

Montana 2025 Elk Counts

Elk are counted in winter or spring by aircraft. It is not possible to count all elk in a management unit and elk plan objectives are based on "Observed Elk", which may be elk observed on trend areas in some cases. Counting elk is an inexact exercise subject to a multitude of weather and timing variables and elk movements between hunting districts. Therefore, counts in some years may not accurately reflect elk numbers and better counts from previous years are reported.

Hunting District(s)	Elk Management Unit (EMU)	Most Recent Elk Count (as of 2025)	Year of Count	Average Count ¹	Population Goal Range	Status ²
100	PURCELL	Surveys not conducted due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover.				
101	EUREKA	Surveys not conducted due to urban low altitude flying constraints.				
103	SALISH	Population count surveys not conducted due to variable and inconsistent elk counts.				
104	CABINET	Surveys not conducted due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover.				
110	WHITEFISH	Surveys not conducted due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover.				
120	SALISH	Surveys not conducted due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover.				
121	LOWER CLARK FORK	1,548	2025	1,618	1,350-1,890	At
122	SALISH	Surveys not conducted due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover.				
123	LOWER CLARK FORK	339	2025	348	360-510	Below
124	LOWER CLARK FORK	Surveys not conducted due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover.				
130	BOB MARSHALL	Surveys not conducted due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover.				
140	BOB MARSHALL	176	2024	122	250-350	Below
141	BOB MARSHALL	Surveys not conducted due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover.				
150	BOB MARSHALL	108	2024	157	450-630	Below
170	NORTH SWAN	Surveys not conducted due to difficulty observing elk in forested cover and urban flying constraints.				
Region 1 Total³		2,171		2,245	2,388-3,712³	Below³
200	LOWER CLARK FORK	193	2025	229 ⁴	240-360	Below
201	MISSOULA/NINEMILE	2,109	2024	2,203	1,600-2,400	At
201 North Hills		294 ⁵	2025	261	170-250	Above
202	LOWER CLARK FORK	603	2025	603	400-600	Above
202 Cold Creek/Trout Creek		239 ⁵	2025	239	250-350	Below
202 Cougar Creek/Quartz Creek		163 ⁵	2025	141	50-100	Above
202 N Fork Fish Creek		124 ⁵	2025	124	100-150	At
204, 261, 262 Skalkaho/Willow	NORTH SAPPHIRE	375	2025	343	300-500	At
204, 261, 262 Willow/Eight Mile		495	2025	430	360-540	At
204, 261, 262 Eight Mile/North		790	2025	755	400-600	Above
210 N	ROCK CREEK & FLINT CREEK	550	2025	433	400-600	At
210 S, 211, 212, 216	ROCK CREEK & FLINT CREEK	2,445	2025	2,361	1,040-1,560	Above
213	FLINT CREEK	2,520	2025	2,259	920-1,380	Above
214	FLINT CREEK	202	2025	178	160-240	At
215	DEER LODGE	2,340	2025	1,916	1,360-2,040	At
217	FLINT CREEK	1,063	2025	808	480-720	Above
240	BITTERROOT	727	2024	734	600-900	At
250	WEST FORK BITTERROOT	1,069	2025	1,052	800-1,200	At
260	BITTERROOT/CLARK FORK	227	2025	227 ⁶	0-100	Above
270	EAST FORK BITTERROOT	4,231	2025	4,317	3,600-4,400	At
280	BOB MARSHALL	No Wintering Elk.				
281	BOB MARSHALL	834	2024	702	500-700	Above
282	BOB MARSHALL	968	2024	765	900-1,100	Below
284, 293, 339, 343	GRANITE BUTTE	3,428	2025	3,081	1,800-3,500	At
285 (Gold-Belmont)	BOB MARSHALL	222	2025	222	240-360	Below
290, 298	GARNET	751	2025	832	480-720	Above
291	GARNET	1,030	2025	875	480-720	Above
292	GARNET	838	2025	617	640-960	Below
Region 2 Total		28,010		25,942	17,700-26,200	At

Hunting District(s)	Elk Management Unit (EMU)	Most Recent Elk Count (as of 2025)	Year of Count	Average Count ¹	Population Goal Range	Status ²
301, 309	BOZEMAN	974	2025	928	400-800	Above
302	TENDOEY	3,226	2024	2,418	1,100-2,100	Above
303	TENDOEY	428	2025	777	650-1,100	At
304	LOWER MADISON	1,864	2025	1,918	1,500-3,000	At
310	GALLATIN/MADISON	640	2025	553	600-1,000	Below
311 North Tobacco Herd	LOWER MADISON	801	2024	728	200-1,000	At
311 Red Mountain Herd		955	2025	916	200-1,000	At
312	BRIDGER	1,155	2025	1,203	1,000-2,000	At
313, 314 S ⁷	NORTHERN YELLOWSTONE	6,124	2025	5,352	3,000-5,000	Above
314 N ⁷	UPPER YELLOWSTONE	3,566	2025	3,780	2,900-4,200	At
315	CRAZY MOUNTAINS	3,315	2025	2,917	1,200-2,000	Above
316	NORTHERN YELLOWSTONE	No Wintering Elk.				
317	ABSAROKA	2,012	2025	1,856	900-1,700	Above
318	DEER LODGE	698	2024	698	400-800	At
319 S	FLEECER	963	2025	1,142	850-1,100	Above
319 NE	FLEECER	579	2025	557	450-600	At
320	TOBACCO ROOT	1,444	2025	1,466	500-1,500	At
321 S	WEST BIG HOLE	1,041	2025	915	800-1,000	At
321 N	WEST BIG HOLE	831	2025	888	800-1,000	At
322, 323, 324 ⁸	GRAVELLY	10,833	2025	9,475	6,000-10,000	At
329	PIONEER	2,019	2025	1,542	700-1,300	Above
331	PIONEER	1,518	2025	1,561	1,250-1,950	At
335	DEER LODGE	1,221	2025	1,210	500-1,400	At
339	GRANITE BUTTE	Counted with 284 and 293 - see above				
343						
340	HIGHLAND	1,401	2025	1,116	800-1,200	At
350	WHITETAIL-BULL MTN	294	2025	325	300-400	At
360	GALLATIN-MADISON	5,504	2025	5,210	3,300-4,700	Above
361	GALLATIN-MADISON	Few wintering elk. No stated objective.				
370	WHITETAIL-BULL MTN	486	2025	430	350-450	At
380	ELKHORN	1,601	2023	1,601	1,700-2,300	Below
388	GRANITE BUTTE	Survey not conducted. No stated objective.				
390	BRIDGER	2,035	2025	2,010	1,200-1,800	Above
391	SW BIG BELT	2,005	2024	1,979	1,000-1,500	Above
392	NW BIG BELT	297	2025	255	480-720	Below
393	BRIDGER	3,947	2023	3,947	2,700-4,000	At
Region 3 Total		63,777		59,673	37,530-61,620	At

