

# Proposed Antlerless Elk Shoulder Seasons Master List and Justifications

February 13, 2020

Proposed changes to its December commission adoption are highlighted in yellow below.

## Montana shoulder seasons proposed in HDs that are above objective and meet all harvest criteria

HD	Status Number & %	Current Season		Proposed Season		Notes
		License Type	Season Dates	License Type	Season Dates	
210/211	1885 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 (quota range 5- 1000). A new, larger 211 that includes old W 214.	Aug 15-end of general. Only on private land Aug 15 to general, valid on DNRC lands outside USFS boundary during general. Remove late Shoulder.	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-end of general. Remove late Shoulder.	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.

HD	Status Number & %	Current Season		Proposed Season		Notes
		License Type	Season Dates	License Type	Season Dates	
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 (quota range 5-500).	Aug 15-end of general. Remove late Shoulder.	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 or 89% 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-end of archery private land only, private land and DNRC outside USFS boundary during general. Not valid east of Browns Gulch in general. Remove late Shoulder.	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	Remove 002-00 OTC B, replace with new 262-01 B license, unlimited 1 per hunter valid on private lands only.	Valid archery and general season only in HD 261, change with calendar rotation. Aug 15-Jan 15 in HD 262.	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	Remove 002-00 OTC B, replace with 300 new 290-01 B license (quota range 5-500), only valid on private lands excluding Weyerhaeuser, Stimson, and TNC within HDs 290 and 298.	Aug 15-Jan 15	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.
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) valid in all. General License not valid on National Forest late.	General license valid late. 397-00 valid Aug 15 - archery (only private land) then general season-Feb 15 (off National Forest).	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	317-00 valid only on private lands	317-00 from general-Feb 15.	To address over-objective, distribution and brucellosis concerns. Meets all harvest criteria, proposed to continue.
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.

421/422/423/444	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 – start of archery, Jan 1 - Feb 15 (exclude day after general to Dec 31), change with calendar rotation	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.
-----------------	---------------------	--------------------------------------	------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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.
-----	-----------------------	--------------------------------------	------------------------------------------	-----------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------

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 other change.	Change with calendar rotation	Consolidates Castle Mtns HDs
---------	--------------------	--------------------------------------	------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------

500	210 or 350% Over	General and 005- 00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Gen license and 005- 00 only valid on private land Aug 15 to archery. 2000 595-00	Aug 15 to archery, general to Feb 15. Exclude dead week. 595-00 valid 1/1-2/15, 595-00 license holders may use gen license.	Only 1 year of shoulder season. Meets all harvest criteria, proposed to continue.
-----	---------------------	-----------------------------------	--------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

---

**Montana shoulder seasons proposed in HDs that are at or below objective.**

HD	Status Number & %	Current Season		Proposed Season		Notes
		License Type	Season Dates	License Type	Season Dates	
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. Harvest criteria do not apply.
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. Only on private land.	General license not valid after general season. 217-02 valid Aug 15-end of general.	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	Convert 240-01 from antlerless permits to 200 antlerless B licenses. Only valid on private land after general.	Valid during archery and general to Jan 15, excluding dead week.	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. Only valid on private lands.	Aug 15-end of general.	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	Remove 002-00. Replace with 100 new 292-01 B license. Only valid on private lands excluding Weyerhaeuser, Stimson, and TNC within Blackfoot watershed of HD 292	Aug 15- end of general, excluding dead week.	Addresses problematic distribution among many small ownerships. Harvest criteria do not apply. 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	Remove 002-00. Replace with 150 293-00 B license. Only valid on private lands in south portion of HD.	Aug 15- end of general, excluding dead week.	Shoulder season addresses problematic distribution. Harvest criteria do not apply.
-----	------------------	-----------------------------------------	-----------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

309	At Objective	General License & 100 395-00 B Licenses	Dec 2 - Jan 15	Remove 395-00. Part of 309, 311, 312 bundle using 397-00 OTC B Licenses. 397-00 not valid on National Forest during general, only valid on private prior to start of archery. Allow General license to Feb 15.	Gen license valid to Feb 15. 397-00 valid Aug 15 – archery, end of general - Feb 15	Greater Bozeman urban area. Consistent with HD 311. To manage exurban elk. Harvest criteria do not apply. 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	Remove 311-00. Part of 309, 311, 312 bundle using 397-00 OTC B Licenses.	Aug 15 - archery, end of general - Feb 15 Only in north portion.	To address distribution and Brucellosis concerns. Harvest criteria do not apply. Remove 311-00 B License
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 above objective, NOT meeting all harvest criteria.**

HD	Status Number & %	Current Season		Proposed Season		Notes
		License Type	Season Dates	License Type	Season Dates	
204	451 or 31% Over	002-00 OTC B License	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Remove from 002-00 bundle and replace with new 261-02 B license (unlimited one per hunter valid on private land purchase before start of general)	Aug 15-Nov 29 Remove late Shoulder. Change with calendar rotation.	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	445 or 37% 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 Shoulder. Change with calendar rotation.	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.
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	Remove 397-00. Add new 389-00 OTC B Licenses valid in HDs 390, 391, and 393. Not valid on USFS or FWP Remove WMAs.	No general license after general firearm season. 389- 00 valid general firearm-Jan 1.	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.

