use season types that accommodate elk harvest on private land • Work with private landowners to increase hunting access • Special weapons opportunities • Explore options to implement rifle opportunities where safe

Objective: Provide public elk recreation opportunities

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Balance safety concerns with harvest opportunities	Minimal/no safety issues during hunting season	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special weapons opportunities

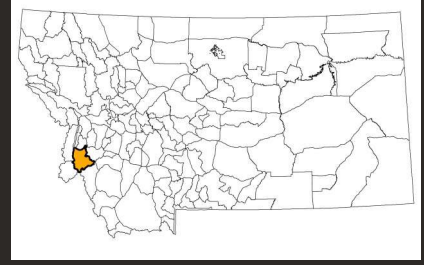


HD 270

Size: 664 mi²

Primary Habitat: Forest

Public Ownership: 85%



East Fork Bitterroot Elk Management Unit

District Summary

Hunting District 270 is located in the southeast Bitterroot Valley, encompassing the upper Bitterroot River watershed (excluding the upper West Fork) and the southern end of the Sapphire Mountain Range, as well as the northwestern slopes of the Pintler Mountains. It is bounded by the Continental Divide on the southeast, the West Fork-East Fork Bitterroot hydrologic divide on the southwest, US Highway 93 on the northwest, Skalkaho Highway on the north, and the Bitterroot-Rock Creek watershed divide on the east. Hunting District 270 supports an abundant elk population, a significant portion of which migrate from summer range in adjacent hunting districts during the fall.

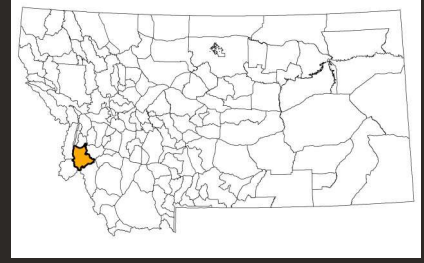
This HD is comprised of 85% public and 15% private land. The Bitterroot National Forest administers the majority, although 4% of the total area in HD270 is Montana State Trust Land (mostly represented by the 11,774-acre Sula State Forest in French Basin). The 148 mi² Sapphire Wilderness Study Area spans both sides of the Bitterroot-Rock Creek hydrologic divide to encompass the northeastern portion of HD 270. The southeastern portion contains about a quarter of the 248 mi² Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness.

Outside of wilderness areas, the public land in HD 270 contains moderate to high road densities; 83% of the HD is within 1 mile of open public roads during hunting seasons. In cooperation with FWP, the Bitterroot National Forest applied several seasonal road closures intended to increase elk security along migration routes during rifle season; these closures include routes between HD 270 and HD 321, and from high elevation summer range within HD 270 to winter range in French Basin. Currently, three Block Management Areas provide 2,210 acres of private land hunting access. The 1,170-acre Lazy J Cross Block Management Area is held under a conservation easement with the Bitter Root Land Trust, but with perpetual hunting access managed by FWP. This Block Management Area is prime winter range in French Basin, with a high level of use by both hunters and elk, often leading to conflict.

Due to the size, accessibility, habitat quality, and population of elk, both elk harvest (especially antlered bulls) and hunter pressure in HD 270 (measured as total number of hunters) is consistently among the highest in the state. Past management has focused on maximizing hunting opportunity for both antlered and antlerless elk, while managing crowding issues and preventing overharvest/shoot-out situations related to the timing of migration and severe weather events. It is possible that the current high elk population is approaching the carrying capacity of the winter and/or summer range and managing this population will become increasingly important especially given the habitat needs of competing and culturally significant ungulate species such as bighorn sheep and mule deer.



HD 270

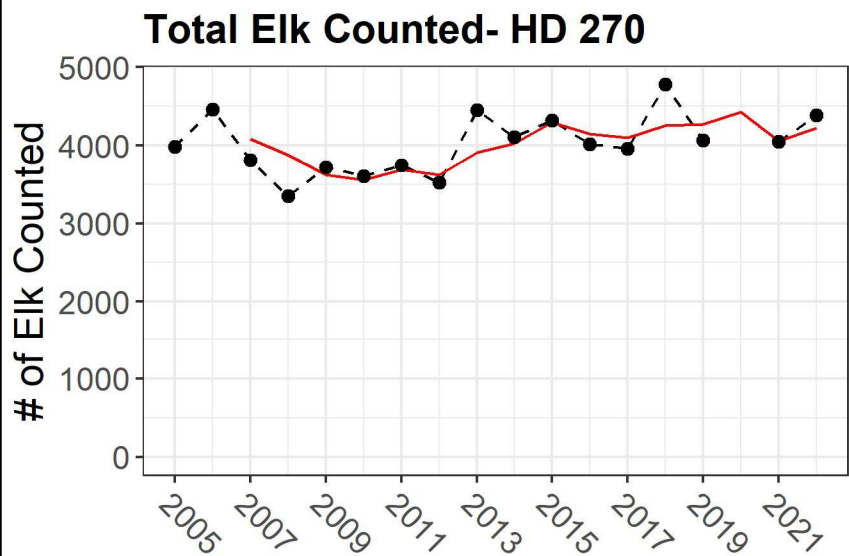


East Fork Bitterroot Elk Management Unit

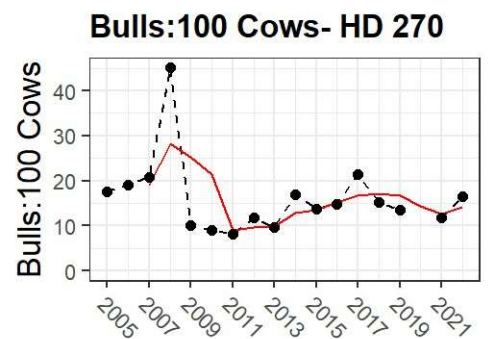
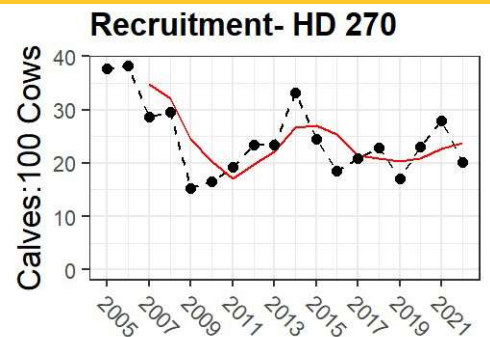
Management Challenges:

- Hunter crowding and conflict especially during rifle season, with a history of shoot-out situations in key winter range areas
- Difficulty in harvesting antlerless elk on inaccessible private lands, and subsequent game damage
- Conflicting habitat needs with important mule deer and bighorn sheep herds
- Elk security challenges outside of wilderness areas, particularly in regard to migration onto winter range during hunting season

Current Population Status & Trend

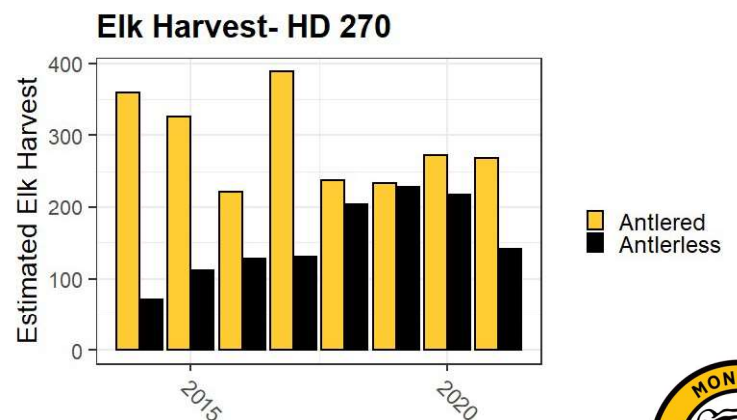


Points show observations from survey flights and the solid red line shows the average of the 3 most recent surveys.

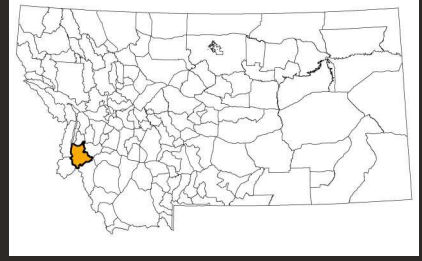


Hunter Effort and Harvest Statistics

Hunting District	License Year	Hunters	Hunter Days
270	2014	2,488	19,278
	2016	2,594	21,719
	2018	2,875	22,751
	2020	2,731	23,936



HD 270



East Fork Bitterroot Elk Management Unit

Objective: Manage toward elk population size and demographic targets

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain spring aerial survey counts between 3,600-4,400 elk observed	3-year average of elk counts is within Goal range for population size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlerless harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas • Consider expanding carnivore hunting opportunities to boost elk survival when below population Goal and/or recruitment threshold
	3-year average recruitment ≥ 20 calves:100 cow when below Goal range	
Bull:cow ratio is $\geq 10:100$	3-year average bull: cow ratio is meeting or exceeding minimum bull:cow threshold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with public land managers and private landowners to conserve and improve habitat • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security • Use antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas

Objective: Maintain an acceptable elk distribution

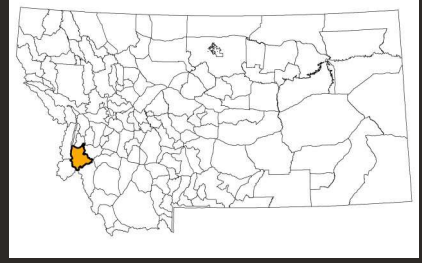
Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain elk distribution across landownerships with available habitat throughout the year	Proportion of year-round resident (non-migratory) elk on private land is stable or decreasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security • Work with private landowners to maintain or increase hunting access • Use public/private land-specific harvest regulations to distribute harvest

(Continued on next page)



HD 270

East Fork Bitterroot Elk Management Unit



Objective: Provide public elk recreation opportunities

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Reduce hunter crowding	Maintain current elk hunter numbers unless additional access opportunities are created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with stakeholders to find creative solutions • Use antlerless and antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structures and/or quotas • Use hunting season structure that does not exacerbate crowding
	No shoot-out incidents (uncontrolled shooting at visible elk congregations by large groups of hunters) in popular areas	
Provide opportunity to harvest antlerless elk	Hunting regulations maintain antlerless hunting opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide PTHFV/youth antlerless opportunities
Maximize bull hunting opportunity	3-year average bull harvest is within 20% of the 10-year average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with private landowners to maintain or increase hunting access • Adjust quota • Maintain youth archery opportunity on general license
Increase or maintain harvest success rates	Maintain B-License success rate $\geq 25\%$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security

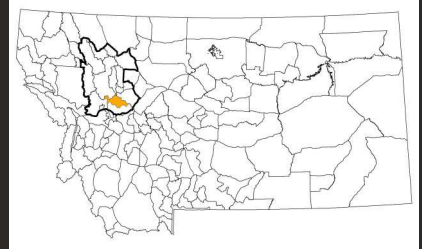


HD 280

Size: 305 mi²

Primary Habitat: Forest

Public Ownership: 100%



Bob Marshall Elk Management Unit

District Summary

Hunting District 280 is located in the northeast portion of the Blackfoot watershed at the southern end of the Lewis and Clark Mountains and the Scapegoat Wilderness Area. The HD's northern boundary follows the Blackfoot watershed hydrological divide from the Landers Fork in the east to Monture Creek in the west. Most of the southern boundary follows the divide along the wilderness boundary. Except for a few minor private inholdings this district is composed entirely of public land administered by the Lolo and Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forests.

