

2013 Kentucky Elk Hunt Survey

Final Report



Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources

January 2014

Executive Summary

Survey Purpose & Methods: In order to better understand Kentucky elk hunters' experiences and opinions, agency staff conducted a survey during summer 2014 that sought responses from all elk hunt applicants who were drawn for the 2013 elk hunt. The survey was mixed-mode: we first invited by email and postcard the selected applicants to complete an online questionnaire, after which we followed up with nonrespondents using a mail questionnaire. We received a total of 691 unique, completed surveys from the 1,010 applicants drawn, for an overall response rate of 68.4%.

Reasons for applying: The most important reasons for participants entering the drawing were: opportunity to harvest an elk, opportunity to hunt elk in my home state, opportunity for special memories with friends or family, an opportunity to bring home a substantial amount of meat. In terms of selecting permit types to apply for, respondents indicated that their "likely odds of being drawn for a particular hunt type" and "choice of [hunting] method" were more important than "sex of the animal" or other factors.

Selection of Hunting Areas: About half of respondents applied for an area to hunt based on "recommendation from a friend or acquaintance." Other prevalent reasons included prior knowledge of the area and availability of public land. About one-third used the help of friends or acquaintances to locate hunting properties, while 18% were assisted by someone who had hunted elk in Kentucky before, 16% used the Department website, 12% used an elk guide/outfitter, and 11% used the elk hunt packet sent by the Department.

Travel & Time Invested: Respondents typically made nearly 4 trips to the elk zone to hunt and hunted 4.7 days each, on average. Respondents hunted the North At-Large Area (29%) and the Hazard LEA (26.6%) most frequently. Over half made trips (average of 3.5 trips) to the elk zone primarily to scout, and they used the help of an average of 2 people to scout. Elk hunters used the help of 2.6 helpers, who spent between 2.5 and 3.6 days helping, on average.

Expenditures: Elk hunters spent considerable amounts of money in both scouting and hunting. While scouting, they spent an average of \$926 per hunter inside the elk zone and \$545 outside the elk zone. While hunting, they spent \$1206 inside the elk zone and \$1438 outside the zone on average per hunter.

Guides: About 36% of hunters hired guides/outfitters for hunting, and spent an average of \$624 for their services.

Hunting Experiences: From among those drawn to hunt, 88.5% reported that they actually went hunting. (This very closely mirrors the percentage of drawn applicants who purchased a 2013 elk hunt permit). Just over three-fourths of respondents reported harvesting an elk. Less than 1% reported shooting at and missing or wounding an elk.

Hunting Methods: About two-thirds of respondents (64%) used firearms and just over a third (36%) bowhunted. Firearms hunters overwhelmingly used centerfire rifles (99%); less than 1% of firearms hunters used an optional bow or crossbow. The average bullet size was 171 grains, and the most popular calibers were .30-06, .300, .270, and 7mm. Bowhunters mainly used compound bows (75%) or crossbows (23%); average draw weight was 80 pounds and broadhead size 109 grains. Most bowhunters applied for archery elk permits either “to use archery equipment” or “for better odds of getting drawn.” The hunting techniques most used were: “spot and stalk mostly on foot” (59%), “spot and stalk mostly with a vehicle” (38%) and using a “blind or stand over a trail or travel corridor” (13%).

Future Hunts: About 91% of respondents intend to apply for the 2015 or other future elk hunts. Important factors influencing decision to apply for future hunts include: total number of elk permits available, number of hunt types/options that they may apply for, number of elk permits available per hunt type, and amount of public land in elk zone. Nearly all (96%) respondents were interested in harvesting a Kentucky bull elk in the future, but opinions about balancing production of more “large-antlered bulls” and number of opportunities varied. When presented with photos of different bulls, a majority of hunters indicated they would shoot *any* of the bulls (ranged from a small 4x4 to a large 7x7) if they presented a safe and legal shot.

Big Game Hunts in Other States: Nearly 70% had applied for big game hunts elsewhere. Most-applied-for species were elk (24%), mule deer (15%), and white-tailed deer (10%). Those who had hunted in other states mostly used centerfire rifles (84%) or muzzleloaders (24%). Most attractive features of other states’ big game hunts were: amount of public land in hunt area, total number of tags/permits available to nonresidents, appeal of back-country experience, increased odds or rewards for repeat application, and ease of application.

Demographics: Resident respondents (603) represented 109 of the 120 Kentucky counties, and 83 nonresidents represented 21 other states. Participants were predominately male (91%) and the average age was 46 (age range of 7-89). Most applicants resided on rural areas not on a farm or ranch (32%), in a rural area on a farm or ranch (30%), or in a small city/town (22%). Household incomes most frequently reported were \$50,000-\$99,999 (43%), \$100,000 to \$249,000 (24%), and \$25,000 to \$49,999 (20%).

Introduction

Kentucky's elk herd is estimated by the Department at 10,000 animals (Crank et al. 2014)—larger than all other elk herds east of the Rocky Mountains combined. The Commonwealth's elk hunt attracts substantial interest among resident and nonresident hunters, evidenced by tens of thousands of entries into the hunt drawing each year.

The four Kentucky elk hunt permit types available in 2013 were: bull firearms, bull archery, cow firearm, and cow archery. Applicants could apply for two of the four hunt permit types (two entries into the drawing). A randomized drawing was used to select a total of 1,010 applicants (1,000 regular permits and 10 youth-only permits) to be eligible to purchase the type of elk hunt permit they were drawn for. Elk hunt permit holders could then legally pursue their quarry in the southeastern 16 counties that comprise the elk zone. A maximum of 10% of nonresident applicants could be selected in the drawing; thus 90%+ of applicants selected in the drawing were residents.

In order to better understand the experiences and opinions of these elk hunters, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) implemented a survey of recent applicants. We sent invitations to participate in the survey to all 1,010 those drawn for the 2013 elk hunt.

Methods

Survey Implementation

As described above, the sampling frame consisted of the entire population of those selected to hunt. The survey was mixed mode and followed principles of the tailored design method (Dillman 1978, Dillman 2007), with some variations. Thus, in efforts to enhance response rate and representativeness, several waves of invitations (emails and postcards) with hyperlinks to the online questionnaire were sent to members of the sampling frame, followed by a cover letter and printed version of the questionnaire mailed to nonrespondents (Table 1).

Table 1. Waves of survey administration and responses received.