HD	Status Number & %	Current Season		Proposed Season		Notes
		License Type	Season Dates	License Type	Season Dates	
391	564 or 58% Over	400 391-00 B Licenses only valid S of Duck Cr.	Dec 2 - Feb 15	391-00 only valid north of Duck Creek off National Forest. Add new 389-00 OTC B Licenses valid in HDs 390, 391, and 393. Only valid south of Duck Cr. Not valid on USFS or FWP WMAs.	No general license after general firearm season. 389-00 valid general firearm-Jan 1.	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	Remove 397-00. Last week of general season antlerless-only. Add new 389-00 OTC B Licenses valid in HDs 390, 391, and 393. Not valid on USFS or FWP WMAs.	No general license after general firearm season. 389-00 valid general firearm-Jan 1.	Apparent loss of public access due to SS. Harvest has gone down and pop up.
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 on all lands south of Crooked Creek (Sacagawea River). Not valid on CMR Refuge. Quota range from 100 - 1200	Valid during archery and general season to Feb 15. Dead week excluded.	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, 004-00 & 1000 411-00 B Licenses. General license and 411- 00 not valid on National Forest after general season. 004-00 not valid on National Forest.	General, 005-00, and 411-00 from archery to Jan 1, excluding dead week. 411-00 continues to Feb 1, 411-00 license holders may also use gen license.	Eliminate east-west split. Make regs consistent with 511 & 530

417	1,595 or 425% Over	No Shoulder Season		Gen license and 004-00. B license not valid on USFS, WMA, or CMR.	Both licenses valid archery and general -Jan 15, excluding dead week.	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		Gen license and 004-00. B license not valid on USFS, WMA, or CMR.	Both licenses valid archery and general -Jan 15, excluding dead week.	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.
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).
445	1,529 or 61% Over	General plus 004-00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Sep 6, Oct 26 - Feb 15	Maintain as in 2019	Maintain as in 2019. Includes dead week on gen license and 004-00 off Beartooth WMA.	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	Maintain as in 2019	Maintain as in 2019. Excludes dead week	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	Gen license, 005-00, and 2000 595-00 B license bundle. In HD 510 only valid west of Hwy 310, otherwise valid on all lands in HDs 502/510.	Gen license and 005-00 valid gen season-Jan 1. 595-00 valid 1/1-2/1, 595-00 license holders may also use general license.	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	Gen license, 005-00, and 1000 411-00 B licenses. General license and 411-00 not valid on National Forest after general season. 005-00 not valid on National Forest.	General, 005-00, and 411-00 from archery to Jan 1, excluding dead week. 411-00 continues to Feb 1, 411-00 license holders may also use gen license.	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 or 19% Over	General and 005-00 B Licenses valid in W portion	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Gen license, 005-00, 2000 595-00, and 520-00 B licenses. General license and 520-00 only valid north and west of West Fork of Rock Creek. Gen license not valid on National Forest or WMAs after general season. 005-00 and 595-00 not valid on National Forest or WMAs.	Gen license, 005-00, and 520-00 valid gen season-Jan 1. 595-00 valid 1/1-2/1, 595-00 license holders may also use gen license.	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	Gen license, 005-00, 2000 595-00, and 540-00 B licenses. Gen license not valid on National Forest or WMAs after general season. 005-00 and 595-00 not valid on National Forest or WMAs.	Gen license, 005-00, and 540-00 valid gen season-Jan 1. 595-00 valid 1/1-2/1, 595-00 license holders may also use gen license.	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	Gen license, 005-00, 2000 595-00, and 560-00 B licenses. Gen license not and 560-00 not valid south of Falls Creek. Gen license not valid on National Forest after general season. 005-00 and 595-00 not valid on National Forest or WMAs.	Gen license, 005-00, and 560-00 valid gen season-Jan 1. 595-00 valid 1/1-2/1, 595-00 license holders may also use gen license.	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	Gen license and 005-00 only valid on private land Aug 15 to archery. 2000 595-00.	Aug 15 to archery, general to Feb 15. Exclude dead week. 595-00 valid 1/1-2/15, 595-00 license holders may also use gen license.	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	Gen license, 005-00, 2000 595-00	Gen license and 005-00 valid gen season-Jan 1. 595-00 valid 1/1-2/1, 595-00 license holders may also use gen license.	Short seasons 1st 2 years.

580	3,195 or 328% Over	General and 005-00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Gen license, 005-00, 2000 595-00, and 580-00 B licenses. Gen license not valid on National Forest after general season. 005-00 and 595-00 not valid on National Forest.	Gen license, 005-00, and 580-00 valid gen season-Jan 1. 595-00 valid 1/1-2/1, 595-00 license holders may also use gen license.	High landowner support to continue shoulder seasons.
590	943 or 90% Over	General and 005-00 B Licenses	Aug 15 - Feb 15	Gen license, 005-00, and 2000 595-00 B licenses.	Gen license and 005-00, valid gen season-Jan 1. 595-00 valid 1/1-2/1, 595-00 license holders may also use gen license.	Well over obj.
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	Retain 698-00 antlerless permit in 620, 621, 622 (remove 630, 631, 632). 699-00 B Licenses valid in 620, 621, 622 off CMR (remove 630 and 631).	699-00 valid 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	Remove from 699-00 B License. Remove from 698-00 antlerless permit. Drop 632 from bundle.	No late harvest	See above notes for 620/621/622. Keeps regs consistent with these HDs.

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
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. General license antlerless during general. 150 690-01 B Licenses in new 690. Remove 690-00 & 696-00 B Licenses and 697-00 antlerless permits.	General license during general season. 690-01 valid during general season and Dec 15 -Feb 15	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.