This district is remote and rugged; elevations range from 5,000 feet along Monture Creek to 9,400 feet on Red Mountain, the highest peak in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. The roadless nature of the district requires foot or stock for access. Approximately 77% of the district is composed of the Scapegoat Wilderness Area, with an additional 22% USFS Inventoried Roadless designation. This district is managed for a traditional backcountry rifle hunting experience during the rutting season starting September 15.

Hunting District 280 has a complex fire history, with more than half the district experiencing wildfire since 1988. This includes four large fires burning greater than 10,000 acres (1988; 2000; 2007; 2017). Since 2000, a wildfire 3,000 acres or larger has occurred approximately every 4-5 years. Variation in burn severity and succession result in a complex mosaic of variable elk forage and security habitat. This area also contains excellent habitat for a rich suite of carnivore species that may influence elk behavior and limit populations and productivity.

This is a high snowfall area resulting in little suitable winter range. Consequently, most elk summering here migrate in early winter to the Blackfoot and Clearwater valleys or the Eastern Front of the Rockies. Based on radio telemetry data, up to 50% of the elk wintering in HDs 281, eastern 285, and 422 migrate into HD 280 in early summer and accomplish the reverse migration in early winter. Timing of annual migration can be highly variable and influences the challenge of finding elk.

Due to the lack of winter range, elk are not counted in this district. Rather, trends in neighboring HDs (281, 285, and 422) in combination with bull harvest are used to monitor population trends. Elk harvest in HD 280 has declined since 2005 and currently is more than 25% below the long-term average.

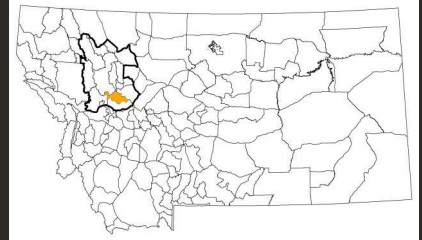
Management Challenges:

- Information gaps regarding roles of habitat and predation on elk population dynamics
- Ability to conduct management interventions (e.g., habitat improvements and carnivore harvest) in a district with such a large percentage of designated Wilderness and roadless area
- Abundant large carnivores (wolves, mountain lions, black bears, and grizzly bears), which may limit elk populations and productivity even with minimal human hunting pressure



HD 280

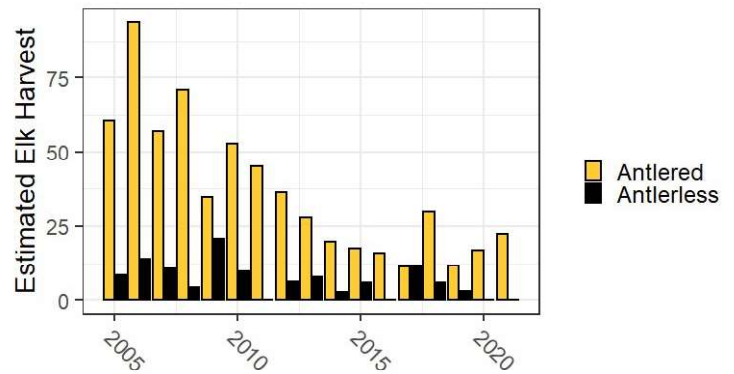
Bob Marshall Elk Management Unit



Hunter Effort and Harvest Statistics

Hunting District	License Year	Hunters	Hunter Days
280	2006	507	3,018
	2008	364	2,518
	2010	322	1,823
	2012	247	1,630
	2014	232	1,529
	2016	236	1,485
	2018	198	1,227
	2020	181	1,197

Elk Harvest- HD 280



No population demographic Objective; Elk population surveys are not conducted in this HD because there are few wintering elk

No distribution Objective; HD is entirely a backcountry/wilderness district

Objective: Provide public elk recreation opportunities

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Provide opportunity to harvest antlerless elk	3-year average antlerless harvest is within or above 20 % of the 10-year average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early backcountry rifle season with youth opportunity
Maximize bull hunting opportunity	3-year average bull harvest is within 20% of the 10-year average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlerless and antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structures and/or quotas • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security

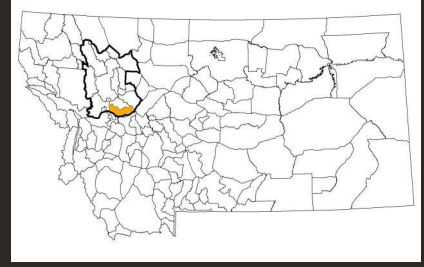


HD 281

Size: 379 mi²

Primary Habitat: Forest

Public Ownership: 75%



Bob Marshall Elk Management Unit

District Summary

Hunting District 281 is located in the northern region of the Blackfoot watershed at the southern end of the Lewis and Clark Mountains. The HD's western boundary is Monture Creek Road north of the town of Ovando. Most of the northern boundary follows the Scapegoat Wilderness boundary and State Route 200 generally defines the southern boundary. The HD's shape largely captures the transition from rugged higher elevation montane zones to the grassland and agricultural lands found on the floor of the Blackfoot valley.

This HD is primarily public land (75%) administered by the Lolo and Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forests (80%) and the State of Montana (12%). Access to elk hunting is most significantly affected by the remote character of the USFS lands in the northern one-third of the district. These higher-elevation areas are either Wilderness or USFS Inventoried Roadless Areas limiting motorized access. There are currently more than 44,000 acres of private land enrolled in FWP's Block Management Program, which provides public access to private lands during the fall hunting season.

Roughly one-third of the district has experienced wildfire since 2003. Four large wildfires (>5,000 acres) burned in 2017 along most of the northern boundary. Variation in burn severity and succession processes post-fire result in a complex mosaic of variable elk forage and security habitat. Hunting District 281 also contains excellent habitat for a rich suite of carnivore species that may influence elk behavior and limit populations and productivity.

This district is in a high snowfall region which can result in marginal quality winter range during heavy snow years. Although elk in HD 281 exhibit a mix of resident and migratory strategies, most elk are migratory. These elk either winter in HD 281 or use the district as spring transitional range while migrating from winter ranges in neighboring districts (e.g., HD 422 and HD 290) to summer ranges in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Elk are surveyed during spring in this district; counts and objectives should account for variation in winter severity and the presence of seasonal migrants from neighboring districts.

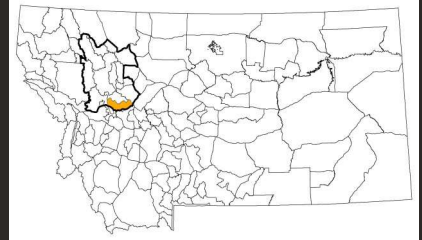
Management Challenges:

- Incorporating annual variation in winter snowpack (i.e., winter range use) and transitional use of district into spring survey data trends
- Minimizing harvest of elk post-migration (outside the district and on winter ranges) without negatively impacting opportunity and management objectives in neighboring districts
- Limited public winter range and heavy annual snowfall complicates potential for improving winter range habitat



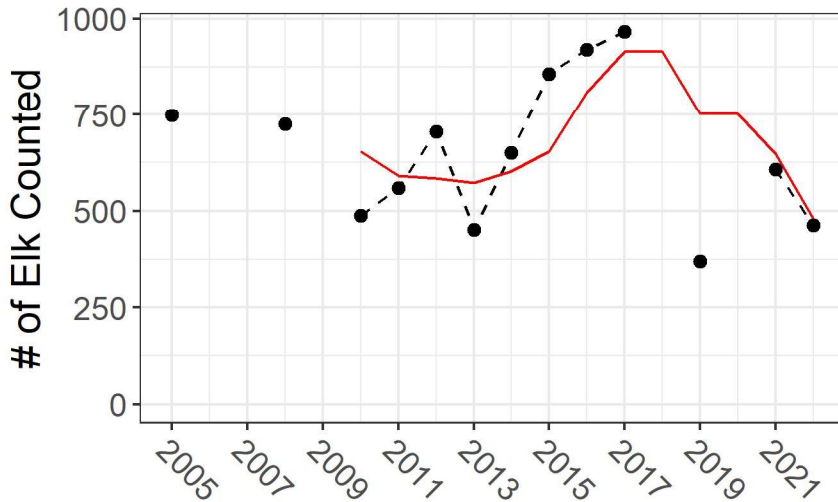
HD 281

Bob Marshall Elk Management Unit



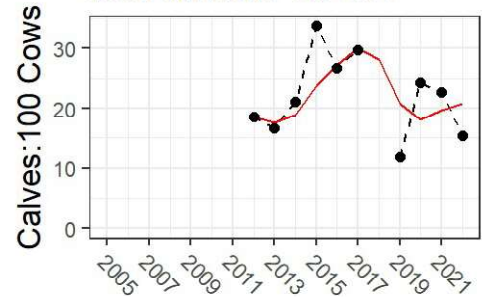
Current Population Status & Trend

Total Elk Counted- HD 281

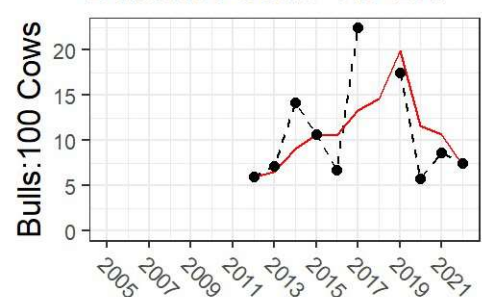


Points show observations from survey flights and the solid red line shows a 3-year moving average.