Hunting District(s)	Elk Management Unit (EMU)	Most Recent Elk Count (as of 2025)	Year of Count	Average Count ¹	Population Goal Range	Status ²
400, 403, 404, 405, 406, 419, 444, 471	GOLDEN TRIANGLE	Survey not conducted. No stated objective.				
401	SWEETGRASS HILLS	739	2025	716	450-650	Above
410	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	2,488	2025	2,306 ⁹	2,600-3,200	Below
411, 535	SNOWY	7,456	2025	7,830 ⁹	6,000-12,000	At
412	SNOWY	1,282	2024	1,235	600-1,500	At
413	LITTLE BELT	1,479	2025	1,270	700-1,000	Above
415	BOB MARSHALL	118	2024	136	150-250	Below
416	SW LITTLE BELT	1,194	2025	900	1,000-1,500	Below
417	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	2,038	2024	2,241	1,500-2,500	At
418	NE LITTLE BELT	376	2025	312 ⁹	200-300	Above
420, 448	NE LITTLE BELT	1,082	2025	970	1,000-1,500	At
421	BIRDTAIL	924	2023	924	400-600	Above
422	BOB MARSHALL	1,176	2025	1,117	600-800	Above
424, 425, 442	BOB MARSHALL	2,304	2025	2,281	2,250-2,750	At
426	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	224	2025	272	150-350	At
441	BOB MARSHALL	847	2025	795	500-700	Above
445, 455	DEVIL'S KITCHEN	5,989	2023	5,989	2,500-3,500	Above
446	EAST BIG BELT	3,227	2025	2,775	1,500-2,000	Above
447	HIGHWOOD	1,479	2025	1,518	800-1,200	Above
450	TETON	762	2025	566	300-400	Above
451	BRIDGER	961	2023	383 ⁴	200-800	At
452	CASTLE MOUNTAIN	1,441	2025	1,562	800-1,200	Above
Region 4 Total		37,586		36,098	24,200-38,700	At
502	ABSAROKA	190	2025	196	150-250	At
515	MID-YELLOWSTONE	1,203	2024	1,124 ⁹	900-1,500	At
525	ABSAROKA	3,190	2024	3,176	2,200-3,300	At
535	SNOWY	Counted with 411 - see above				
540	SE LITTLE BELT	1,659	2025	1,499	1,500-2,000	Below
555	ABSAROKA	230	2025	198	150-250	At
565	ABSAROKA	291	2025	300	225-375	At
575	ABSAROKA	1,138	2024	1,023	650-1,050	At
580	CRAZY MOUNTAINS	6,267	2025	5,704 ⁹	2,500-4,000	Above
590	BULL MOUNTAINS	3,717	2023	3,717	2,400-3,600	Above
Region 5 Total		17,885		16,937	10,675-16,325	Above
600, 640, 650, 652, 670	PRAIRIE BREAKS					
620, 621, 622	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	974	2024	1,133 ⁹	1,600-2,400	Below
630	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	209	2024	232 ⁹	400-600	Below
690	BEARS PAW ³	696	2023	696 ⁹	800-1,200	Below
Region 6 Total		1,879		2,061	2,800-4,200	Below
700	MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS	1,608	2024	1,494 ⁹	1,600-2,400	Below
701	PRAIRIE BADLANDS	Survey not conducted. No stated objective.				
702, 704, 705	SOUTHEASTERN MONTANA	4,392	2024 & 2025	3,771 ⁹	3,240-4,860	At
703	PRAIRIE BADLANDS	Survey not conducted. No stated objective.				
Region 7 Total		6,000		5,265	4,840-7,260	At
STATE TOTAL		157,308		148,221	100,080-157,580	At

¹Average counts are for the past three years unless otherwise noted

²Status is classified as At, Below or Above the population goal using the count average specified in the Elk Management Plan

³Only includes HDs where elk are countable

⁴Average count is for the last five years

⁵Count is excluded from the total count; area is represented within the broader HD count.

⁶Average count is the most recent count

⁷As of 2023, new boundary of HD 314 includes part of the old HD 313.

⁸As of 2023, HD 322 was split into HD 322, 323 and 324.

⁹Average count is for the last four years