

2016-2017 Performance-Based Shoulder Season Review

Fish & Wildlife Commission August 9, 2018

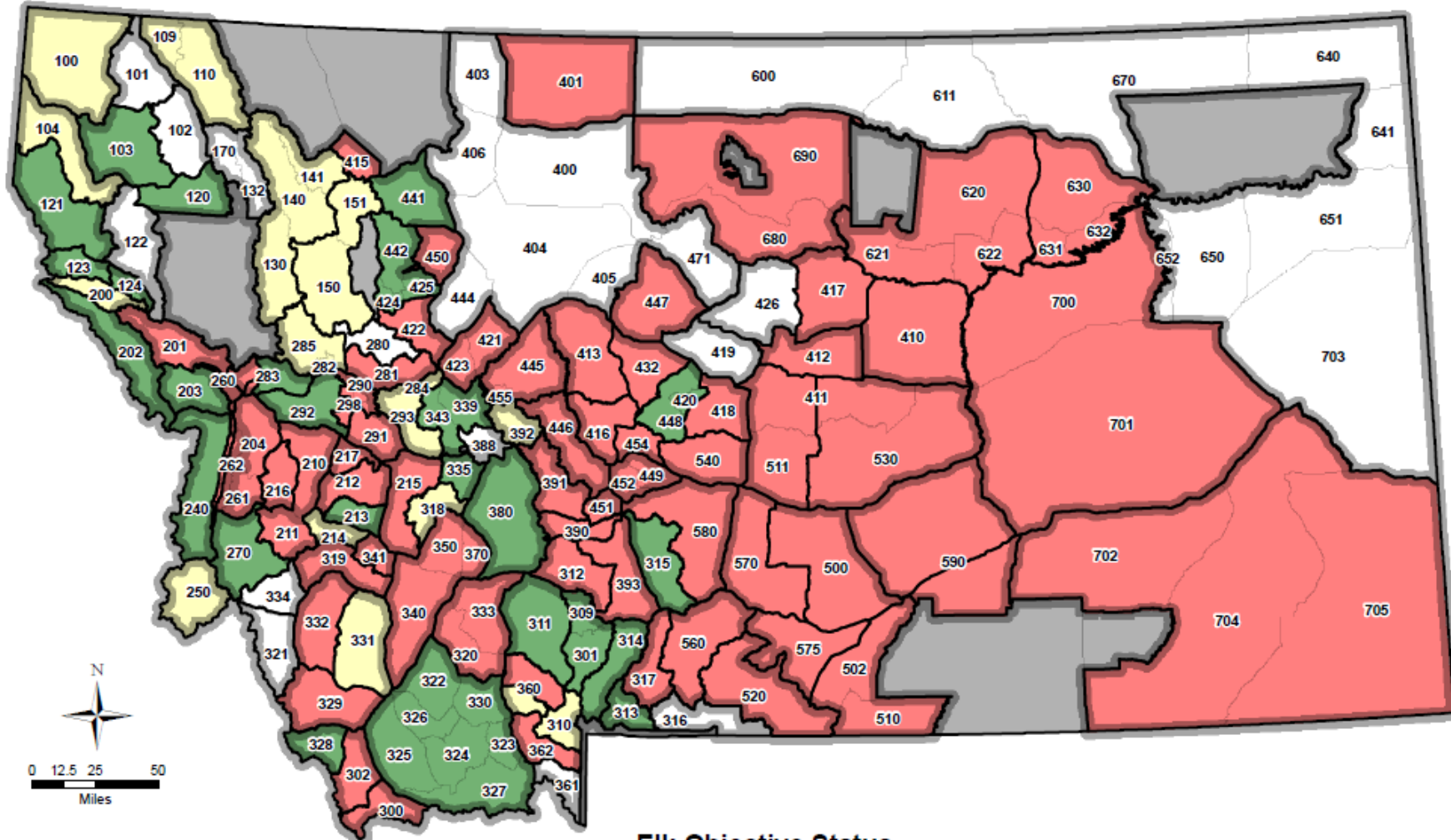
MCA 87-1-323

(3) The department shall:

- (a) manage with the objective that populations of elk, deer, and antelope are at or below the sustainable population number *[i.e. Population Objective]* by January 1, 2009

In summer 2014, FWP Director Jeff Hagener authorized an internal process to explore and develop guidelines for the 2016–2017 biennial elk season setting process. This was in response to Gov. Bullock’s charge to improve landowner relations and specifically in response to criticism that FWP was not meeting elk objectives.

Elk Population Objective Status by Hunting District - 2017



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

\\Projects\213\ObjectiveStatusMaps\Elk\2017\ElkObjective2017_Status.mxd
MFWP - SPDS - MAM 6/27/2017

Elk Objective Status

- Below Objective Range
- Within Objective Range
- Above Objective Range

- Not a Hunting District
- Not Applicable (No stated objective, no wintering elk or no survey flown)
- Elk Survey Unit Boundaries
- Elk Management Unit Boundaries