Recruitment- HD 281



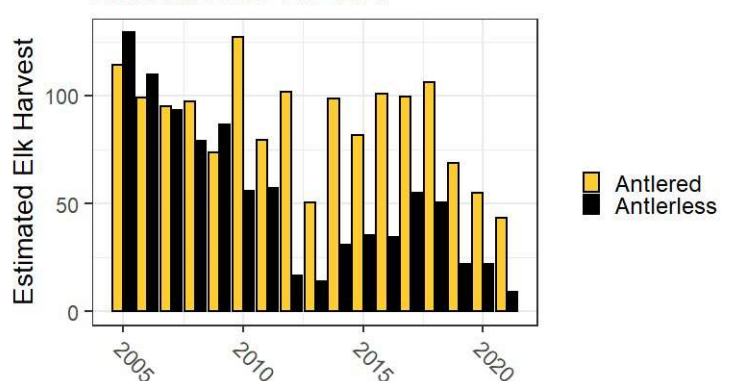
Bulls:100 Cows- HD 281



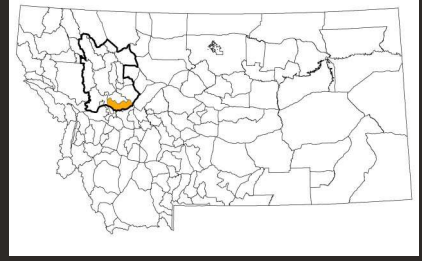
Hunter Effort and Harvest Statistics

Hunting District	License Year	Hunters	Hunter Days
281	2006	1,332	8,995
	2008	1,838	13,952
	2010	1,431	12,131
	2012	1,381	9,363
	2014	1,538	11,739
	2016	1,532	11,271
	2018	1,324	10,062
	2020	1,119	8,728

Elk Harvest- HD 281



HD 281



Bob Marshall Elk Management Unit

Objective: Manage toward elk population size and demographic targets

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain spring aerial survey counts between 500-700 elk observed	3-year average of elk counts is within Goal range for population size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlerless harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas • Consider expanding carnivore hunting opportunities to boost elk survival when below population Goal and/or recruitment threshold • Work with public land managers and private landowners to conserve and improve habitat • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security
	3-year average recruitment ≥ 20 calves:100 cows when below Goal range	
	If outside Goal range, population is trending toward Goal range	
Bull:cow ratio is $\geq 10:100$	3-year average bull: cow ratio is meeting or exceeding minimum bull:cow threshold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas

Objective: Maintain an acceptable elk distribution

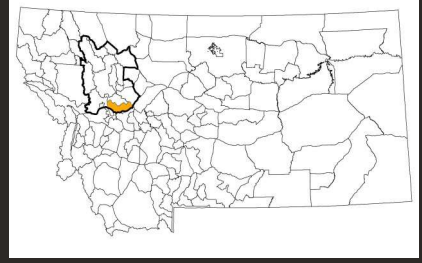
Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain elk distribution across landownerships with available habitat throughout the year	Proportion of elk across the 3 subunits (Monture-Arrastra;Arrastra-Beaver Cr.;Beaver Cr-Rogers Pass) is within 10% of the 10-year average during spring green up aerial surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with land management agencies to improve habitat conditions for elk on public lands • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security

(Continued on next page)



HD 281

Bob Marshall Elk Management Unit



Objective: Provide public elk recreation opportunities

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Reduce hunter crowding	No complaints of hunter pressure on landowner fence lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with private landowners to reduce elk refuge areas that exist at start of general rifle season
Provide opportunity to harvest antlerless elk	Hunting regulations maintain antlerless hunting opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with private landowners to maintain or increase hunting access • Use antlerless and antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structures and/or quotas
Maximize bull hunting opportunity	3-year average bull harvest is within 20% of the 10-year average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide youth antlerless opportunities • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security

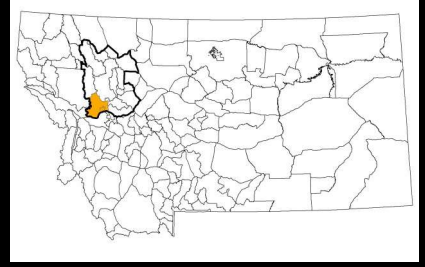


HDs 282 & 285

Size: 703 mi²

Primary Habitat: Forest

Public Ownership: 74%



Bob Marshall Elk Management Unit

District Summary

Hunting District 282, also known as the Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA district, is located in the Blackfoot and Clearwater watersheds between the Swan, Rattlesnake, and Garnet mountain ranges near the towns of Seeley Lake and Ovando. This district is unique in that most its ownership (86%) falls within the Blackfoot-Clearwater Wildlife Management Area (WMA). State Routes MT-200 and MT-83 define the southern and eastern boundaries, and Woodworth Road defines the eastern and northern boundaries. In the northeast, the district extends north of Woodworth Road to the Cottonwood Lakes-Monture Road between Cottonwood and Dry Cottonwood creeks.

Although a few elk may spend most of their time in HD 282, the majority of elk using this district are migratory and use HD 282 as their winter range. Collar data obtained during a 2019-2020 study indicated that elk using summer range from 8 different HDs (130, 150, 280, 281, 285, 290, 292, and 298) used HD 282 as part of their winter range (Millsbaugh et al. 2022). Furthermore, few elk that utilize HD 282 do so exclusively for their entire winter range, with most elk using neighboring districts HD 292 and HD 285 in addition to HD 282. Individuals showed high annual variation in the amount of time spent in HD 282 versus neighboring districts across winter months.

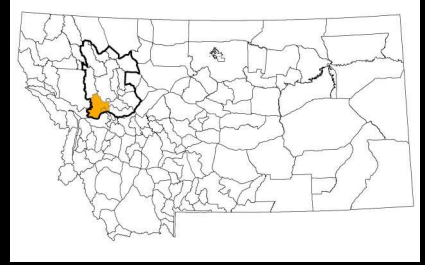
Elk are extremely vulnerable to harvest when they congregate on winter range following early winter snowstorms, and the timing of arrival on the WMA varies annually. Additionally, higher hunting pressure outside the WMA lowers elk security and can result in early migration onto winter range. This increases grazing pressure on limited winter range resources and decreases hunting opportunity outside the WMA. Conversely, too much access within HD 282 can drive elk off the WMA, onto adjacent private lands outside the district, resulting in game-damage issues on private lands and reduced hunting opportunity within the WMA.

To meet these challenges, FWP's management utilizes a combination of limited tag opportunities and variable season lengths to influence hunter numbers, access, and harvest. Unlike many districts that manage for either bull opportunity or older age-class bulls, HD 282 is largely managed for the uniqueness of the hunting experience on the WMA.

Annual surveys are conducted during winter and as early as possible before snow depth increases and elk move into more timbered country or begin using adjacent districts. The largely migratory nature of the elk using HD 282 and fluidity of movement with winter range in neighboring districts must be accounted for when interpreting survey trends. (Continued on next page)



HDs 282 & 285



Bob Marshall Elk Management Unit

District Summary

Hunting District 285 lies in the Blackfoot and Clearwater watersheds, and includes parts of the Mission, Swan and Rattlesnake mountain ranges. This HD is bounded on its southern end by MT-200 and the Blackfoot-Clearwater Wildlife Management Area (HD 282). In the north, HD 285 follows the Bob Marshall Wilderness boundary and hydrological divide between the Clearwater and Swan watersheds. The western border follows the Flathead Reservation and Rattlesnake National Recreation Area boundaries and eastern portion is bounded by Monture Creek Road.

Most of HD 285 is publicly accessible during hunting season. Access to elk is most significantly affected by the remote character of National Forest lands in the northern parts of the district. Approximately 13.5% of the district is USFS Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA). The southwestern portion of HD 285, which includes the former HD 283 East (Gold-Belmont), was historically extensively roaded for timber harvest; however, many roads were closed to motorized vehicles shortly after Plum Creek Timber Co. purchased lands in the mid-1990s. The northwest portion of HD 285 contains the Marshall Creek Wildlife Management Area, covering 24,798 acres and BLM and TNC hold a continuous block of land north of Potomac providing public access to more than 137,000 acres. Additionally, there are more than 30,000 acres enrolled in FWP's Block Management program.

Most habitat is elk summer and transitional range, with suitable winter range falling along the valley bottoms and south-facing hillsides. Elk are mostly migratory, either using the plentiful summer range within this large district, or migrating longer distance to summer in neighboring HDs (e.g. Hunting District 280, HD 281). Thus, the abundance and location of elk during the hunting season will depend on migration timing, which varies annually with winter snow accumulation.

Roughly one-third of HD 285 has experienced wildfire since 2000. This includes four large wildfires burning more than 10,000 acres in the district (Mineral-Primm Fire; Jocko Lakes Fire; Liberty Fire; Rice Ridge Fire). Variation in burn severity and succession have resulted in a complex mosaic of variable elk forage and security habitat. Hunting District 285 also contains excellent habitat for a rich suite of carnivore species that may influence elk behavior and limit populations and productivity.

Due to the heavily timbered habitat in this district and migratory nature of the elk, surveys are conducted during early winter in HD 282 and considered reflective of population dynamics in HD 285. In the southern portion of the district (Gold-Belmont) elk are surveyed during spring green-up with objectives considered separately from the rest of HD 285.