Date	Type of Communication with Potential Respondents	Number of Applicable Respondents	Number of New Responses Generated	
			Web	Mail
5/30/2014	Pre-survey email notification about the survey	858		
6/3/2014	Email invitation for web-based questionnaire	858	353	
6/9/2014	Email reminder for web-based questionnaire	487	111	
6/23/14	Postcard invitation for	127	19	

	web-based questionnaire			
7/14/14	Cover letter + print copy of questionnaire (including invitation for web-based questionnaire)	499	5	203

One mode employed in this survey was a web-based version of the questionnaire (Appendix 1). The web-based questionnaire was designed and implemented using customizable URL branding through SurveyMonkey®. The second mode was a parallel printed questionnaire (Appendix 2) distributed by mail to those who did not respond to email and postcard invitations to complete the online questionnaire. The postcards and mail survey’s cover featured a hyperlink to the online questionnaire, a scannable quick-response (QR) code, and unique survey identification numbers for each participant to enter. The online questionnaire prompted respondents to enter their survey identification numbers at the beginning of the online questionnaire, before they could proceed to subsequent questions.

Response Rate

We first sent email notifications about the survey, followed by email invitations, to 881 members of the 1,010-member sampling frame for whom we had email addresses; 488 respondents either partially or completely finished the online questionnaire in response to email invitations, and 12 emails were undeliverable. (These 12 individuals were subsequently included in the mailing to other email-nonrespondents because we had mailing addresses for all members of the sampling frame.) In response to postcard mailings or the mailed copies of the survey, an additional 68 respondents completed the questionnaire online; 3 mailings were returned to sender. One-hundred thirty-four (134) respondents completed and returned mail questionnaires, each of which had respondents’ unique survey identification number for tracking purposes. One completed mail questionnaire was a duplicate of a completed online submission, and was thus deleted. This resulted in a total of 691 questionnaire submissions. This resulted in a gross response rate of 68.4% (adjusted response rate of 68.7% factoring in the 3 undeliverable mails and 2 opt-outs).

Results

For simplicity, statistics for each question (highlighted in bold font) are listed below following each question asked in the survey. For some questions, responses may not total 100% because of nonresponse to that question (or a particular answer option), because some questions allowed respondents to select multiple answer options, or because of rounding.

Applying to Hunt

The most frequently cited important reminders to apply for the Kentucky elk hunt included word of mouth from friends or relatives and communications from KDFWR

(Table 2). The most important reasons for participants entering the drawing were: opportunity to harvest an elk, opportunity to hunt elk in my home state, opportunity for special memories with friends or family, an opportunity to bring home a substantial amount of meat (Table 3). In terms of selecting permit types to apply for, respondents indicated that their “likely odds of being drawn for a particular hunt type” and “choice of [hunting] method” were more important than “sex of the animal” or other factors (Table 4).

Table 2. Percents of responses to the question, “Which of the following were important in reminding you to enter the Kentucky elk hunt drawing, for any years you applied?” (in descending order by percent of responses).

Type of Communication	Percent
Reminder from relative or friend	43.4
Post card reminder from Kentucky Fish and Wildlife	34.8
Email reminder from Kentucky Fish and Wildlife	31.9
Elk hunts or ads on Kentucky Afield Television Show	23.8
Ad on Kentucky Fish & Wildlife’s website	20.3
Promotional ad card from Kentucky Fish and Wildlife	18.4
Article or ad in newspaper or magazine	11.9
Ad on a website other than KY Fish & Wildlife’s	6.5
Facebook or Twitter reminder from Kentucky Fish and Wildlife	5.8
Ads on the Sportsman Channel or other TV/cable networks	3.3
Radio Ad	2.3
Other (please specify)	0.8

*“Other” responses specified appear in Appendix 3.

Table 3. Percents of responses* to the question, “How important to you were the following reasons for entering the Kentucky elk hunt drawing in 2013?”

Reason	Percent				
	Not At All Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Neither Important Nor Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Opportunity to Harvest A large-antlered bull	10.6	2.8	15.9	18.3	52.4
Opportunity for special memories with friends or family	3.1	2.1	6.8	19.0	69.0
The high success rate of Kentucky elk hunters	4.5	3.0	18.3	31.4	42.8
Opportunity to hunt in a different place	8.9	2.8	15.7	31.4	41.2
The low cost of Kentucky’s elk hunt permits	3.8	3.1	14.3	24.6	54.1
Opportunity to bring home a substantial amount of meat	1.5	1.6	8.6	27.6	60.6
Opportunity to harvest an elk	0.6	0.4	3.1	11.2	84.6
Opportunity to hunt elk in my home state	5.9	0.8	5.0	10.6	77.8

*Respondents provided 46 “other” responses, ranging from “on my bucket list” to “To help Fish & Wildlife.” These are listed in Appendix 4.

Table 4. Percents of responses to the question, “When applying for your elk hunt permit, which ONE of the following options did you consider most important?” (in descending order by percent of responses).

Options	Percent
The likely odds of being drawn for a particular elk hunt type	38.8
Choice of method (firearm or bow/arrow)	37.8
Sex of the animal	19.7
Other (please specify)*	2.8

*"Other" responses given are listed in Appendix 5.

Hunt Areas

Nearly half of respondents applied for a designated hunt area based on recommendation from a friend or acquaintance; other prevalent reasons included prior knowledge of the area and availability of public land (Table 5). Nearly 30% reported hunting the North At-Large Area and just over one-fourth hunted the Hazard LEA, whereas just under one-fifth reported hunting each of the South At-Large Area and Straight Creek LEA (Table 6).

Pre-Hunt Scouting

Over half of respondents made trips to the elk zone to scout for their hunts (Table 7). The mean (average) number of trips taken was 3.0 (Table 8) and mean number of scouting helpers was 2.4 (Table 9). Mean (average) time spent scouting varied among hunt areas, ranging from 1.2 days in the Caney LEA to 3.5 days in the South At-Large Area (Table 10). About one-third of respondents used the help of friends or acquaintances to locate hunting properties, while 18% were assisted by someone who had hunted elk in Kentucky before, 16% used the Department website, 12% used an elk guide/outfitter, and 11% used the elk hunt packet sent by KDFWR (Table 11).

Table 5. Percents of responses to the question, “How did you choose which Limited Entry Areas (LEAs) and/or At-Large Areas to apply for?” (in descending order by percent of responses).

Information Source Used to Select Hunt Areas	Percent
Recommendation from a friend or acquaintance	48.5
Prior knowledge of the area	28.7
Availability of public land	25.0
Availability of guides	16.3
Information on Kentucky Fish & Wildlife’s website	15.2
Scouting after being drawn for the hunt	13.2
Print information provided by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife	9.1
Personal assistance from Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Staff	8.0
Did not apply for the area drawing	4.6
Other (please specify)	0.7

* “Other” responses given are listed in Appendix 6.

Table 6. Percents of responses to the question, “Which area did you hunt?” (in descending order by percent of responses).

