

**From:** Montana FWP - Region 5 <montanafwp@announcements.mt.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 13, 2023 9:31 AM  
**To:** Ravalli County Commissioners Office  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fair weather for antelope season opener in south-central Montana



## **FWP NEWS RELEASE**

**Region 5 Headquarters**

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THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

# **Fair weather for antelope season opener in south-central Montana**

## *Harvest and hunter numbers similar to 2022, below long-term average*

**BILLINGS** - Fair weather across south-central Montana over the opening weekend of general antelope season led to good hunting conditions. Overall, harvest and hunter numbers were similar to opening weekend in 2022, but below long-term averages. FWP operated game check stations in Big Timber and Broadview on both Saturday and Sunday of the opening weekend. The general antelope season is open until Nov. 12.

The Big Timber check station had 199 hunters and the Broadview station had 200 hunters, both relatively consistent with hunter numbers recorded last year over the same weekend. FWP staff checked 126 total antelope at the Big Timber check station and 65 in Broadview. The number of big game hunters and the number of harvested antelope were below long-term averages for both check stations.

At the Big Timber check station, hunter success was 65%, an increase from last year's 56% success rate. Success rate at the Broadview check station was 34%, consistent with the rate observed last year.

The majority of harvested antelope at both check stations were bucks. Younger age classes were lacking in the harvest, likely the result of poor fawn recruitment in recent years. Good horn growth in older bucks was observed at the Broadview check station.

There was an increase in the number of upland bird hunters at both check stations, with 48 bird hunters at the Big Timber station and 26 in Broadview. Two

harvested elk were checked at each station over the weekend. No harvested deer were checked.

All hunters are required to stop at game check stations, regardless of success. No check stations will operate this weekend, Oct. 14-15. In south-central Montana, check stations in Billings, Lavina, Columbus and Big Timber will operate on both Saturday, Oct. 21, and Sunday, Oct. 22, for the opening weekend of the general deer and elk season.

Hunting regulations for deer, elk and antelope are available online at: [fwp.mt.gov/binaries/content/assets/fwp/hunt/regulations/2023/2023-dea-regulations-final-for-web.pdf](http://fwp.mt.gov/binaries/content/assets/fwp/hunt/regulations/2023/2023-dea-regulations-final-for-web.pdf).

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