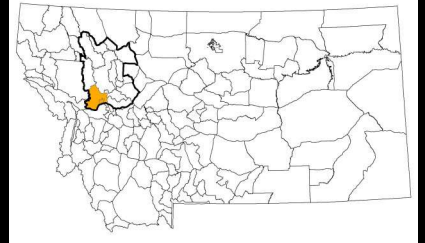
Management Challenges:

- Vulnerability of elk to harvest because the HD 282 is mostly winter range
- Hunter pressure driving elk off WMA (HD 282) onto private lands and subsequent game damage
- Abundant large carnivores (wolves, mountain lions, black bears, and grizzly bears), which may limit elk populations and productivity even with minimal human hunting pressure
- Mitigating chronically low recruitment, including identifying causative factors (e.g., predation) and efficacy of management actions to influence these factors
- High levels of access/low security in southern portion of HD 285 (Gold-Belmont)
- Annual variation in migration and hunter pressure can create early arrival on winter range (HD 282) limiting hunter opportunity in northern portions of HD 285



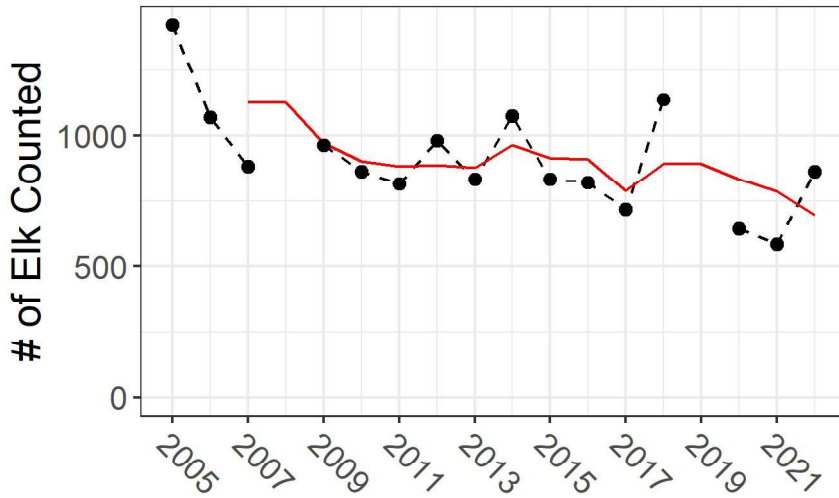
HDs 282 & 285

Bob Marshall Elk Management Unit



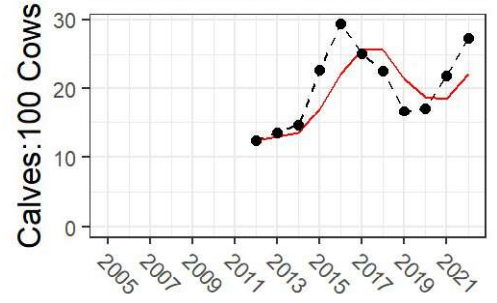
Current Population Status & Trend

Total Elk Counted- HDs 282 & 285

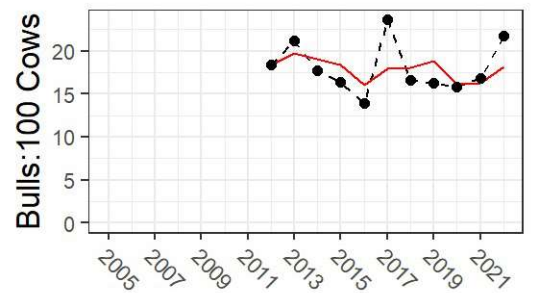


Points show observations from survey flights and the solid red line shows a 3-year moving average.

Recruitment- HD 282 & 285



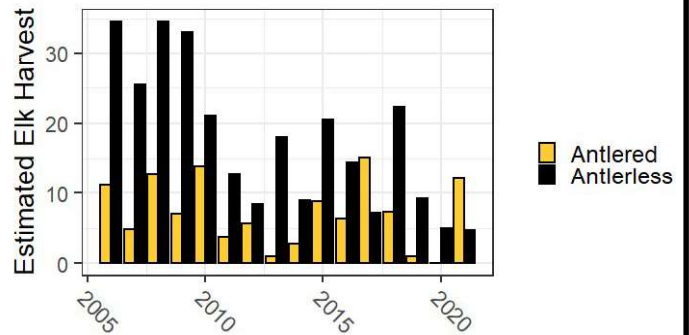
Bulls:100 Cows- HD 282 & 285



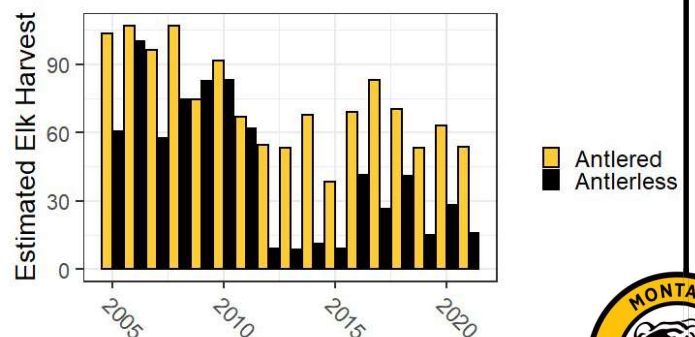
Hunter Effort and Harvest Statistics

Hunting District	License Year	Hunters	Hunter Days
282	2006	303	2,084
	2008	288	1,520
	2010	208	1,353
	2012	146	932
	2014	171	1,072
	2016	203	1,532
	2018	233	1,534
	2020	211	1,366
285	2006	1,911	13,533
	2008	2,120	15,801
	2010	1,715	15,239
	2012	1,660	11,028
	2014	1,573	11,279
	2016	1,508	11,532
	2018	1,421	11,563
	2020	1,377	11,203

Elk Harvest- HD 282



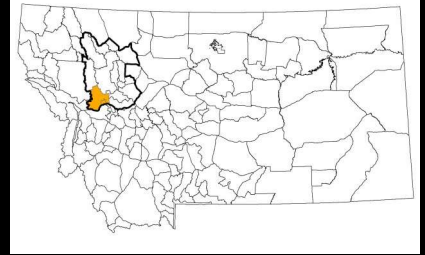
Elk Harvest- Former HD 285



Disclaimer: HD 285 had a boundary change in 2022; harvest and hunter effort data displayed may not be directly comparable to data obtained after 2021.



HDs 282 & 285



Bob Marshall Elk Management Unit

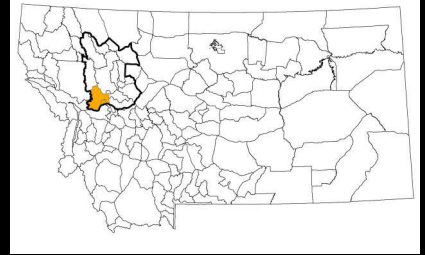
Objective: Manage toward elk population size and demographic targets

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain annual aerial survey counts between 1,140-1,460 elk observed in HDs 282/285	3-year average of elk counts is within Goal range for population size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlerless harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas • Consider expanding carnivore hunting opportunities to boost elk survival when below population Goal and/or recruitment threshold • Work with public land managers and private landowners to conserve and improve habitat • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security • Use antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas
	If outside Goal range, population is trending toward Goal range	
	3-year average recruitment ≥ 20 calves:100 cow when below Goal range	
Maintain winter aerial survey counts between 900-1,100 elk observed in HD 282	3-year average of elk counts is within Goal range for population size	
	If outside Goal range, population is trending toward Goal range	
	3-year average recruitment ≥ 20 calves:100 cow when below Goal range	
Maintain spring aerial survey counts between 240-360 elk observed in HD 285 (Gold-Belmont)	3-year average of elk counts is within Goal range for population size	
	If outside Goal range, population is trending toward Goal range	
	3-year average recruitment ≥ 20 calves:100 cow when below Goal range	
Bull:cow ratio is $\geq 10:100$	3-year average bull: cow ratio is meeting or exceeding minimum bull:cow threshold	

(Continued on next page)



HDs 282 & 285



Bob Marshall Elk Management Unit

Objective: Maintain an acceptable elk distribution

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain elk distribution across landownerships with available habitat throughout the year	Proportion of year-round resident (non-migratory) elk on private land is stable or decreasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with land management agencies to improve habitat conditions for elk on public lands • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security
Maximize elk use of Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA	Stable to increasing proportion of total elk counted are on the Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA during the winter aerial survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use public/private land-specific harvest regulations to distribute harvest • Work with private landowners to increase hunting access • Habitat improvement projects on Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA

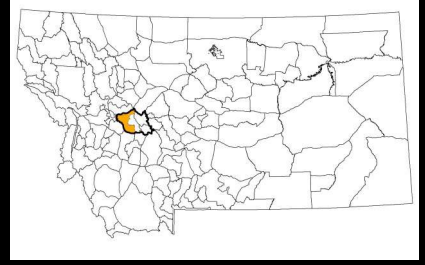
Objective: Provide public elk recreation opportunities

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Provide opportunity to harvest antlerless elk	Hunting regulations maintain antlerless hunting opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide PTHFV/youth antlerless opportunities in HD 285
Maximize bull hunting opportunity	3-year average bull harvest is within 20% of the 10-year average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with private landowners to maintain or increase hunting access • Use antlered and antlerless harvest opportunity matrices to adjust season structure and/or quotas
Promote hunter recruitment and retention	Youth hunters have a special hunting opportunity relative to non-youth hunters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide youth-only limited special permit opportunity in HD 282 • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security



HDs 284 & 293

Size: 461 mi²
Primary Habitat: Forest
Public Ownership: 55%



Granite Butte Elk Management Unit

District Summary

Hunting District 284, also known as the Lincoln Archery District, lies along the Blackfoot River and adjacent to the town of Lincoln in Lewis and Clark County. This district is composed mostly (85%) of private residential and agricultural lands between Lincoln Gulch in the west and Landers Fork River in the east. District boundaries follow a complex mix of roads and rivers and much of the northern boundary does not follow any clear landscape or ownership features, requiring careful understanding of one's location when hunting. Additionally, the area around the town of Lincoln (Section 24, T14N, R9W) is closed to all big game hunting. Public access can be found on State and USFS lands and there are currently 2,223 acres enrolled in FWP's Block Management Program covering roughly 20% of the HD.

Given the very small size of this district, elk using HD 284 have the potential to cross district boundaries during all times of year. During the general season, the archery-only status of this district can create a situation of "relative security," or "refugia" compared with surrounding rifle districts which receive higher hunter pressure. Accordingly, elk can congregate in HD 284 causing game damage issues and a loss of hunting opportunity in surrounding districts.

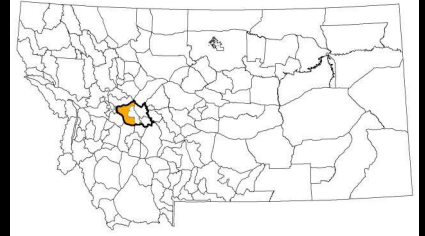
Elk in HD 284 are not surveyed as their own district. Rather, animals wintering in the southern portion of the district south of the Blackfoot river along the HD 284/293 boundary are incorporated in the HD 293 survey conducted during winter.