Hunt Area	Percent
North At-Large Area	29.3
Hazard LEA	26.6
South At-Large Area	19.0
Straight Creek LEA	17.9
Caney LEA	4.5

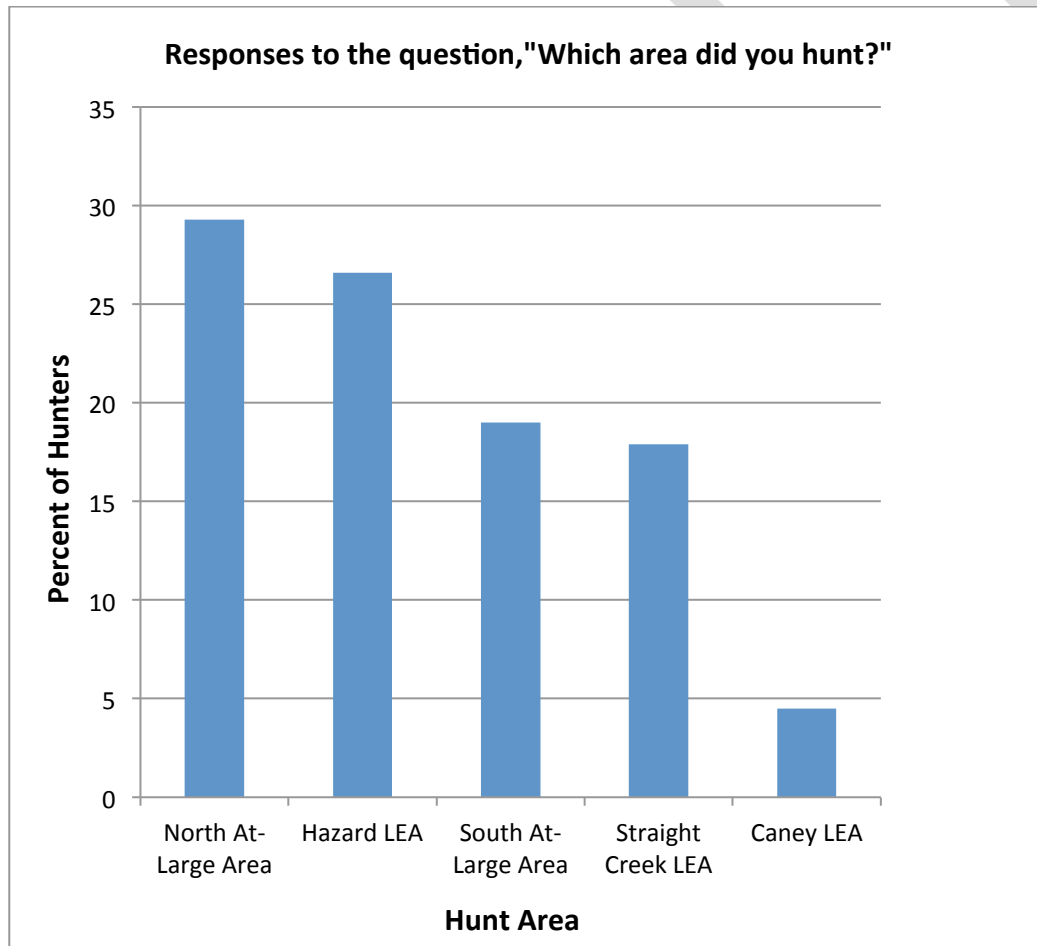


Figure 1. Bar chart graphically showing proportions of hunters using hunt areas assigned for the 2013 Kentucky elk hunt.

Table 7. Percents of responses to the question, “Prior to your hunt, did you make any trips to the elk zone primarily to scout for elk?”

Response	Percent
Yes	56.6
No	43.4

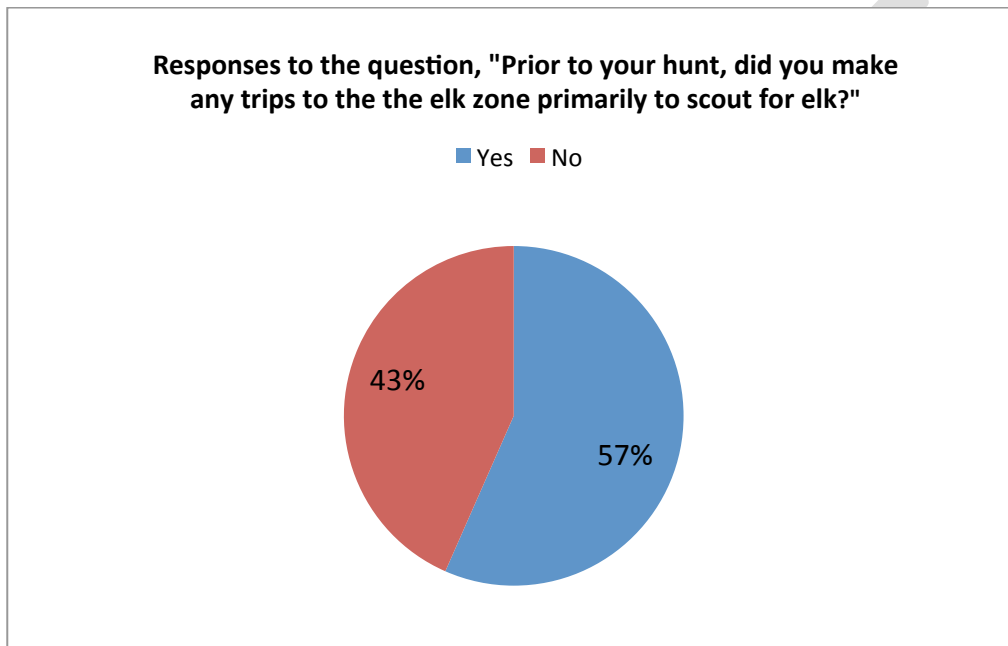


Figure 2. Pie chart graphically showing proportions of hunters who did and did not make trips to the elk zone primarily to scout for the 2013 Kentucky elk hunt.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics for responses to the question, “Prior to hunting, how many different trips did you take to the elk zone primarily to scout for elk?”

Mean	Std. Dev.	Median	Mode	Min	Max
3.0	2.9	2.0	1	1	26*

*A few instances of very high-value outliers (30, 40, 70 and 80 trips) probably reflected data entry errors on the part of online respondents and were omitted from the analysis for this variable.

Table 9. Descriptive statistics for responses to the question, “How many other people helped you scout for elk?”

Mean	Std. Dev.	Median	Mode	Min	Max
2.4	2.1	2.0	2	1	25

Table 10. Descriptive statistics for responses to the question, “How many days total did you scout for elk?”

Hunt Area	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Hazard LEA	1.93	1.6	0	10
Caney LEA	1.2	1.7	0	8
Straight Creek LEA	2.5	2.5	0	15
North At-Large	2.9	3.3	0	15
South At-Large	3.5	4.3	0	27

Table 11. Percents of responses to the question, “Which of the following did you use to locate property(s) to elk hunt on?” (in descending order by percent of responses).

