

ELK – HD 620, 621, 622



Draft Changes for 2022-2023 Hunting Regulations:

Eliminate antlerless Elk Permit (698-00) and re-allocate those 300 permits to existing B-licenses

- Re-allocate elk licenses/permits as follows:
 - 621-01 elk B-license- Increase to 350 (Add 100 to existing 250)
 - 622-00 elk B-license- Increase to 700 (Add 200 to existing 500)

Biological Implication:

This will have limited impact to elk populations. However, it will eliminate the highest hunter success rate tool for antlerless elk harvest in Region 6. In addition, it is a primarily private land (off CMR) elk management tool. In 2020, this antlerless permit saw a 22% success rate, compared to 12% for the 621-01 elk B-license and 16% for the 622-00 elk B-license.

Social Consideration:

Eliminating this antlerless permit is in response to a department directive to eliminate antlerless elk permits to simplify the regulations and make all elk permits specifically for either-sex opportunities.

We heard support from the Breaks Elk Working Group to maintain this antlerless permit in 2019 and again in 2021. During the 2019 season setting process, FWP proposed eliminating this antlerless permit. But, due to public comment favoring retaining the tool and recognition of its value for elk management, we recommended to the commission to keep the antlerless permit.

Hunters favor the tool because it provides an LPT (for those that are only interested in harvesting a cow) to obtain an antlerless elk permit annually. Antlerless elk B-licenses are more sought after and have lower drawing odds and show a lower harvest success. The availability of the antlerless permit also facilitates some hunters in holding two antlerless elk licenses and addresses overcrowding concerns. In 2020, 22% of the permit holders held two antlerless elk licenses/permits.

The region 6 CAC recognizes that eliminating 698-00 clears up confusion in the regulations, but also adds to possible hunter congestion issues on the CMR by reallocating those hunters to existing B-licenses (which are valid district-wide to include the CMR).

For Questions, Contact: Scott Thompson, Wildlife Manager, Glasgow, sthompson@mt.gov, 406-228-3710