Performance-Based Shoulder Seasons

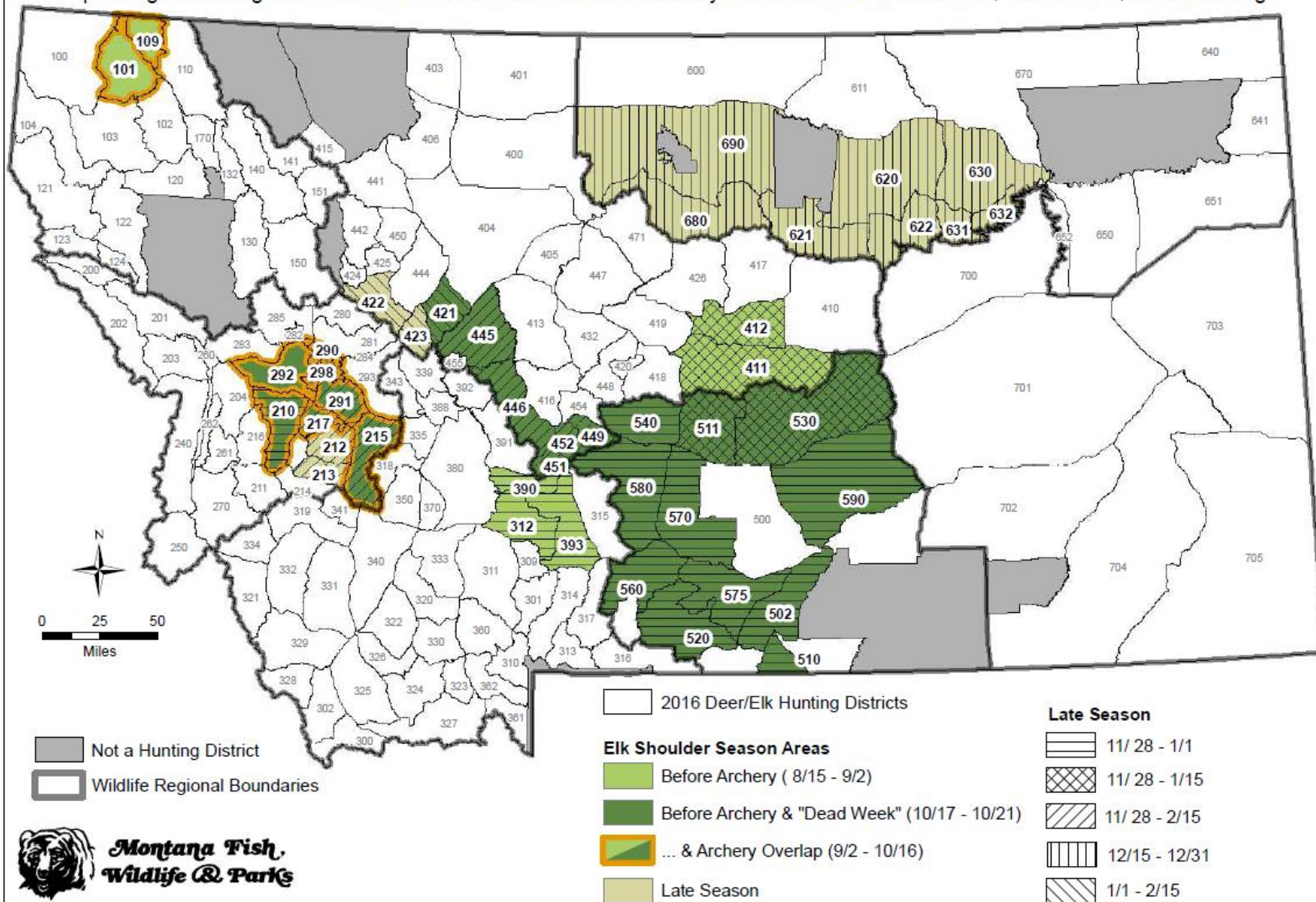
In response to Legislative, Gubernatorial, Director's and Commission direction

- **Primary intent of shoulder seasons is to reduce elk populations to objective.**
- Firearms seasons that occurs outside the 5-week general firearms season and focuses on antlerless elk harvest on private land.
- Not intended to replace or reduce harvest during archery and general firearms seasons.
- Have “performance criteria” regarding the timing, make-up and number of elk to be harvested in order to maintain the season.

2016 Elk Shoulder Seasons

Hunting for ANTLERLESS ELK ONLY

Depending on hunting district shoulder seasons are: Private Land Only -or- Not Valid on Nat'l Forest, FWP WMAs, or CMR Refuge



FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVES

Elk considerations:

- Manage elk populations to objective as rapidly as possible.
- Increase harvest of elk, where appropriate.

Hunter and landowner considerations:

- Address problematic distributions of elk and elk harvest.
- Enhance free public access to bulls and cows on private land during the general seasons.
- Reduce exclusive access to elk.
- Enhance landowner flexibility to manage elk hunting on their property.
- Reduce game damage.
- Reduce hunter impacts on landowners (e.g., cost of hiring additional staff, loss of productivity, property damage from hunters, etc.).
- Simplify rules and regulations.

Logistical considerations:

- Balance statewide consistency with local flexibility of regulations, rules, and policies.
- Keep staff time and cost down.

Performance-Based Shoulder Season Harvest Criteria – evaluated on a 3-year basis

1. The number of **bulls and cows (each evaluated separately) harvested during the archery-only and 5-week general seasons** is more than half (>50%) the number of bulls and cows recruited **AND**
2. The **total harvest of cows during all seasons combined** (archery, 5-week firearms and shoulder seasons) is more than the number of cows recruited **AND**
3. The **total harvest of all elk (including calves) during all seasons combined** is more than the total number of elk recruited **OR**
4. If harvest criteria have not been met due to clear and widely accepted extenuating circumstances (e.g., weather, forest fire, etc.), the shoulder season may be continued, **as long as access to elk during the general season is not considered to be the main reason** harvest criteria are not being met.