Types of Assistance	Percent
Friend or Acquaintance	34.1
Someone who hand hunted elk In Kentucky before	18.4
Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Website	16.0
Elk Guide/Outfitter	12.0
Elk hunt packet from Kentucky Fish and Wildlife	10.7

Internet—websites other than Kentucky Fish & Wildlife’s	9.6
Direct/personal Assistance from Kentucky Fish & Wildlife Staff	6.7
Other (please specify)*	0.5

* “Other” responses given are listed in Appendix 7.

In the course of scouting for elk hunts, respondents and their helpers spent considerable amounts of money inside and outside the elk zone (Table 12). While scouting, the average total expenditure spent by hunters and their helpers was \$926 inside the elk zone and \$545 outside the elk zone.

Table 12. Average (mean) expenditures reported in response to the question, “About how much money for the following expenses did you and your helpers spend while scouting for elk?”

Expense Item	Inside the Elk Zone (mean)	Outside the Elk Zone (mean)
Gas	\$143.71	\$136.27
Meals	\$95.54	\$59.19
Lodging	\$143.57	\$36.58
Equipment	\$163.12	\$265.25
Guide/Outfitter Service	\$297.01	
Other	\$83.03	\$47.79
TOTAL	\$925.98	\$545.08

Hunting for Elk

Nearly 90% of respondents indicated that they went elk hunting in 2013 after being selected in the elk hunt drawing (Table 13). Those who hunted took an average (mean) of 3 trips (Table 14) and used the help of 2 or more people (Table 15). Hunters themselves spent nearly 5 days on average elk hunting (Table 16).

Table 13. Percents of responses to the question, “Did you actually go elk hunting in Kentucky during the 2013 season?”

Response	Percent
Yes	88.5
No	8.4

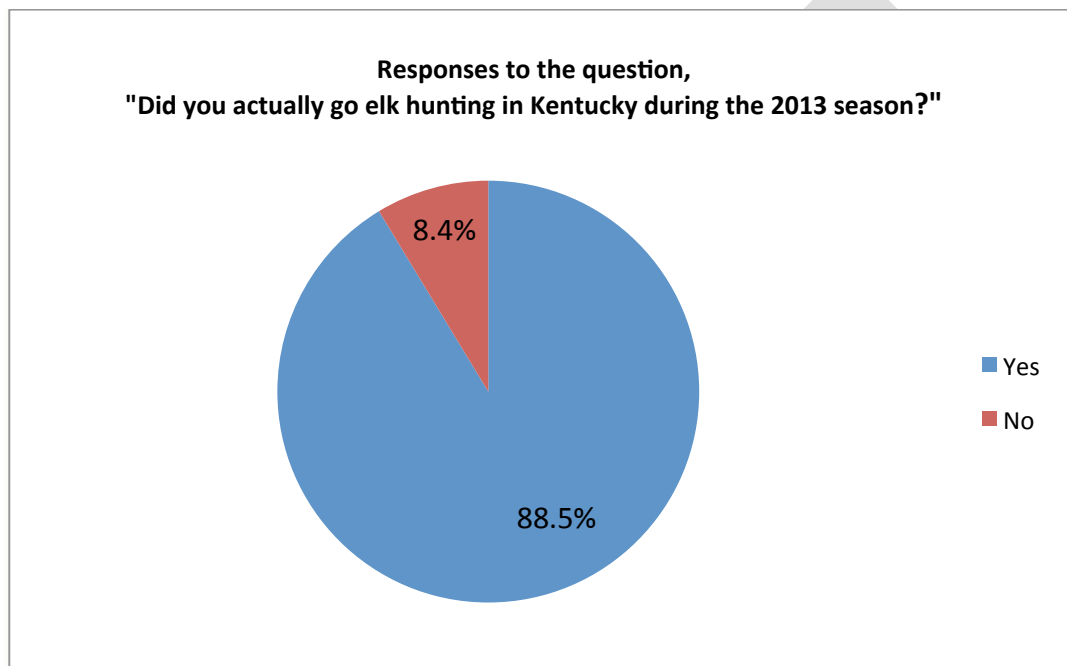


Figure 3. Pie chart graphically showing proportions of hunters who did and did not actually elk hunt during the 2013 elk season.

Table 14. Percents of responses to the question, “How many different trips did you take to the elk zone to hunt for elk?”

Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
3.1	3.0	1	20*

*At least some of the response values above 10 are likely a reflection of data entry errors made by online respondents. Very high outliers (21, 24, 25, 28, 30, 40, and 60 different trips) were omitted from analysis on this variable.

Table 15. Percents of responses to the question, “How many other people helped you hunt for elk?”

Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
2.3	1.4	1	10*

*At least some of the response values above 10 are likely a reflection of data entry errors made by online respondents. Very high outliers (21, 30, and 87 other people) were omitted from analysis on this variable.

Just over one-third of hunters reported using a guide or outfitter for elk hunting (Table 17) and spent an average (mean) of \$624 for those services. Other expenditures by elk hunters were substantial (Table 18). The average total expenditures reported by hunters were \$1206 inside the elk zone and \$1438 while traveling for their hunts.

Table 16. Percents of responses to the question, “About how many days did you and others helping you spend elk hunting?”

Self & Others	Mean	Median	Mode
Myself	4.7 days	3.0	1
Helper #1	3.6 days	2.0	1
Helper #2	2.5 days	2.0	1
Helper #3	1.8 days	1.0	1
Helper #4	1.2 days	0.5	0
Helper #5	0.9 days	0	0
All other helpers Combined*	2.7 days	1.0	0

*Very large outliers (67,100 days) were likely a result of respondent data entry made by online respondents, and were omitted from analysis on this variable.

Table 17. Percents of responses to the question, “Did you hire a guide/outfitter for your 2013 elk hunt?”

Response	Percent
Yes	35.6
No	64.3

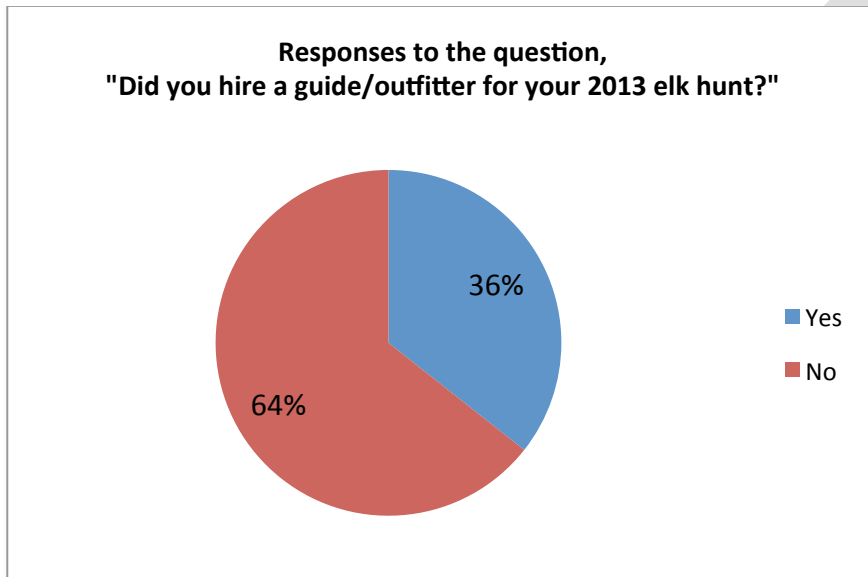


Figure 4. Pie chart graphically showing proportions of hunters who did and did not hire a guide/outfitter for the 2013 elk hunt.