Hunting District 293 lies within the 1,113 mi² Granite Butte Elk Management Unit (EMU) along with HDs 284, 339 and 343. This EMU extends west from the Missouri River to Mineral Hill at the junction of State Route 200 and State Route 141, from Avon to East Helena along US Highway 12 and north on I-15 to Route 453 to the Missouri River and north to Holter Dam. Hunting District 293 extends from Rogers Pass south to MacDonald Pass, south of State Route 200, east of State Route 141 and north of U.S. Highway 12.

The majority of HD 293 is public land (59%) and access is generally good, though remote areas far from motorized routes are few, with approximately 97% of elk habitat occurring within one mile of a road currently open to motorized travel. Roadless Areas in excess of 250 mi² on the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest include Specimen Creek, Anaconda Hill, Crater Mountain, Ogden Mountain, and Nevada Mountain. Although most these areas provide quality elk habitat, in many cases the majority of the acreage in these roadless areas are within 1 mile of an existing road. The Nevada Lake Wildlife Management Area (1,523 acres) provides opportunity for walk-in elk hunting. Additionally, there are more than 43,000 acres of private land enrolled in FWP's Block Management Program, providing public access during the fall hunting season. Over 12,000 acres of private lands to the south of Lincoln along the Forest service boundary are protected from further development through conservation easements. (Continued on next page)



HDs 284 & 293



Granite Butte Elk Management Unit

District Summary Continued

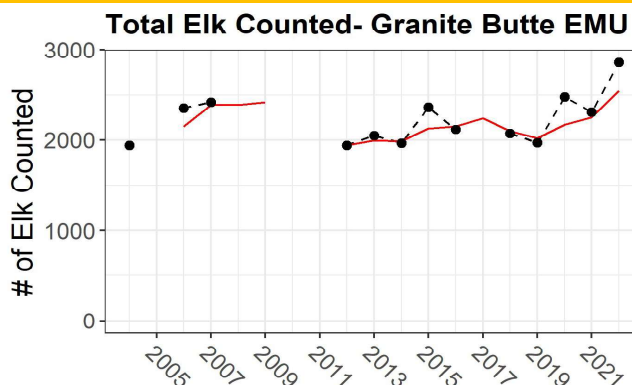
Habitat and landownership vary on a north-south gradient. The northern two-thirds of the district are primarily higher-elevation forested public lands with parcels of relatively small private lands in the narrow valley bottoms. On its southern edge, large open hillsides and wide valley bottoms are mostly large private ranches. Several are currently enrolled FWP's Block Management Program and large expanses of public land exist in the higher elevations providing good access to elk. These north-south differences are reflected in elk conflicts on private land, which are a management concern in the south but relatively absent from the northern parts of the district.

Elk using HD 293 exhibit a mix of resident and migratory strategies. While some elk will winter in HD 293, a significant portion will migrate east across the Continental Divide to winter in HDs 343 and 339 to take advantage of east slope Chinook winds. The proportion of elk exhibiting this behavior varies annually and is driven by the amount and timing of snow accumulation during early winter. Annual surveys are conducted during winter, and therefore population trends and demographic objectives should be evaluated at both the HD and EMU scales. Inferences at the district level should incorporate winter severity indices and patterns for the other districts in the EMU.

Management Challenges:

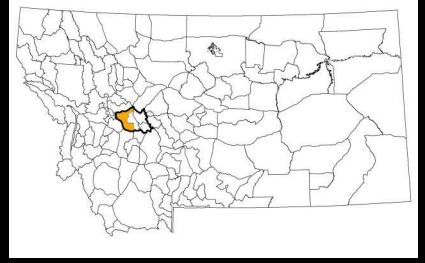
- Recurrent game damage issues in a few key places that are difficult to manage with archery-only methods (HD 283)
- Congregations of elk on private land causing crop damage (second cutting of hay) prior to archery season in the southern portion of the district (HD 293)
- Difficulty in accounting for annual variation in migratory patterns of elk and their exchange with HDs 343 and 339
- Sightability during aerial surveys in heavily timbered winter range pockets in the northern portion of district (HD 293)
- Abundant large carnivores (wolves, mountain lions, black bears, and grizzly bears), which may limit elk populations and productivity even with minimal human hunting pressure (HD 293)

Current Population Status & Trend: Granite Butte EMU



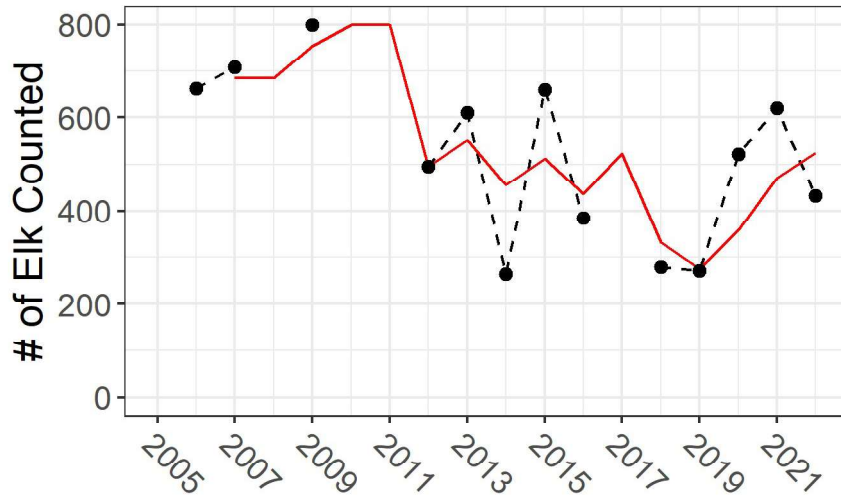
HDs 284 & 293

Granite Butte Elk Management Unit

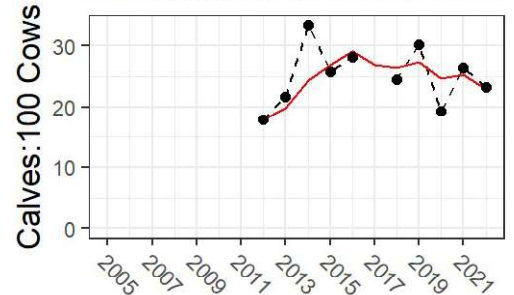


Current Population Status & Trend

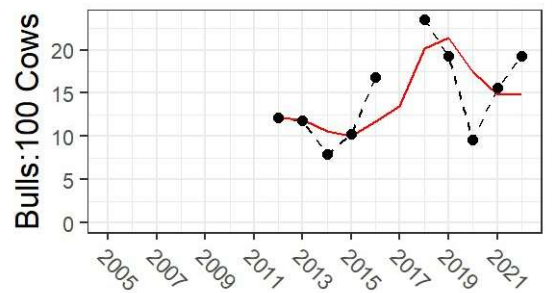
Total Elk Counted- HDs 284 & 293



Recruitment- HDs 284 & 293



Bulls:100 Cows- HDs 284 & 293

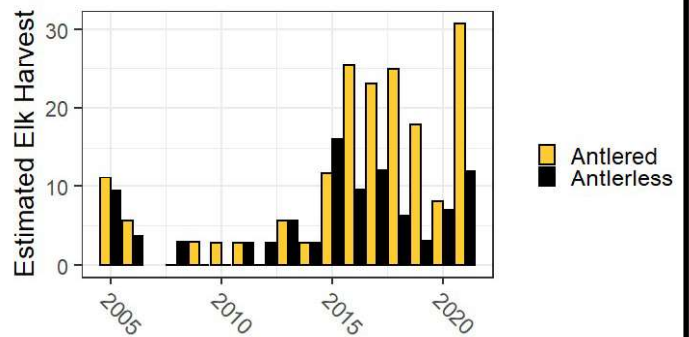


Points show observations from survey flights and the solid red line shows the average of the 3 most recent surveys.

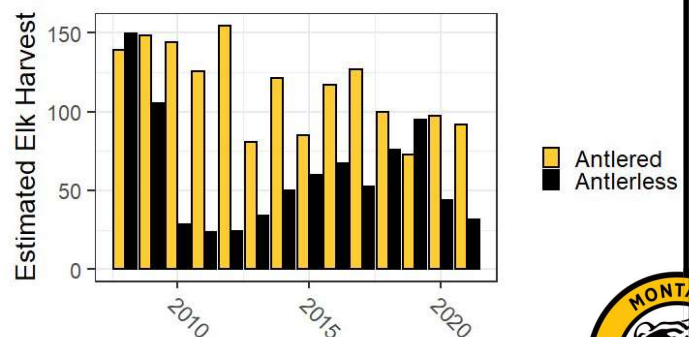
Hunter Effort and Harvest Statistics

Hunting District	License Year	Hunters	Hunter Days
284	2006	124	778
	2008	93	702
	2010	138	817
	2012	88	479
	2014	187	1,057
	2016	429	3,328
	2018	287	1,967
	2020	317	2,477
293	2008	1924	14,358
	2010	1426	10,783
	2012	1594	10,941
	2014	1781	12,587
	2016	1450	11,045
	2018	1427	10,315
	2020	1239	9,199

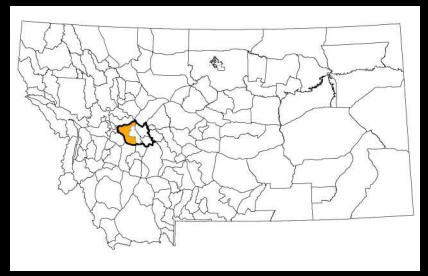
Elk Harvest- HD 284



Elk Harvest- HD 293



HDs 284 & 293



Granite Butte Elk Management Unit

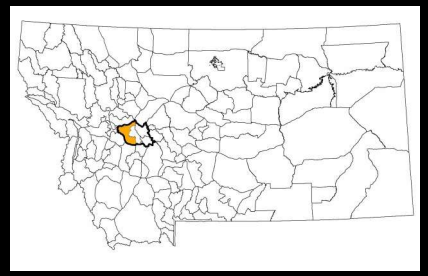
Objective: Manage toward elk population size and demographic targets