OR:

6. Other shoulder seasons not subject to the above harvest criteria are allowed if they are consistent with the fundamental objectives and have broad, expressed support from landowners, sportsmen, FWP and the Commission.

2016-2017 ELK SHOULDER SEASONS



Shoulder seasons will be offered in 43 hunting districts.

A shoulder season is a firearms season that occurs outside the 5-week general firearms season. The seasons focus on antlerless elk harvest on **private land** and are not intended to replace or reduce harvest during the existing general archery and 5-week general firearms season.

In order for shoulder seasons to be effective, everyone must work together – FWP, landowners and sportsmen.

Hunters can use their General Elk License or Elk B License, obtained through a limited drawing or over-the-counter (OTC), depending on the hunting district.

Application deadline for limited B Licenses is June 1. OTC and any surplus B Licenses are available for purchase beginning August 8. Check for availability at fwp.mt.gov.

Region	Valid in Hunting District(s)	License Type	Shoulder Season Dates
1	HD 101 and 109	B License by drawing only	Aug 15 – Oct 16
2	HD 210	B Licenses by drawing only	Aug 15 – Jan 01
	HD 212 and 213	B License by drawing only	Dec 01 – Feb 15
	HD 215	OTC B License	Aug 15 – Feb 15
	HD 217	OTC B License, B License by drawing only & General Elk License	Aug 15 – Feb 15*
	HD 290 and 298	OTC B License	Aug 15 – Feb 15
	HD 291	B License by drawing only	Aug 15 – Feb 15
	HD 292	B License by drawing only	Aug 15 – Oct 21
3	HD 312, 390 and 393	OTC B License	Aug 15 – Sep 02, Nov 28 – Jan 01
	HD 390 and 393	General Elk License	Nov 28 – Jan 01
4	HD 411 and 412	B License by drawing only & General Elk License	Aug 15 – Sep 02, Nov 28 – Jan 15*
	HD 421	B License by drawing only	Aug 15 – Sep 02, Jan 01 – Feb 15
	HD 422 and 423	B License by drawing only	Jan 01 – Feb 15
	HD 445, 446, 449, 451 and 452	B License by drawing only & General Elk License	Aug 15 – Sep 02, Oct 17 – Oct 21, Nov 28 – Feb 15
5	All R5 except HD 500, 511 and 530	B License by drawing only & General Elk License	Aug 15 – Sep 02, Oct 17 – Oct 21, Nov 28 – Jan 01*
	HD 511 and 530	B License by drawing only & General Elk License	Aug 15 – Sep 02, Oct 17 – Oct 21, Nov 28 – Jan 15*
6	HD 680 and 690	B License by drawing only	Dec 15 – Dec 31
	HD 620, 621, 622, 630, 631 and 632		
*Some licenses are not valid in all hunting district portions or for all shoulder season dates as described. See individual hunting regulations			

Hunters should start early in the year in establishing contacts and building relationships with landowners who may offer access for Montana's elk shoulder season hunts.

KNOW THE REGULATIONS

116 Turn In Poachers. Enough is Enough! Make the call: 1-800-TIP-MONT (1-800-847-6668)



Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks

43 Hunting Districts

- 3 (HDs 101, 109 & 292) meant to redistribute elk among many small properties (HD 311 added in 2017).
- 40 meant to reduce elk numbers
 - 8 in Region 2
 - 3 in Region 3
 - 11 in Region 4
 - 10 in Region 5
 - 8 in Region 6



The 2016 Season = Poor

“This season was quite a contrast to 2015--harvest was down 30-50% in all my districts, for both the general and shoulder, due to the unseasonably mild weather. It will be important to put this in context, if asked, b/c both access and landowner participation actually increased for 2016 despite the lower harvest success.”

Jay Kolbe
White Sulphur Springs
Area Biologist

If harvest criteria have not been met due to clear and widely accepted extenuating circumstances (e.g., weather, forest fire, etc.), the shoulder season may be continued, **as long as access to elk during the general season is not considered to be the main reason** harvest criteria are not being met.

Montana 2016 Shoulder Season Performance Criteria Evaluation. Green cells = meets criteria, orange = does not meet criteria.