Table 18. Average (mean) expenditures reported in response to the question, “About how much money for the following expenses did you and your helpers spend while hunting for elk?”

Expense Item	Inside the Elk Zone (mean)	Traveling to and from the Elk Zone (mean)
Gas	\$120.43	\$130.63
Meals	\$98.31	\$68.97
Lodging	\$162.72	\$107.62
Equipment	\$129.84	\$626.17

Guide/Outfitter Service	\$624.22	
Other	\$70.63	\$145.57
TOTAL	\$1206.15	\$1437.81

About three-fourths of hunters reported harvesting an elk (Table 19). Most reported only shooting at and hitting the animal they actually harvested (Tables 20 and 21). In terms of hunting techniques, nearly sixty percent of hunters spotted and stalked on foot, although over one-third spotted and stalked mostly with aid of a vehicle (Table 22).

Hunting Methods

Firearms

The ratio of firearms hunters to archery hunters in the survey sample was about 2:1 (Table 23), and virtually all firearms hunters used centerfire rifles (Table 24). The most popular centerfire calibers were .30-06, .300, .270 and 7mm, and the average (mean) bullet size was about 170 grains (Tables 25 and 26). Very few hunters who purchased firearms permits used bows or crossbows to elk hunt in 2013 (Table 27).

Table 19. Percents of responses to the question, “Did you harvest an elk during your hunt?”

Response	Percent
Yes	76.3
No	23.7

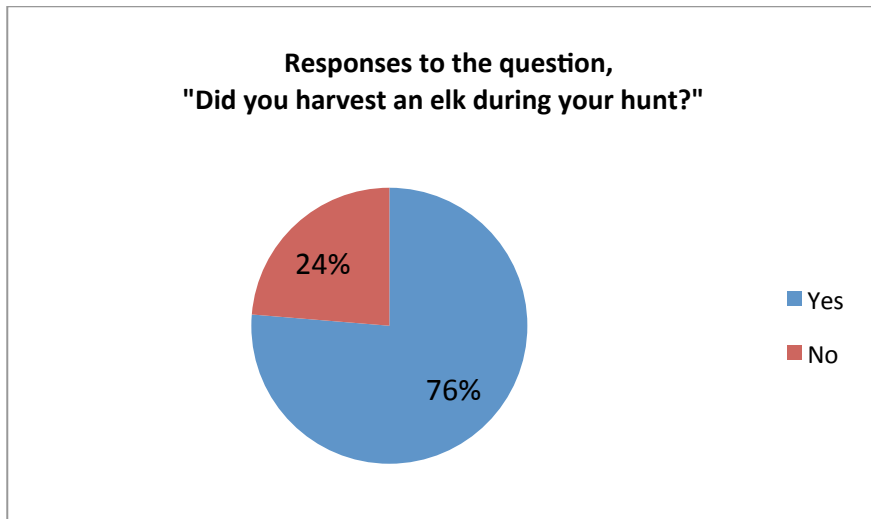


Figure 4. Pie chart graphically showing proportions of hunters who did and did not hire a guide/outfitter for the 2013 elk hunt.

Table 20. Percents of responses to the question, "How many elk did you shoot at but miss?"

Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
0.2	0.5	0	4

Table 21. Percents of responses to the question, "How many elk did you wound and not recover?"

Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
0.05	0.2	0	2

Table 22. Percents of responses to the question, “Which of the following techniques did you use while elk hunting?”

Techniques	Percent
Spot and stalk mostly on foot	58.9
Spot and stalk mostly with a vehicle	38.3
Blind or stand over a trail or travel corridor	12.8
Blind or stand over a food source	4.6
Blind or stand over a water source	3.2
Other (please specify)	0.2

*“Other” responses given are listed in Appendix 8.

Table 23. Percents of responses to the question, “What type of shooting equipment did you use on your elk hunt?”

Method	Percent
Firearm	64.3
Archery or Crossbow	35.8

Table 24. Percents of responses to the question, “If you hunted elk with firearms, which of the following methods did you use?”

Method	Percent
Centerfire Rifle	99.2
Muzzleloader	0.8
Slug Gun	0.0
Handgun	0.2

Table 25. Descriptive statistics for responses to the question, “Please enter the following about the firearm you used to elk hunt:”

Equipment Spec	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Grains of Bullet	170.9	31.2	65	325

Table 26. Percents of responses for calibers of firearms used by elk hunters (in descending order of frequency).

Caliber Used (As Reported)	Valid Percent
.30-06	27.4
.300	14.0
.270	13.2
7mm	10.8
.308	6.5
.300 Win Mag	6.5
7mm Mag	4.3
.30	2.2
.338	1.6
7mm Rem Mag	1.6
.300 Mag	1.6
.300 Win Short Mag	1.1
.300 Weatherby	1.1
.50	0.5
.280	0.5
7mm Ultra Mag	0.5
.270 Win Short	0.5
.300 Short Mag	0.5
.300 Rem Ultra Mag	0.5
7mm-08 Rem	0.5
.30-378 Weatherby	0.5
8mm	0.3
9mm	0.3
.34	0.3
.223	0.3
.375	0.3
7mm Win Short	0.3
7mm STA	0.3
.35 Whelen	0.3
.45-70	0.3
.300 Ultra Mag	0.3
.300 Rem Mag	0.3
.300 Savage	0.3
.308 Win	0.3
0.358 STA	0.3

Archery and Crossbows

Very few elk hunters drawn for firearms elk permits used bows or crossbows. Among archery/crossbow hunters, about three-fourths used compound bows and nearly a fourth used crossbows (Table 28). Average (mean) drawn weight across bow/crossbow methods was 80 pounds, and average broadhead weight was 109 grains (Table 29). Compound bow hunters averaged a draw weight of 67.0 pounds and a broadhead weight of 106.6 grains. Among crossbow hunters, average draw weight was 154.4 pounds and broadhead weight 120.7 grains. About twice as many hunters used fixed broadheads as mechanical (Table 30). A majority (60%+) of archery and crossbow hunters applied for archery/crossbow elk permits simply because it was their preferred method of hunting and/or because of better odds of being drawn for an elk permit (Table 31).