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain aerial survey counts between 1,800-3,500 elk observed in Granite Butte EMU	3-year average of elk counts is within Goal range for population size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlerless harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas • Consider expanding carnivore hunting opportunities to boost elk survival when below population Goal and/or recruitment threshold • Work with public land managers and private landowners to conserve and improve habitat • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security
Maintain winter aerial survey counts between 600-900 elk observed in HD 293	3-year average of elk counts is within Goal range for population size	
	If outside Goal range, population is trending toward Goal range 3-year average recruitment ≥ 20 calves:100 cow when below Goal range	
HD 293 : Bull:cow ratio is $\geq 10:100$	3-year average bull: cow ratio is meeting or exceeding minimum bull:cow threshold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security

(Continued on next page)



HDs 284 & 293



Granite Butte Elk Management Unit

Objective: Maintain an acceptable elk distribution

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain elk distribution across landownerships with available habitat throughout the year	Proportion of year-round resident (non-migratory) elk on private land is stable or decreasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with land management agencies to improve habitat conditions for elk on public lands • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security • Work with private landowners to maintain or increase hunting access • Use antlerless harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas • Use public/private land-specific harvest regulations to distribute harvest
Maximize elk use of Nevada Lake WMA	Presence of elk on WMA during winter aerial surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat improvement projects on Nevada Lake WMA

Objective: Provide public elk recreation opportunities

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Provide opportunity to harvest antlerless elk	Hunting regulations maintain antlerless hunting opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlerless and antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structures and/or quotas
Maximize bull hunting opportunity	3-year average bull harvest is within 20% of the 10-year average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide PTHFV/youth antlerless opportunities in HD 293

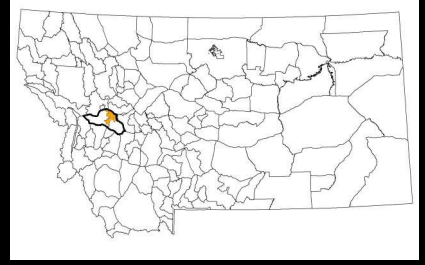


HDs 290 & 298

Size: 204 mi²

Primary Habitat: Grassland

Public Ownership: 10%



Garnet Elk Management Unit

District Summary

Hunting District 290, also known as the Helmville-Ovando Archery District, lies between the towns of Helmville and Ovando in Powell County. The district boundary is composed of the area defined by the Helmville-Ovando Road, Route 271, State Route 141, and State Route 200. The district contains the East-Ovando Archery Area, defined as all parts of the district west of the North Fork Blackfoot River.

Except for riparian areas, this district is mostly unforested and composed of private (83%) agricultural land that is generally not enrolled in FWP's Block Management Program. Public access can be found on the Aunt Molly Wildlife Management Area (1,182 acres), the Kleinschmidt Lake Wildlife Habitat Protection Area (322 acres), the Blackfoot Waterfowl Production Area (USFWS; 1,164 acres), and smaller parcels of DNRC and BLM lands (726 acres).

Hunting District 290 was historically an archery-only district but chronic game damage issues and over-objective elk numbers led to changes in antlerless elk opportunity in portions of the district. Given its small size, there is limited availability of winter range in the district, which is mostly located in the northwest portion of the district and associated with larger contiguous blocks of winter range in HDs 292 and 281. However, elk do use private agricultural lands during winter and game damage issues are an important concern in this HD. Elk wintering in this district are largely migratory using neighboring districts for summer range.

Due to the small size of this district, the shared boundary, and similarity of both being mostly private land, elk in HD 290 are surveyed together with HD 298 as a single survey unit (HD290/298). Surveys are conducted during early spring green-up prior to elk migration.

Hunting District 298, also known as the Ovando-Helmville District, is 152 mi² and lies in the Ovando and Helmville valleys in Powell County. The district was created in 2008 to address chronic game damage issues by carving out the private land portions of HDs 290, 291, and 292 within the valley. Thus, the district boundary mostly follows the private land/public land interface bound on the north by the Ovando Valley, on the east by the unofficially named "Nevada Mountains", and on the south and west by the Garnet Mountains. The district is 93% private land, with half of the public land residing on USFS in the northeast corner of the district west of the Nevada-Ogden Road which serves as the district boundary. The remaining public lands are primarily fishing access sites along the Blackfoot River and isolated parcels of State and BLM ownership. While this HD contains a substantial amount of open valley floor, it also contains higher elevation forested habitats, and transitional zones, that rise more than 1,000 feet from the valley floor. These areas are found along all but the northern district boundaries and are most abundant in the Murray and Douglas Creek Drainages. (Continued on next page)

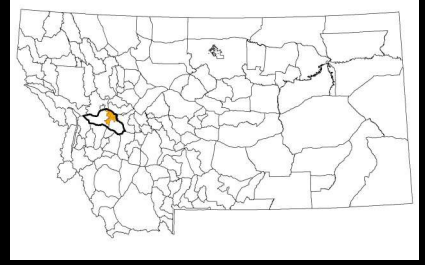


HDs 290 & 298

Size: 204 mi²

Primary Habitat: Grassland

Public Ownership: 10%



Garnet Elk Management Unit

District Summary Continued

Although the HD is primarily private land, access is generally good except for a few large ranches that currently do not provide public access. There are several large conservation easements covering 29,444 acres (30% of HD) which protect further development and allow for public access during fall hunting seasons. Additionally, there are over 8,550 acres enrolled in FWP's Block Management Program providing additional public access during hunting seasons.

Elk in HD 298 exhibit a mix of resident and migratory strategies, with resident elk taking advantage of the forage productivity that exists in the valley. Radio-collar studies show migratory exchange with HDs 292, 290, 293, and 291. Several adjacent HDs conduct elk surveys during winter, and therefore elk in HD 298 need to be surveyed during early spring green-up before elk migration begins to avoid counting elk that have already been surveyed in other districts. Surveys for HD 298 include the small archery district to the North (HD 290).

Managing elk to objective status in this district has been challenging and elk have been consistently over-objective since 2011. Thus, game damage issues are a persistent concern, though the use of shoulder seasons has proven to be an effective tool for reducing conflicts and building tolerance for elk.

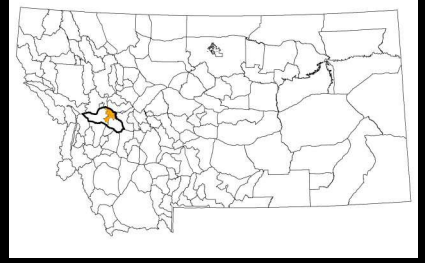
Management Challenges:

- Obtaining representative counts during spring surveys due to migratory nature of elk and timing of green-up flights
- Abundant large carnivores (wolves, mountain lions, black bears, and grizzly bears), which may limit elk populations and productivity even with minimal human hunting pressure
- Access to elk during hunting seasons (HD 290)
- Access to elk in a few key places (HD 298)
- Game damage issues due to limited winter range on non-agricultural land (HD 290)
- Achieving antlerless harvest at levels suitable to meet management objectives (HD 298)



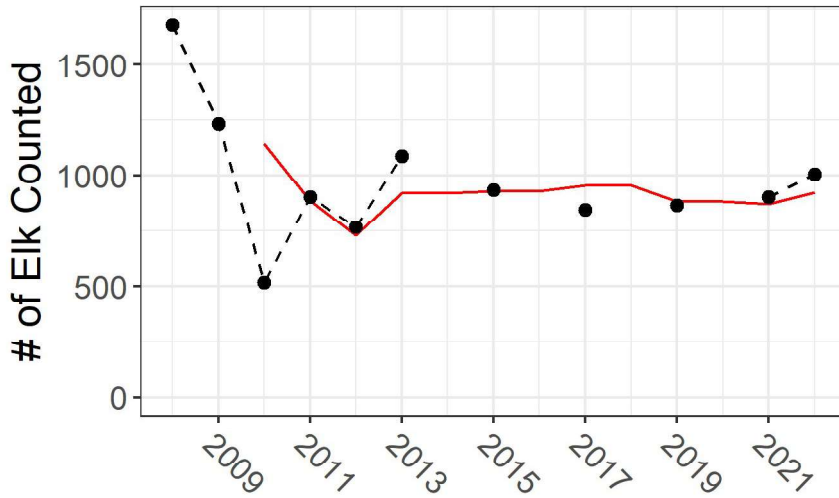
HDs 290 & 298

Garnet Elk Management Unit



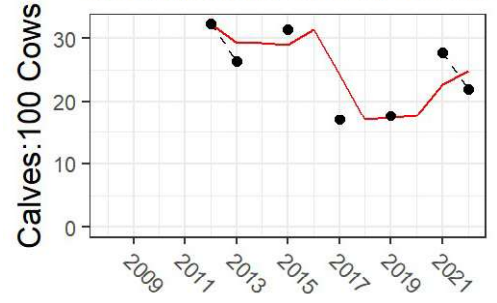
Current Population Status & Trend

Total Elk Counted- HDs 290 & 298

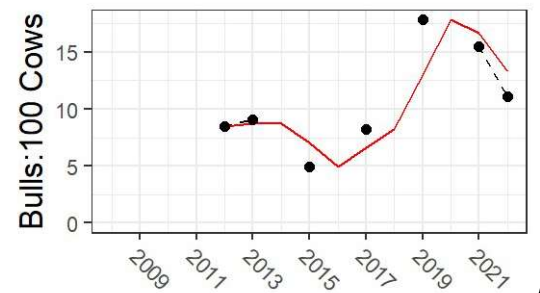


Points show observations from survey flights and the solid red line shows a 3-year moving average.