2016 Harvest Criteria - Harvest that is needed and harvest that was realized												
Hunting District(s)	Pop Obj	2016			Archery and General Seasons ^a				All Seasons Combined ^b (Archery+General+Shoulder)			
		Last Count	Recruitment		Adult Cows		Adult Bulls		Adult Cows		Cows + Bulls + Calves	
			Cows	Bulls	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized
101	NA ^c	NA ^c			NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
109/110	NA ^c	NA ^c			NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
210/211	1450	2281	221	147	113	125	75	128	221	246	368	392
212	400	1851	117	77	60	39	39	134	117	91	194	240
213	750	516	50	41	26	55	21	73	50	75	91	151
215	1400	2765	293	195	149	179	99	213	293	429	488	659
217	600	1225	96	64	49	58	33	42	96	240	160	301
290/298	600	767	95	63	48	86	32	54	95	148	158	215
291	600	1368	119	79	61	58	40	57	119	174	198	240
292	NA ^c	NA ^c			NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
312	600	1058	129	86	66	142	44	199	129	270	215	475
390	900	2321	315	210	161	91	107	75	315	189	525	273
393	1500	3027	415	277	212	175	141	189	415	306	692	510
411/511/530	800	5452	468	379	239	239	193	281	468	414	847	717
412	300	730	86	57	44	57	29	64	86	108	143	179
421/423	500	660	74	50	38	87	26	79	74	118	124	200
422	500	1685	186	124	95	64	63	55	186	143	310	203
445/455	2500	3976	457	305	233	199	156	140	457	260	762	415
446	950	2114	270	180	138	134	92	212	270	283	450	513
449/452	600	1501	192	128	98	93	65	133	192	132	320	284
451	275	538	89	59	45	22	30	35	89	62	148	100
502/510W	60	158	22	15	11	16	8	13	22	22	37	32
520NW	850	1191	190	127	97	61	65	78	190	107	317	191
540	600	1786	340	226	173	100	115	76	340	151	566	243
560N	400	1356	150	100	77	98	51	113	150	157	250	290
570	100	576	88	59	45	19	30	47	88	47	147	97
575	225	992	147	99	75	73	50	45	147	89	246	137
580	975	4616	581	387	296	160	197	261	581	224	968	487
590N	750	2331	383	255	195	154	130	245	383	235	638	484
620/621/622	1650	2869	457	305	233	272	156	267	457	310	762	598
630/631/632	350	535	85	56	43	62	29	63	85	98	141	164
680/690	250	435	90	60	46	71	31	46	90	85	150	138
Total	21435	50680	6205	4210	3165	2989	2147	3417	6205	5213	10415	8928

^aHarvest of adult bulls and cows (no calves) during the archery and general seasons combined must be a number ≥51% of recruitment for both bulls and cows.

^bHarvest during all seasons combined (archery, general and shoulder seasons) must be a combined harvest of bulls, cows **and calves** ≥100% of recruitment of all elk.

^cShoulder seasons in these hunting districts are not intended for population reduction but for redistributing elk. Harvest criteria do not apply.

2016

This is **ONE** year of Data and only an update.

The *real* evaluation is after **THREE** years.

Montana 2016 Shoulder Season Performance Criteria Evaluation. Green cells = meets criteria, orange = does not meet criteria.

2016 Harvest Criteria - Harvest that is needed and harvest that was realized												
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		Last	Recruitment		Adult Cows		Adult Bulls		Adult Cows		Cows + Bulls + Calves	
		Count	Cows	Bulls	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized
101	NA ^c	NA ^c			NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
109/110	NA ^c	NA ^c			NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
210/211	1450	2281	221	147	113	125	75	128	221	246	368	392
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213	750	516	50	41	26	55	21	73	50	75	91	151
215	1400	2765	293	195	149	179	99	213	293	429	488	659
217	600	1225	96	64	49	58	33	42	96	240	160	301
290/298	600	767	95	63	48	86	32	54	95	148	158	215
291	600	1368	119	79	61	58	40	57	119	174	198	240
292	NA ^c	NA ^c			NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
312	600	1058	129	86	66	142	44	199	129	270	215	475
390	900	2321	315	210	161	91	107	75	315	189	525	273
393	1500	3027	415	277	212	175	141	189	415	306	692	510
411/511/530	800	5452	468	379	239	239	193	281	468	414	847	717
412	300	730	86	57	44	57	29	64	86	108	143	179
421/423	500	660	74	50	38	87	26	79	74	118	124	200
422	500	1685	186	124	95	64	63	55	186	143	310	203
445/455	2500	3976	457	305	233	199	156	140	457	260	762	415
446	950	2114	270	180	138	134	92	212	270	283	450	513
449/452	600	1501	192	128	98	93	65	133	192	132	320	284
451	275	538	89	59	45	22	30	35	89	62	148	100
502/510W	60	158	22	15	11	16	8	13	22	22	37	32
520NW	850	1191	190	127	97	61	65	78	190	107	317	191
540	600	1786	340	226	173	100	115	76	340	151	566	243
560N	400	1356	150	100	77	98	51	113	150	157	250	290
570	100	576	88	59	45	19	30	47	88	47	147	97
575	225	992	147	99	75	73	50	45	147	89	246	137
580	975	4616	581	387	296	160	197	261	581	224	968	487
590N	750	2331	383	255	195	154	130	245	383	235	638	484
620/621/622	1650	2869	457	305	233	272	156	267	457	310	762	598
630/631/632	350	535	85	56	43	62	29	63	85	98	141	164
680/690	250	435	90	60	46	71	31	46	90	85	150	138
Total	21435	50680	6205	4210	3165	2989	2147	3417	6205	5213	10415	8928

2016

Short Shoulder Season

--To Jan 1st--

- 25% met Criteria

^aHarvest of adult bulls and cows (no calves) during the archery and general seasons combined must be a number ≥51% of recruitment for both bulls and cows.