Table 27. Percents of responses to the question, “Did you also use a bow or crossbow on your KY elk hunt?” (Asked of firearms hunters.)

Response	Percent
Yes	0.5
No	99.5

Table 28. Percents of responses to the question, “If you hunted elk with a bow or crossbow, which of the following methods did you use?” (Asked of all elk hunters who said they used archery equipment.)

Method	Percent
Crossbow	22.6
Compound Bow	75.2
Recurve Bow	1.3
Long Bow	0.8

Table 29. Descriptive statistics for responses to the question, “Please enter the following about the archery/crossbow equipment you used to elk hunt:” (Asked of archery/crossbow hunters.)

Equipment Spec	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Draw Weight/poundage	80.1	36.8	20	200
Grains of Broadhead*	109.1	14.8	75	175

*Values entered by online respondents likely reflected at least some instances of data entry; outliers of 25 and 250 grains were omitted from analysis on this variable.

Table 30. Percents of broadhead types used by archery or crossbow elk hunters (in descending order of frequency).

Broadhead Type	Percent
Fixed	62.8
Mechanical	32.5
Both	3.6

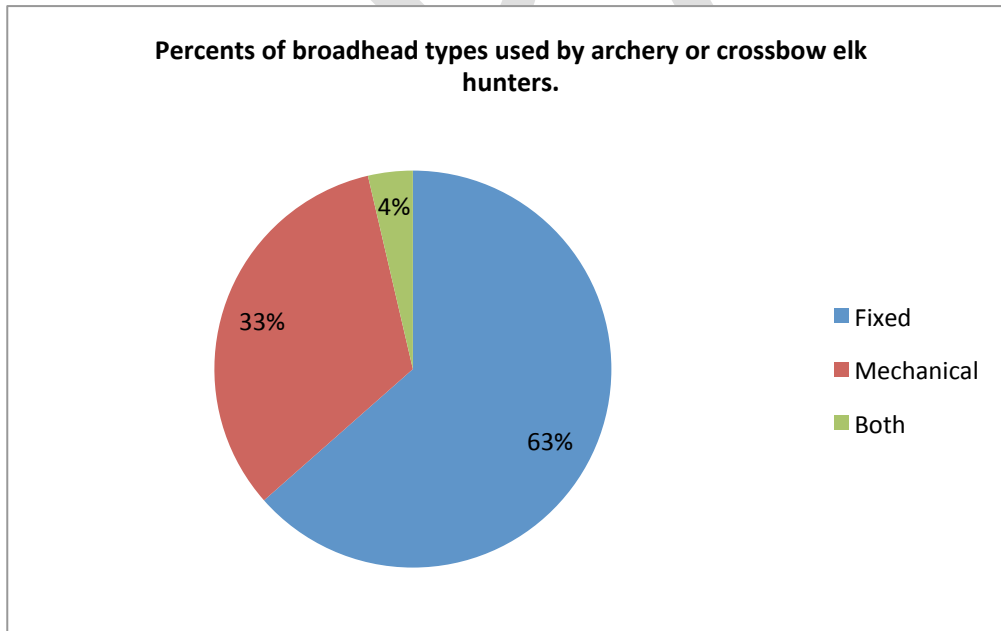


Figure 5. Pie chart graphically showing proportions of broadhead types used by archery or crossbow hunters during the 2013 Kentucky elk hunt.

Table 31. Percents and frequencies of responses to the question, “If you hunted with a bow or crossbow, what were your reasons?”

Reasons	Percent	Frequency of Responses
Wanted to use archery equipment	68.7	147
I applied for the archery/crossbow permit for better odds of getting drawn	61.7	132
Longer season length	38.8	83
Fewer elk hunters out there	38.8	83
Wanted to use crossbow equipment	8.4	18
Other (please specify):	20.6	44

*Please refer to Appendix 9 for a list of “other” responses given.

Applying for Future Hunts

The vast majority of 2013 elk hunters indicated that they planned to apply again for the hunt (Table 32). Key factors influencing their decision included number of permits available (total and by hunt type), number of entries offered, and amount of public land in the elk zone (Table 33). As a group, respondents indicated opposition to all restrictions on re-application, except they supported the current 3-year waiting period for bull permits and were relatively neutral toward a possible 1-year waiting period for cow permits (see Tables 34-35).

Table 32. Percents of responses to the question, “Do you intend to apply for 2015 or future Kentucky elk hunts?”

Intend to Apply?	Percent
Yes	90.5
No	3.7
Unsure	5.7

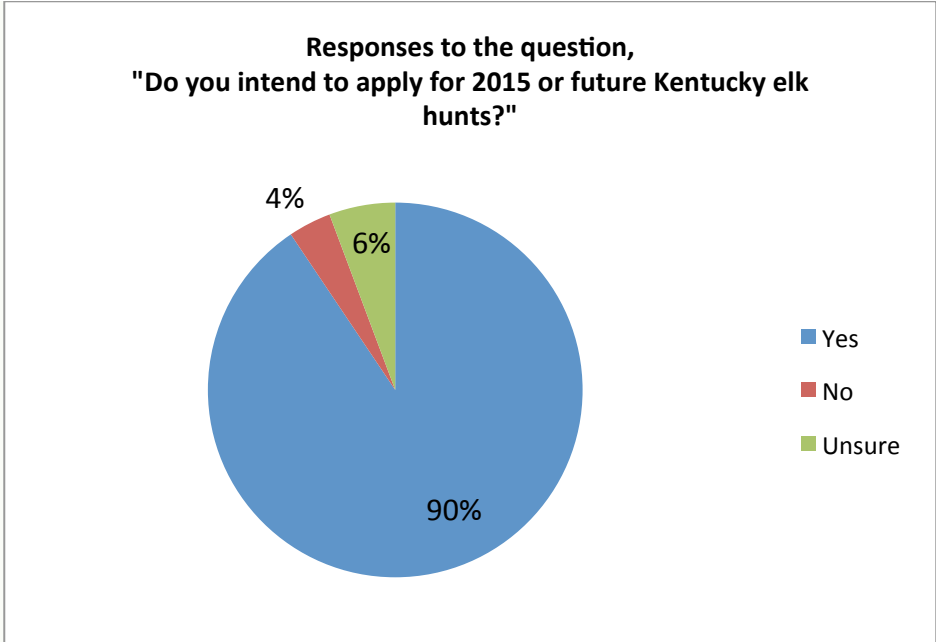


Figure 5. Bar chart graphically showing proportions hunter intentions toward applying for the 2015 Kentucky elk hunt.

Table 33. Percents of responses to the question, "Which of the following factors will influence your decision to apply for the Kentucky elk hunt drawing in the future?"