Recruitment- HD 290 & 298



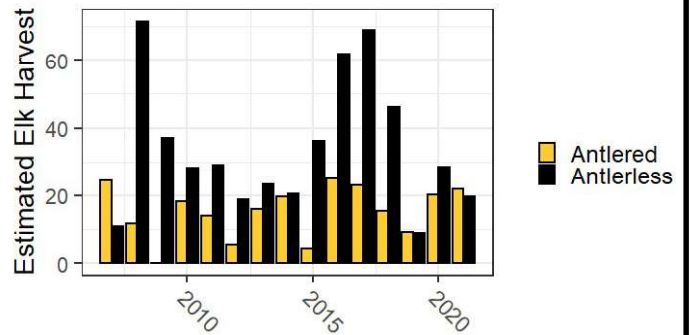
Bulls:100 Cows- HD 290 & 298



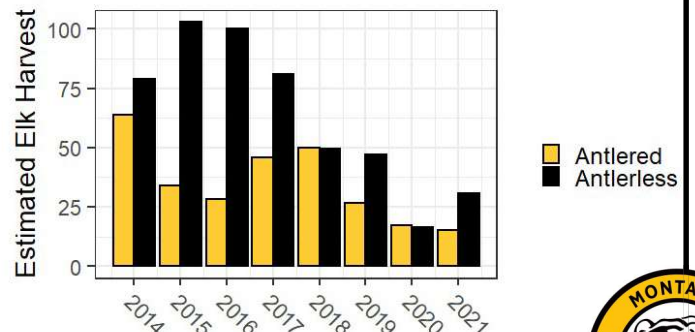
Hunter Effort and Harvest Statistics

Hunting	License Year	Hunters	Hunter Days
290	2008	281	1,417
	2010	231	1,514
	2012	249	1,344
	2014	204	1,369
	2016	377	2,254
	2018	255	1,484
	2020	362	2,362
290	2014	652	4,002
	2016	503	2,786
	2018	378	3,233
	2020	288	1,941

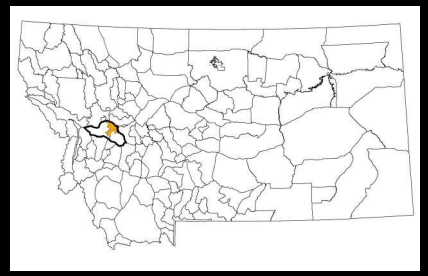
Elk Harvest- HD 290



Elk Harvest- HD 298



HDs 290 & 298



Garnet Elk Management Unit

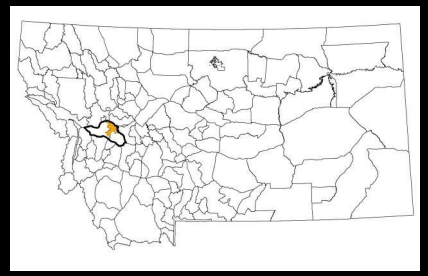
Objective: Manage toward elk population size and demographic targets

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain spring aerial survey counts between 480-720 elk observed	3-year average of elk counts is within Goal range for population size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlerless harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas • Consider expanding carnivore hunting opportunities to boost elk survival when below population Goal and/or recruitment threshold • Work with public land managers and private landowners to conserve and improve habitat • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security • Use antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas
	If outside Goal range, population is trending toward Goal range	
	3-year average recruitment ≥ 20 calves:100 cow when below Goal range	
Bull:cow ratio is $\geq 10:100$	3-year average bull: cow ratio is meeting or exceeding minimum bull:cow threshold	

(Continued on next page)



HDs 290 & 298



Garnet Elk Management Unit

Objective: Maintain an acceptable elk distribution

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain elk distribution across landownerships with available habitat throughout the year	Proportion of year-round resident (non-migratory) elk on private land is stable or decreasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Blackfoot Challenge hunt coordinator • Work with land management agencies to improve habitat conditions for elk on public lands • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security • Work with private landowners to increase hunting access • Use antlerless harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas • Use public/private land-specific harvest regulations to distribute harvest

Objective: Provide public elk recreation opportunities

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Provide opportunity to harvest antlerless elk	Hunting regulations maintain antlerless hunting opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlerless and antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structures and/or quotas • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security
Maximize bull hunting opportunity	3-year average bull harvest is within 20% of the 10-year average	

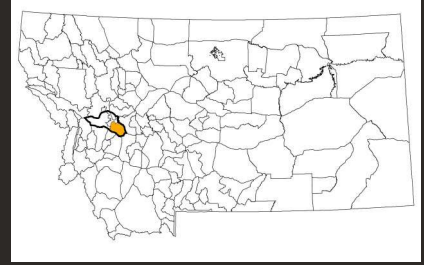


HD 291

Size: 322 mi²

Primary Habitat: Forest & Grassland

Public Ownership: 20%



Garnet Elk Management Unit

District Summary

Hunting District 291 lies east of the Garnet range north of the I-90 corridor and includes the town of Avon and Garrison. The boundaries extend southwest from Avon along Hwy 12 to Garrison, west along I-90, north along the Helmville Road (Hwy 271), southeast along Cottonwood Creek, north and east along the northern BLM boundary near Hoodoo Mountain to the intersection with Brazil Creek Road and north along Nevada Creek Road, southeast along Hwy 141 to the Hwy 12 junction at Avon. This district includes Nevada Lake, the Little Blackfoot River, and Upper Clark Fork River. The district is 20% public land with the majority managed by the BLM and DNRC. Public lands include the Hoodoo Mountain Wilderness Study Area. Of the public land in this HD, 32% is classified as inaccessible by public road or waterway.

Much of the district is working ranch lands managed for agriculture and livestock production. The majority of HD 291 is privately owned and access programs are critical for ensuring public opportunity to effectively achieve management objectives. Private landowners provide public hunting access on 51,509 acres across four properties enrolled in FWP's Block Management Program during fall hunting seasons. In addition, there are 4,612 acres protected by conservation easements in this district.

Hunting District 291 includes quality elk habitat providing year-round resources for elk. Some elk are migratory, moving northwest into adjacent hunting districts. Elk tend to use the south-facing slopes along the I-90 corridor as winter range and occasionally cross I-90 to the south into HD 217. Some resident elk remain on large properties where public access is limited. The harvest required to maintain the population within objective has been achieved since 2019.

Over the last 20 years, the elk population in the district has varied greatly. Approximately 200 elk were counted in 2000 which grew to 1,587 elk by 2014. Given that the population was considerably above the objective range of 480-720, measures to reduce elk numbers were implemented. An aggressive harvest strategy brought the population to within objective in 2019.

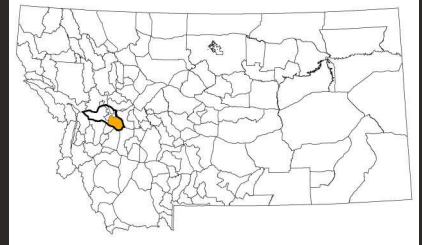
Management Challenges:

- Congregations of elk cause game damage and crop loss to livestock producers each year



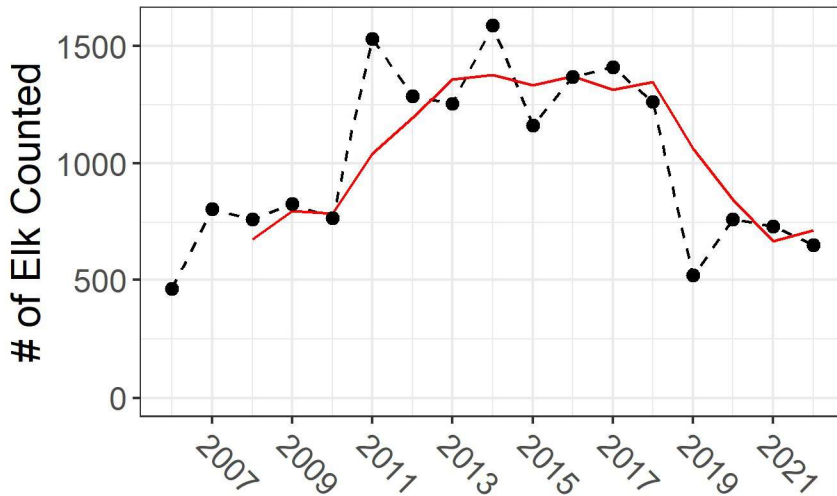
HD 291

Garnet Elk Management Unit



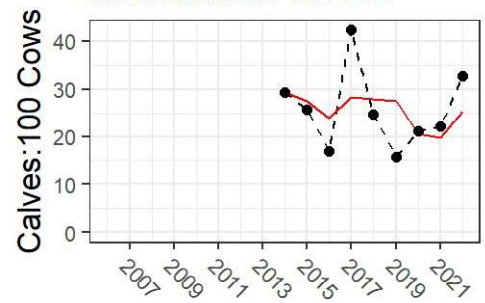
Current Population Status & Trend

Total Elk Counted- HD 291

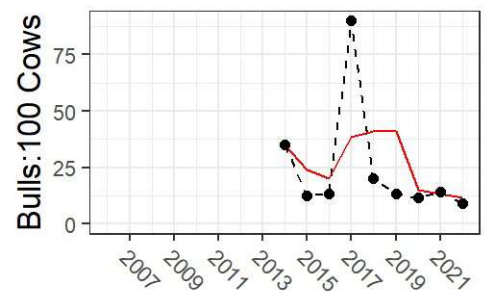


Points show observations from survey flights and the solid red line shows a 3-year moving average.

Recruitment- HD 291



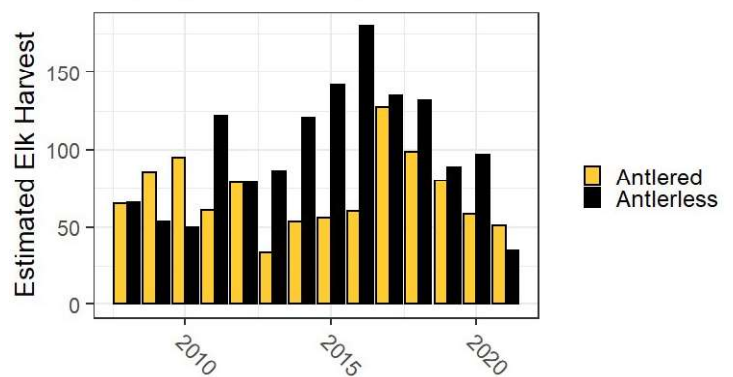
Bulls:100 Cows- HD 291



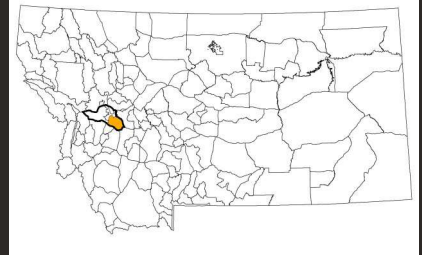
Hunter Effort and Harvest Statistics

Hunting District	License Year	Hunters	Hunter Days
291	2008	856	5,624
	2010	814	5,008
	2012	868	5,113
	2014	817	5,577
	2016	960	6,542
	2018	919	6,180
	2020	741	5,377

Elk Harvest- HD 291



HD 291



Garnet Elk Management Unit

Objective: Manage toward elk population size and demographic targets

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain winter aerial survey counts between 480-720 elk observed	3-year average of elk counts is within Goal range for population size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use antlerless harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas
	If outside Goal range, population is trending toward Goal range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider expanding carnivore hunting opportunities to boost elk survival when below population Goal and/or recruitment threshold
	3-year average recruitment ≥ 20 calves:100 cow when below Goal range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with public land managers and private landowners to conserve and improve habitat Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security
Bull:cow ratio is $\geq 10:100$	3-year average bull: cow ratio is meeting or exceeding minimum bull:cow threshold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas