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			Cows	Bulls	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized
101	NA ^c	NA ^c			NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
109/110	NA ^c	NA ^c			NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
210/211	1450	2281	221	147	113	125	75	128	221	246	368	392
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213	750	516	50	41	26	55	21	73	50	75	91	151
215	1400	2765	293	195	149	179	99	213	293	429	488	659
217	600	1225	96	64	49	58	33	42	96	240	160	301
290/298	600	767	95	63	48	86	32	54	95	148	158	215
291	600	1368	119	79	61	58	40	57	119	174	198	240
292	NA ^c	NA ^c			NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
312	600	1058	129	86	66	142	44	199	129	270	215	475
390	900	2321	315	210	161	91	107	75	315	189	525	273
393	1500	3027	415	277	212	175	141	189	415	306	692	510
411/511/530	800	5452	468	379	239	239	193	281	468	414	847	717
412	300	730	86	57	44	57	29	64	86	108	143	179
421/423	500	660	74	50	38	87	26	79	74	118	124	200
422	500	1685	186	124	95	64	63	55	186	143	310	203
445/455	2500	3976	457	305	233	199	156	140	457	260	762	415
446				180	138	134	92	212	270	283	450	513
449/4				128	98	93	65	133	192	132	320	284
451				59	45	22	30	35	89	62	148	100
502/51				15	11	16	8	13	22	22	37	32
520N				127	97	61	65	78	190	107	317	191
540				226	173	100	115	76	340	151	566	243
560				100	77	98	51	113	150	157	250	290
570	100	576	88	59	45	19	30	47	88	47	147	97
575	25	992	147	99	75	73	50	45	147	89	246	137
580	75	4616	581	387	296	160	197	261	581	224	968	487
590N	0	2331	383	255	195	154	130	245	383	235	638	484
620/621/622	165	2869	457	305	233	272	156	267	457	310	762	598
630/631/632	350	535	85	56	43	62	29	63	85	98	141	164
680/690	250	435	90	60	46	71	31	46	90	85	150	138
Total	21435	50680	6205	4210	3165	2989	2147	3417	6205	5213	10415	8928

2016

Short Shoulder Season

-- To Jan 1st --

- 25% met Criteria

Long Shoulder Season

--To Feb 15th--

- 60% met Criteria

General season
bull harvest was
met, cow harvest
was 176 short

Achieved 84% of
cow harvest, was
992 short

^aHarvest of adult bulls and cows (no calves) during the archery and general seasons combined must be a number $\geq 51\%$ of recruitment for adult bulls and cows.

^bHarvest during all seasons combined (archery, general and shoulder seasons) must be a combined harvest of bulls, cows **and calves** $\geq 100\%$ of recruitment of all elk.

^cShoulder seasons in these hunting districts are not intended for population reduction but for redistributing elk. Harvest criteria do not apply.

Montana 2017 Montana Shoulder Season Performance Criteria Evaluation. Green cell = meets criteria, orange = does not meet criteria.

2017 Harvest Criteria - Harvest that is needed and harvest that was realized												
Hunting District(s)	Pop Obj	2017			Archery and General Seasons ^a				All Seasons Combined ^b (Archery+General+Shoulder)			
		Last Count	Recruitment		Adult Cows		Adult Bulls		Adult Cows		Cows + Bulls + Calves	
			Cows	Bulls	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized
101	NA ^c	NA ^c			NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
109/110	NA ^c	NA ^c			NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
210/211	1450	1901	185	111	94	160	57	235	185	290	296	533
212	400	1475	159	106	81	63	54	167	159	101	265	277
213	750	651	60	40	31	66	20	60	60	70	100	144
215	1400	2850	277	185	141	263	94	417	227	498	462	938
217	600	1384	150	100	77	51	51	71	150	159	250	234
290/298	600	845	47	31	24	91	16	69	74	138	78	218
291	600	1411	139	92	71	50	47	128	139	130	231	262
292	NA ^c	NA ^c			NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
311	NA ^c	NA ^c			NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
312	600	1551	230	153	117	236	78	255	230	301	383	587
390	900	2252	222	148	113	150	75	214	222	210	370	453
393	1500	3381	506	337	258	292	172	319	506	437	843	773
411/511/530	800	5962	912	608	465	369	310	287	912	529	1520	853
412	300	735	95	63	48	107	32	61	95	148	158	225
421/423	500	783	62	41	32	32	21	100	62	69	103	180
422	500	1508	154	103	79	77	53	91	154	149	257	242
445/455	2500	4363	466	310	238	210	158	200	466	290	776	504
446	950	1893	234	156	119	157	80	224	234	260	390	507
449/452	600	1073	132	88	67	129	158	171	132	214	220	414
451	275	628	73	49	37	20	25	37	73	32	122	77
502/510W	60	158	22	15	11	20	8	17	22	26	37	48
520NW	850	1386	210	141	107	63	72	102	210	101	351	208
540	600	2046	427	284	218	141	145	174	427	178	711	366
560N	400	2031	274	183	140	113	93	171	274	180	457	360
570	100	472	68	45	35	63	23	55	68	85	113	146
575	225	1173	141	95	72	75	48	40	141	105	236	154
580	975	4846	505	337	258	223	172	280	505	326	842	622
590N	750	2703	413	275	211	299	140	246	413	389	688	660
620/621/622	1650	2860	457	205	233	221	156	195	457	259	762	457
630/631/632	350				43	44	29	56	85	46		
680/690	250				56	41	38	32	110	52		
Total	21435	53388	6815	4531	3477	3826	2424	4474	6792	5772	11346	10632

^aHarvest of adult bulls and cows (no calves) during the archery and general seasons combined must be a number ≥51% of recruitment for both bulls and cows.