Factors	Percent
Total number of elk permits available	53.3
Number hunt types/options that I may apply for each year	46.4
Number of elk permits available for each hunt type	41.2
Amount of public land in elk zone	34.8
Other (please specify):	17.2

**"Other" responses given are listed in Appendix 10.

Table 34. Responses to the question, “Do you support or oppose the following "waiting periods" before people drawn for a Kentucky elk hunt can apply again?”

Scenario	Strongly Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Neither Oppose Nor Support	Somewhat Support	Strongly Support
3-year Waiting Period for Bull Permit	19.3	10.4	10.0	22.4	37.8
5-year Waiting Period for Bull Permit	47.5	15.9	12.2	10.3	14.1
1-year Waiting Period for Cow Permit	30.1	13.2	17.7	19.1	19.9
3-year Waiting Period for Cow Permit	56.5	15.7	12.8	7.6	7.4
5-year Waiting Period for Cow Permit	71.9	8.9	12.3	2.8	4.1

By re-coding responses to numeric values from -2 (for Strongly Oppose) to 0 for Neither Oppose Nor Support to 2 for Strongly Support, we can estimate the “average” (mean) level of support or opposition to these waiting periods as follows:

Table 35. Average (mean) support ratings based on numerically recoded responses to the 5-point scale question, “Do you support or oppose the following "waiting periods" before people drawn for a Kentucky elk hunt can apply again?”

Waiting Period	Mean Support Rating	Nearest Rating
3-year Waiting Period for Bull Permit	0.49	Neither Oppose Nor Support
5-year Waiting Period for Bull Permit	-0.72	Somewhat Oppose
1-year Waiting Period for Cow Permit	-0.14	Neither Oppose Nor Support
3-year Waiting Period for Cow Permit	-1.06	Somewhat Oppose
5-year Waiting Period for Cow Permit	-1.42	Somewhat Oppose

Interest in Harvesting Bull Elk

Virtually all respondents were interested in taking a Kentucky bull in the future (Table 36). Responses to a question regarding balancing odds of being drawn for a bull permit against opportunity to harvest large-antlered bulls (Table 37) indicated that there was not strong hunter support for trophy-class bull elk management at the expense of hunter opportunity.

Table 36. Responses to the question, "Are you interested in harvesting a bull elk in Kentucky in the future?"

Response	Percent
Yes	96.0
No	0.9
Unsure	3.1

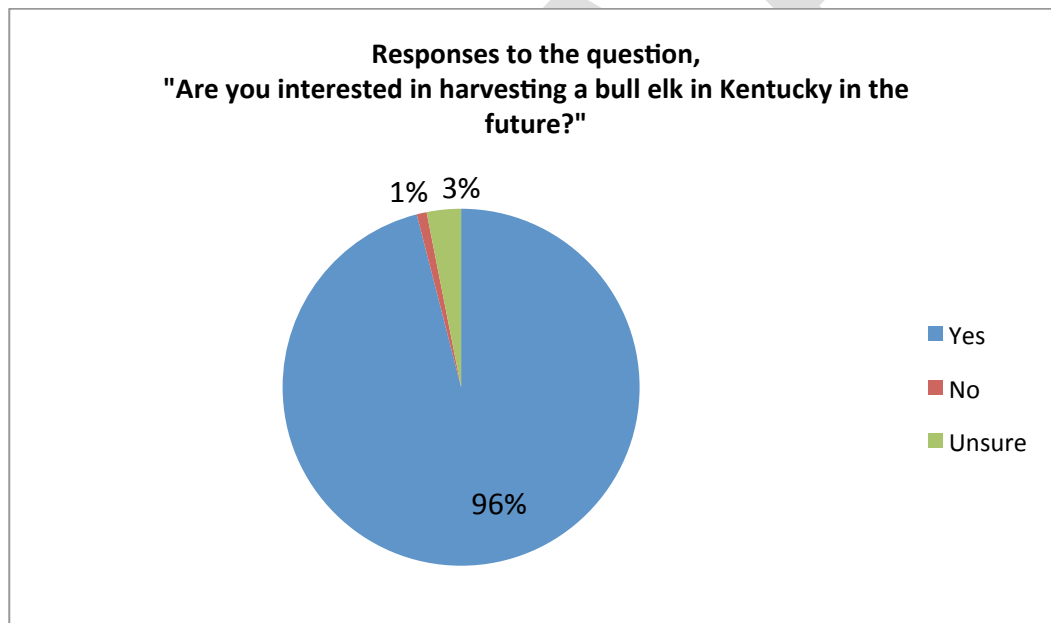


Figure 6. Bar chart graphically showing proportions hunter interest in harvesting a bull elk in the future.

Table 37. Responses to the question, “Generally, older bull elk have larger antlers than younger bulls. Which of the following best fits your preference?”

Preferred Alternative	Percent
Lower odds of drawing a bull permit, if fewer tags increased my opportunity to harvest a large-antlered bull.	29.8
Higher odds of drawing a bull permit, with fewer opportunities to harvest a large-antlered bull.	27.3
No opinion about number of permits issued versus opportunities for large-antlered bulls.	36.0

Willingness to Harvest Particular Bulls

The questionnaire included a section with a series of questions pertaining to willingness to harvest different bulls with varying body and antler sizes. In each question, a photograph of a particular bull was referenced, and participants were asked whether they would shoot the bull with one of these responses: yes, no or depends. The section was preceded with instructions, including the caveats, “if you were drawn for a Kentucky bull permit and had the opportunity to do so safely and legally.” Each photograph and the corresponding summary of responses is presented below in Tables 38-44. For each “depends” response, respondents were asked to explain their rationale; these responses are listed in Appendix 11.



Table 38. Percents of responses to the question, “Would you shoot “Bull A” if you had a KY bull elk permit and the opportunity?”

Response	Percent
Yes	56.9
No	25.4
Depends	17.6



Table 39. Percents of responses to the question, “Would you shoot "Bull B" if you had a KY bull elk permit and the opportunity?”

Response	Percent
Yes	94.7
No	1.9
Depends	3.4



Table 40. Percents of responses to the question, “Would you shoot "Bull C" if you had a KY bull elk permit and the opportunity?”

Response	Percent
Yes	76.6
No	11.7
Depends	11.7



Table 41. Percents of responses to the question, "Would you shoot "Bull D" if you had a KY bull elk permit and the opportunity?"

Response	Percent
Yes	79.8
No	12.4
Depends	7.8

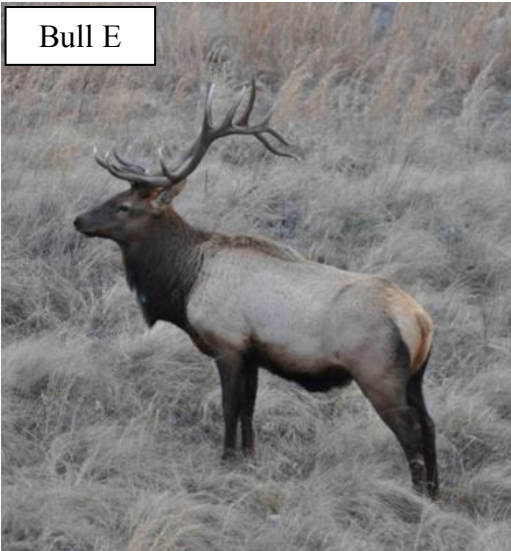


Table 42. Percents of responses to the question, "Would you shoot "Bull E" if you had a KY bull elk permit and the opportunity?"