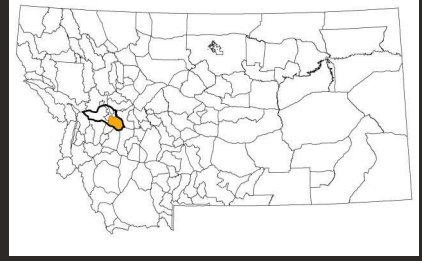
Objective: Maintain an acceptable elk distribution

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain elk distribution across landownerships with available habitat throughout the year	Proportion of year-round resident (non-migratory) elk on private land is stable or decreasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with land management agencies to improve habitat conditions for elk on public lands Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security Work with private landowners to maintain or increase hunting access Use antlerless harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas Use public/private land-specific harvest regulations to distribute harvest

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HD 291



Garnet Elk Management Unit

Objective: Provide public elk recreation opportunities

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maximize bull hunting opportunity	3-year average bull harvest is within 20% of the 10-year average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlerless and antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structures and/or quotas
Provide opportunity to harvest antlerless elk	Hunting regulations maintain antlerless hunting opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security • Provide PTHFV/youth antlerless opportunities

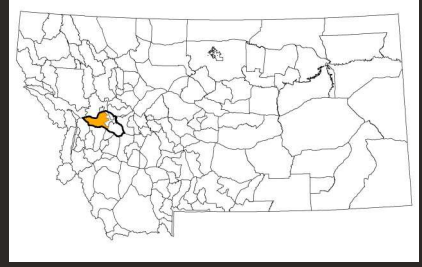


HD 292

Size: 484 mi²

Primary Habitat: Forest

Public Ownership: 52%



Garnet Elk Management Unit

District Summary

Hunting District 292 lies in the Garnet Mountains, roughly equally distributed across the Blackfoot (north) and Clark Fork (south) watersheds. It is bounded in the north and south by State Route 200 and I-90, respectively. The eastern border abutting HD 298 is a snaking boundary mostly following the Granite and Powell county line in the south and BLM and DNRC land boundaries in the north. Despite being heavily forested, this district does not contain any USFS land, and public ownership (52%) is primarily administered by the BLM and DNRC.

Public access is mixed. On the western side, private lands are concentrated in the Potomac and Greenough valleys whereas on the eastern side and along the I-90 corridor large private ranches can complicate public access. However, roughly two-thirds of the public land in the district is within 1 mile of a road open to motorized use during the hunting season and only 15 mi² of the 248 mi² public lands are considered inaccessible. Several large conservation easements along the eastern boundary provide additional hunter access into this HD. In the northeast portion of the district, the 11,580-acre Wales Creek Wilderness Study Area provides an opportunity for more remote and unmotorized recreation activities. Block Management has a long history in this district and currently more than 85,000 acres are enrolled, providing public access during hunting season.

Much of HD 292 includes quality year-round elk habitat. However, elk exhibit a mix of migratory and resident strategies, with some elk migrating to adjacent districts in HDs 282, 285, 290 and 298. Elk not leaving the district may congregate on the south-facing slopes along the I-90 corridor and the Potomac and Greenough valleys during winter. Some resident elk regularly remain on large properties where public access is restricted or not permitted.

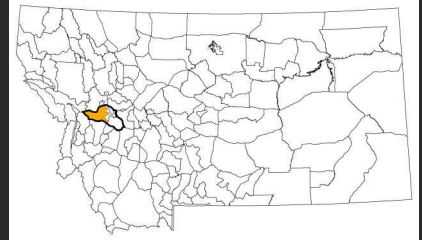
Management Challenges:

- Abundant large carnivores (wolves, mountain lions, black bears, and grizzly bears), which may limit elk populations and productivity even with minimal human hunting pressure
- Sightability in heavily timbered portions of the northern and western portions of the district is poor and reduces effectiveness of aerial surveys
- Congregations of elk on private land, including in neighboring HD 298, prior to archery season create game damage issues and reduce hunter opportunity in early season
- Lack of disturbance and advancing seral stage of habitat in much of the forested portions of the district reduce quality of elk habitat



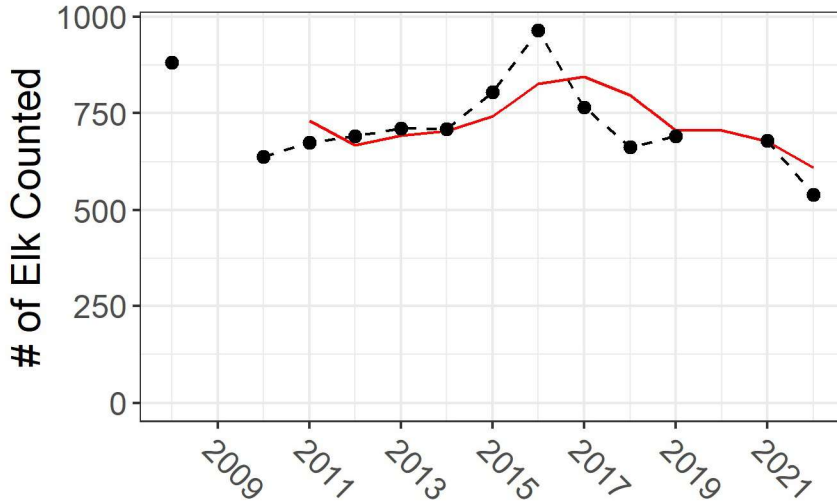
HD 292

Garnet Elk Management Unit



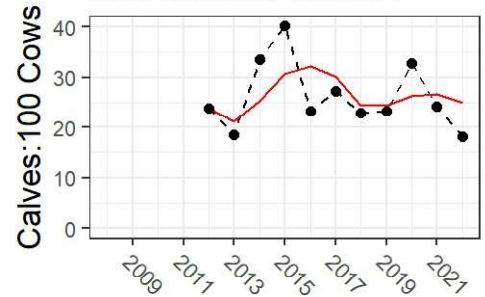
Current Population Status & Trend

Total Elk Counted- HD 292

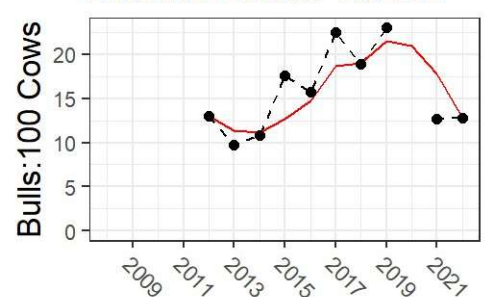


Points show observations from survey flights and the solid red line shows a 3-year moving average.

Recruitment- HD 292



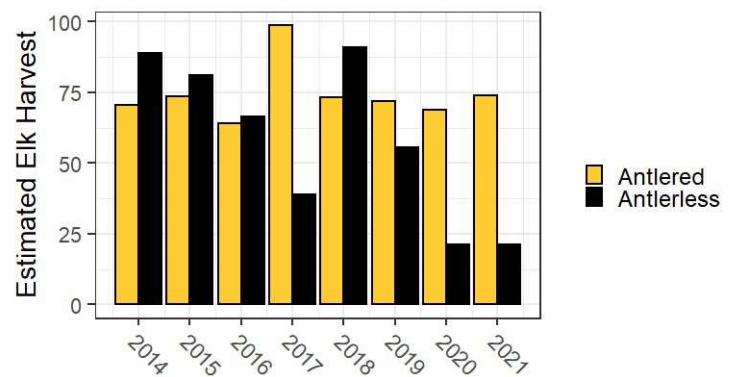
Bulls:100 Cows- HD 292



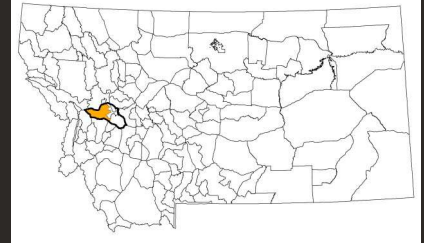
Hunter Effort and Harvest Statistics

Hunting District	License Year	Hunters	Hunter Days
292	2014	1,768	11,562
	2016	1,399	10,220
	2018	1,492	10,512
	2020	1,208	9,038

Elk Harvest- HD 292



HD 292



Garnet Elk Management Unit

Objective: Manage toward elk population size and demographic targets

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain spring aerial survey counts between 640-960 elk observed	3-year average of elk counts is within Goal range for population size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlerless harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas • Consider expanding carnivore hunting opportunities to boost elk survival when below population Goal and/or recruitment threshold • Work with public land managers and private landowners to conserve and improve habitat • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security
	If outside Goal range, population is trending toward Goal range	
	3-year average recruitment ≥ 20 calves:100 cow when below Goal range	
Bull:cow ratio is $\geq 10:100$	3-year average bull: cow ratio is meeting or exceeding minimum bull:cow threshold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas

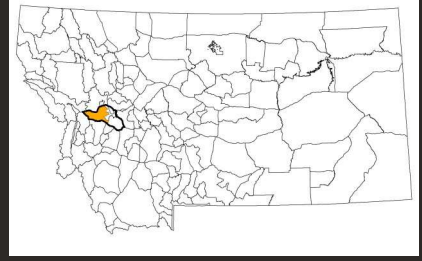
Objective: Maintain an acceptable elk distribution

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Maintain elk distribution across landownerships with available habitat throughout the year	Proportion of year-round resident (non-migratory) elk on private land is stable or decreasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with land management agencies to improve habitat conditions for elk on public lands • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security • Work with private landowners to maintain or increase hunting access • Use antlerless harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structure and/or quotas • Use public/private land-specific harvest regulations to distribute harvest

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HD 292



Garnet Elk Management Unit

Objective: Provide public elk recreation opportunities

Goals	Measures of Success	Strategies
Provide opportunity to harvest antlerless elk	Hunting regulations maintain antlerless hunting opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use antlerless and antlered harvest opportunity matrix to adjust season structures and/or quotas
Maximize bull hunting opportunity	3-year average bull harvest is within 20% of the 10-year average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide PTHFV/youth antlerless opportunities • Work with public land managers to maintain or improve elk security