^bHarvest during all seasons combined (archery, general and shoulder seasons) must be a combined harvest of bulls, cows **and calves** ≥100% of recruitment of all elk.

^cShoulder seasons in these hunting districts are not intended for population reduction but for redistributing elk. Harvest criteria do not apply.

2017

Short Shoulder Season

--To Jan 1st--

- 42% met Criteria

Long Shoulder Season

--To Feb 15th--

- 70% met Criteria

Exceeded by 349

Short by 1,020

Montana 2016 and 2017 combined Montana Shoulder Season Performance Criteria Evaluation. Green cell = meets criteria, orange = does not meet criteria.

			2016 + 2017 Harvest Criteria - Harvest that is needed and harvest that was realized									
		2016 + 2017			Archery and General Seasons ^a				All Seasons Combined ^b (Archery+General+Shoulder)			
	Pop	Last	Recruitment		Adult Cows		Adult Bulls		Adult Cows		Cows + Bulls + Calves	
Hunting District(s)	Obj	Count	Cows	Bulls	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized	Needed	Realized
101					NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
109/110					NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c		NA ^c	
210/211			406	258	207	285	132	363	406	536	664	925
212			276	183	141	102	93	301	276	192	459	517
213			110	81	56	121	41	133	110	145	191	295
215			570	380	291	442	194	630	520	927	950	1597
217			246	164	125	109	84	113	246	399	410	535
290/298			142	94	72	177	48	123	169	286	236	433
291			258	171	132	108	87	185	258	304	429	502
292												
311												
312			359	239	183	378	122	454	359	571	598	1062
390			537	358	274	241	183	289	537	399	895	726
393			921	614	470	467	313	508	921	743	1535	1283
411/511/530			1380	987	704	608	503	568	1380	943	2367	1570
412			181	120	92	164	61	125	181	256	301	404
421/423			136	91	69	119	46	179	136	187	227	380
422			340	227	173	141	116	146	340	292	567	445
445/455			923	615	471	409	314	340	923	550	1538	919
446			504	336	257	291	171	436	504	543	840	1020
449/452			324	216	165	222	110	304	324	346	540	698
451			162	108	83	42	55	72	162	94	270	177
502/510W			44	30	22	36	15	30	44	48	74	80
520NW			400	268	204	124	137	180	400	208	668	399
540			767	510	391	241	260	250	767	329	1277	609
560N			424	283	216	211	144	284	424	337	707	650
570			156	104	80	82	53	102	156	132	260	243
575			288	194	147	148	99	85	288	194	482	291
580			1086	724	554	383	369	541	1086	550	1810	1109
590N			796	530	406	453	270	491	796	624	1326	1144
620/621/622					466	493	311	462	914	569	1524	1055
630/631/632					87	106	57	119	170	144		
680/690					102	112	68	78	200	137		
Total			13020	8741	6640	6815	4458	7891	12997	10985	21761	19560

^aHarvest of adult bulls and cows (no calves) during the archery and general seasons combined must be a number ≥51% of recruitment for both bulls and cows.

^bHarvest during all seasons combined (archery, general and shoulder seasons) must be a combined harvest of bulls, cows **and calves** ≥100% of recruitment of all elk.

^cShoulder seasons in these hunting districts are not intended for population reduction but for redistributing elk. Harvest criteria do not apply.

