

**Chris Taggart**

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**From:** Montana FWP - Region 5 <montanafwp@announcements.mt.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 31, 2023 2:30 PM  
**To:** Ravalli County Commissioners Office  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Cold, sunny weather and low hunter turnout in south-central Montana for week two



## **FWP NEWS RELEASE**

**Region 5 Headquarters**

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THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.



*Hank Luepke harvested his first elk and received an achievement certifiacte at the Columbus check station this weekend. Congrats to all new hunters! Courtesy photo.*

## **Cold, sunny weather and low hunter turnout in south-central Montana for week two**

**BILLINGS** - Hunter turnout throughout south-central Montana over the second weekend of the big game general season was below average. However, those who hunted in the cold, sunny weather experienced success rates consistent with long-term averages for the same weekend.

Check stations in Billings, Lavina, and Big Timber operated on Sunday only. These check stations will operate only on Sundays until the closing weekend of the general season, when they will all operate on both Saturday, Nov. 25, and Sunday, Nov. 26. The Columbus check station operated on both Saturday and Sunday and will maintain this schedule for the entire season. All hunters are required to stop at game check stations as directed, regardless of success.

A total of 440 hunters visited check stations across the region over the second weekend of the season. Elk were the most abundantly harvested species in the region this weekend, with 45 total elk checked across the four check stations. Mule deer harvest was well below the long-term average at each check station, while white-tailed deer harvest was more consistent to the long-term averages.

Success rates ranged from 42% at the Big Timber station down to 23% recorded at the Lavina check station. All check stations, however, observed success rates consistent with their long-term averages for the second weekend. The Lavina check station has been the busiest in the region each weekend of the general season so far.

Several first-time hunters for various species visited check stations over the weekend. Congratulations to all those who harvested their first deer, elk, or antelope!

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks recently launched an online portal providing hunters the opportunity to thank landowners that provide access. This new online feature is part of the “It’s Up To Us” campaign to promote ethical hunting. This campaign is an annual effort with FWP and several partner organizations to encourage hunters to take the initiative to promote good hunter ethics and behavior, particularly on private lands. The campaign website is [fwp.mt.gov/itsuptous](http://fwp.mt.gov/itsuptous). Here hunters can find tips on ethical hunting, links to informative video content and the new “Thank a Landowner” portal.

**Check Station Results**

**[Download the MyFWP mobile app](#) to access your hunting and fishing licenses right on your phone!**



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