2016
&
2017

Short Shoulder Season
-- To Jan 1st --

- 25% met Criteria

Long Shoulder Season
--To Feb 15th--

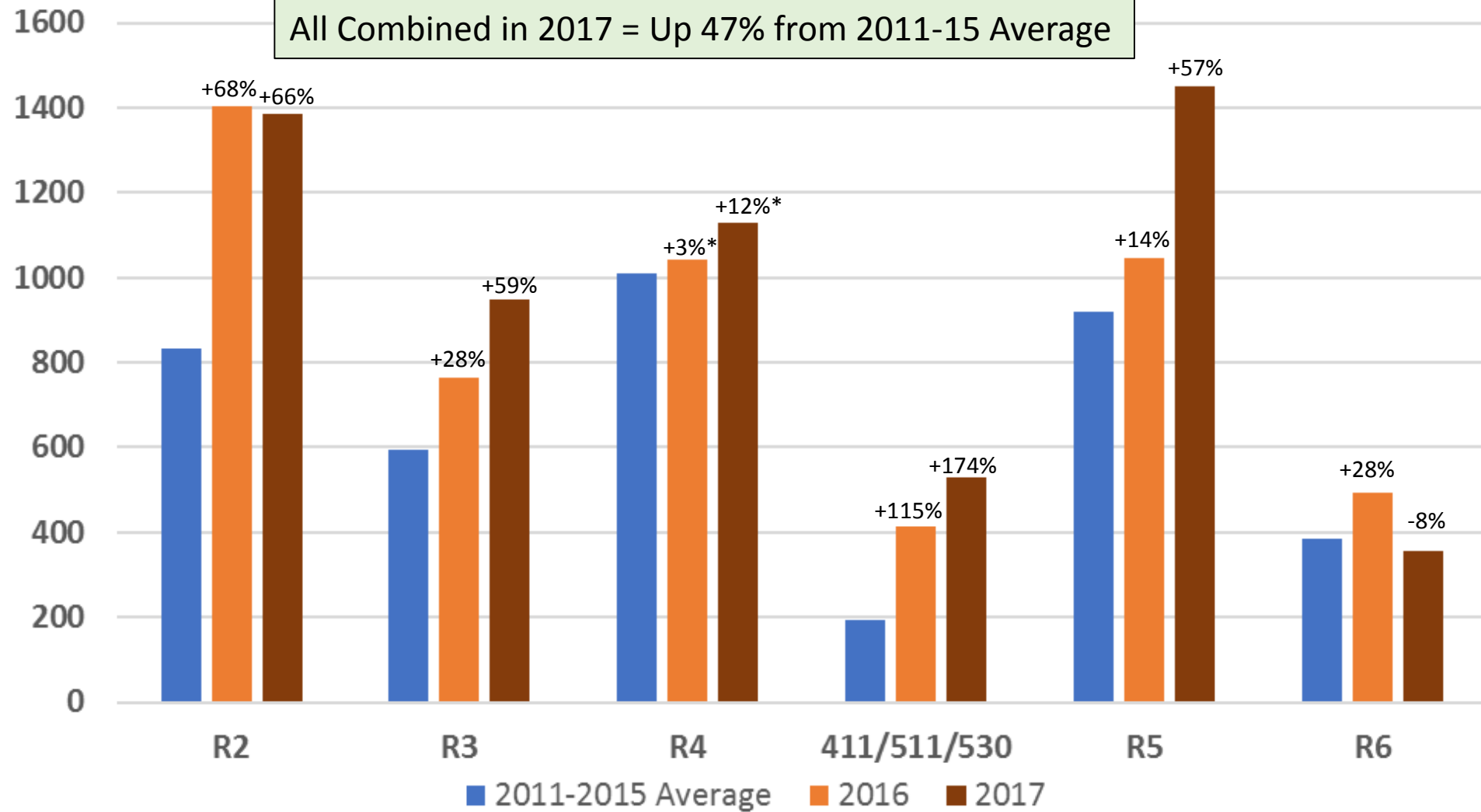
- 70% met Criteria

Exceeded by 175

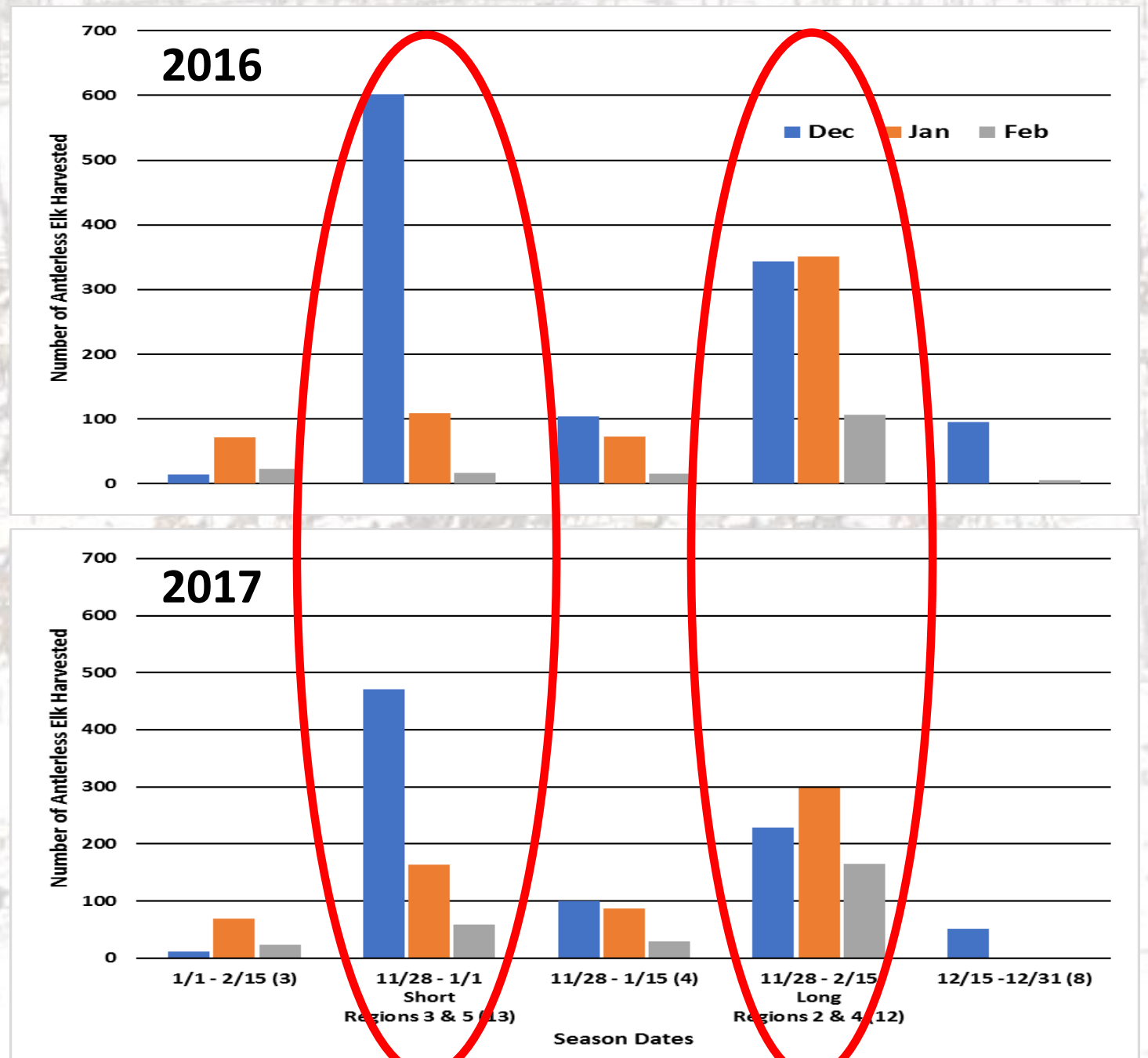
Short by 2,012

Cow Harvest in Shoulder Season Hunting Districts

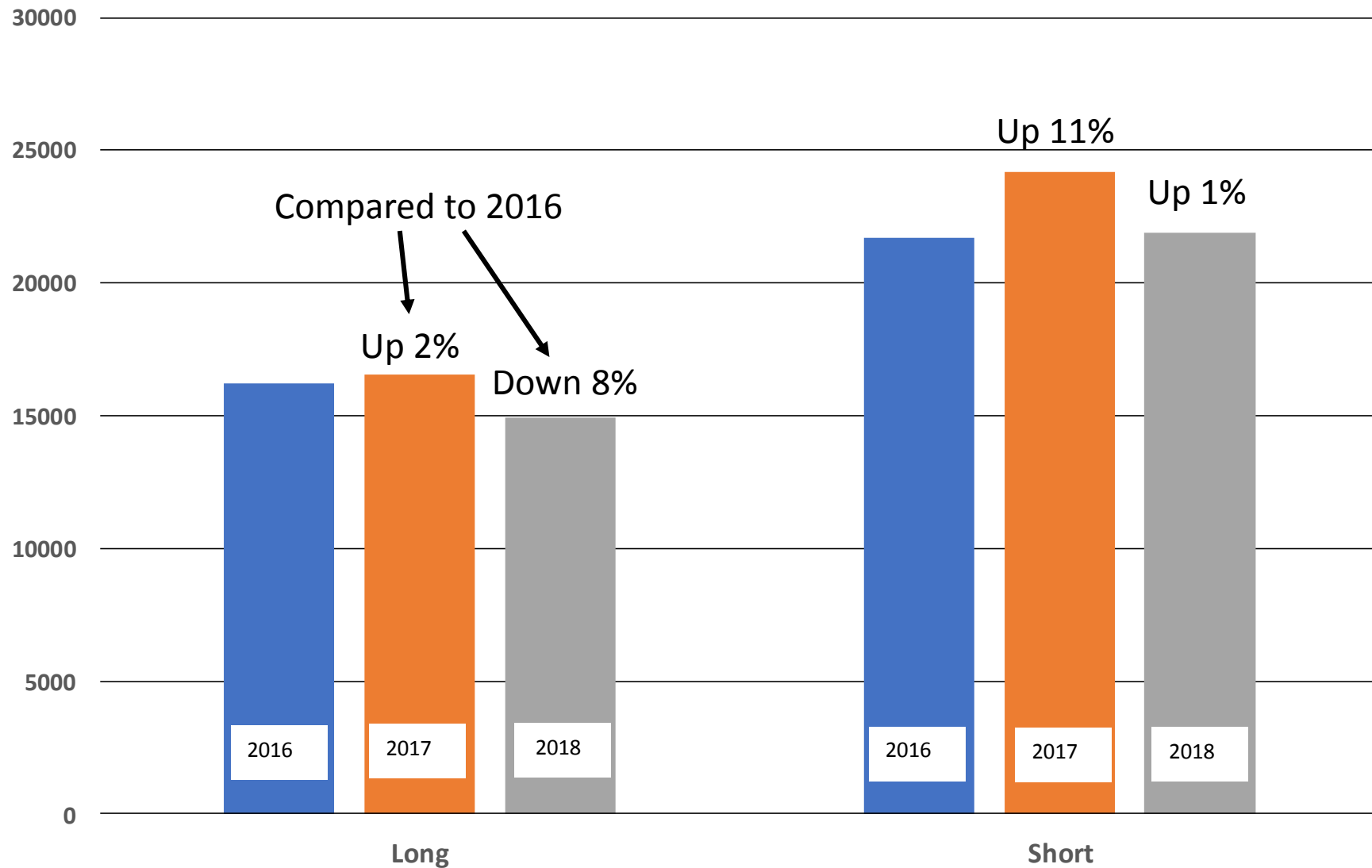
All Combined in 2017 = Up 47% from 2011-15 Average



Timing of Late Season Antlerless Elk Harvest (cows and calves) by different Season Lengths



Elk Counted in HDs with a Long vs. Short Late Season



Shoulder Seasons

Summary

- **2016 was a Bad Elk Hunting Year**
 - Mild Fall & Snowy Winter. Even so, cow harvest was 33% above previous 5-year average
- **2017 cow harvest was 47% above previous average**
- **Long Late Season did better than Short**
 - Overall, long seasons achieved 108% of needed cow harvest
 - Short seasons achieved 58% of needed cow harvest
- **There did not appear to be a shift away from general season harvest**
- **Population counts reflect a change**



Questions?