Response	Percent
Yes	79.9
No	11.2
Depends	8.9



Table 43. Percents of responses to the question, “Would you shoot "Bull F" if you had a KY bull elk permit and the opportunity?”

Response	Percent
Yes	95.3
No	1.0
Depends	8.9



Table 44. Percents of responses to the question, “Would you shoot "Bull G" if you had a KY bull elk permit and the opportunity?”*

Response	Percent
Yes	31.3*
No	54.1*
Depends	14.6*

* After reviewing responses to this question and comparing results from other questions in this series, we consider this question and any inferences drawn from it to be invalid. After comparing responses to the previous questions, we suspect that many respondents may have answered “no” to this question because the scenario pictured did not represent a safe and ethical shot, despite our qualifying the question in the introduction, “if you were drawn for a Kentucky bull permit and had the opportunity to do so safely and legally.” Some answered “depends” and explained their concern about the safety of shooting at the elk’s given its position on the horizon without a safe backstop. One respondent explained in “additional comments” at the end of the survey that this was his or her reason for not shooting Bull G.

Big Game Hunts in Other States

Nearly 70% of respondents had applied for big game hunts elsewhere (Table 45). Most popular target species were elk, mule deer, and white-tailed deer (Table 46). Those who had hunted in other states mostly used centerfire rifles or muzzleloaders (Table 47). Most attractive features of other states’ big game hunts were: amount of public land in hunt area, total number of tags/permits available to nonresidents, appeal of back-country experience, increased odds or rewards for repeat application, and ease of application (Table 48).

Table 45. Percents of responses to the question, “Have you ever applied for big game hunts with limited opportunities (permits/tags awarded by drawing or lottery) in another U.S. state?”

Applied for Big game hunt in other states	Percent
Yes	68.1
No	29.7
Unsure	0.6

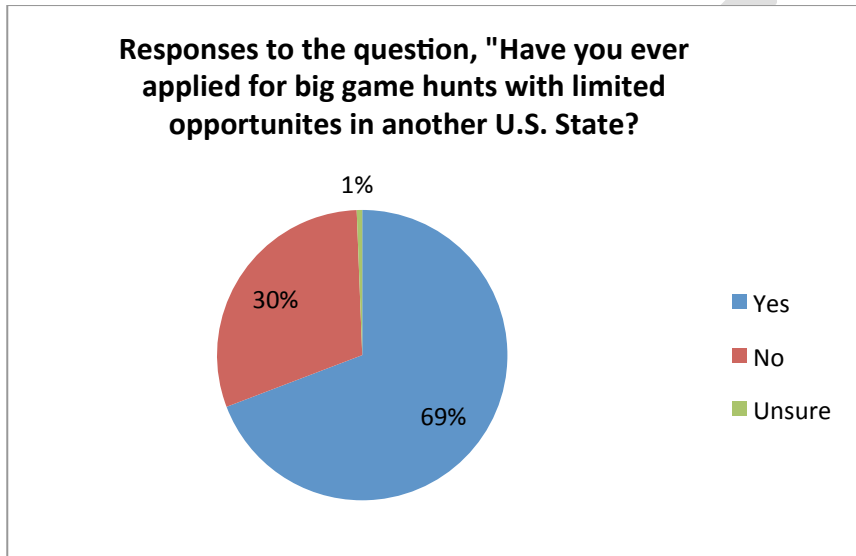


Figure 7. Bar chart graphically showing proportions of hunters who have applied for big game hunts with limited opportunities in other states.

Table 46. Percents of responses to the question, “Which big game animals have you applied to hunt in states other than Kentucky?”

Big Game Animals	Percent
Elk	23.5
Antelope (Pronghorn)	7.7
Moose	6.0
Caribou	1.8
Bighorn Sheep	3.0
White-tailed deer	10.1
Mule Deer	14.7
Bears	6.6
Mountain Goat	2.3
Other*	1.8

*"Other" responses given are listed in Appendix 12.

Table 47. Percents of responses to the question, “What method(s) have you used to hunt big game animals in states other than KY?”

Methods Used	Percent
Not applicable—I have not hunted big game in states other than Kentucky	2.3*
Centerfire rifle	84.3
Muzzleloader	24.0
Slug Gun	14.5
Handgun	8.3
Crossbow	6.7
Archery (compound, recurve or longbow)	5.2

*Percent of total respondent sample (n=689); note that most did not respond to this question. Hunting Methods Used percent totals reflect percent of respondents who indicated they had hunted big game in other states.

Table 48. Percents of responses to the question, “What were the most attractive features of other states’ big game hunting programs?”

Most Attractive Features	Percent
Being able to hunt by myself/with friends (without a guide)	43.6
Amount of public land in big game hunting unit/area/zone(s)	42.6
Appeal of a back-country hunting experience	38.4
Total number of tags/permits available to nonresidents	37.3
Increased odds or rewards for applying each year	33.1
Easy to apply	32.6
Type(s) of big game available for hunting	32.6
Total land area in big game hunting unit/area/zone(s)	24.7
Low cost of permits	16.8
Low cost of applying (compared to other states)	15.8
Guided hunts and information about them were readily available	13.6
Distance from my home	13.1
Land available for lease in the big game hunting unit/area/zone	6.8
Quality of big game populations	5.1
Other (please specify)*	6.8

*"Other" responses given are listed in Appendix 13.

Demographics

Six hundred and three (603) respondents were Kentucky residents, representing 109 of the Commonwealth’s 120 counties. Twenty-one (21) other states were represented by 83 completed surveys. These states are listed in Appendix 14. Six respondents did not provide details about their state or county of residence. Most resided in rural areas or in small cities/towns (Table 49). Respondents were predominately male (Table 50) and averaged about 46 years of age (Table 51). In terms of household income of respondents, 63% fell in the range of \$25,000 to \$99,999, while nearly one-fourth garnered \$100,000 to \$249,000 (Table 52).

Table 49. Responses to the question, “Which of the following best describes your place of residence?”

Places of Residence	Percent
Rural area on a farm or ranch	29.5
Rural area NOT on a farm or ranch	32.4
Small city/town	22.3
Suburban area	9.6
Large city/urban area	6.2

Table 50. Responses to the question, “What is your gender?”

Response	Percent
Male	90.5
Female	9.5

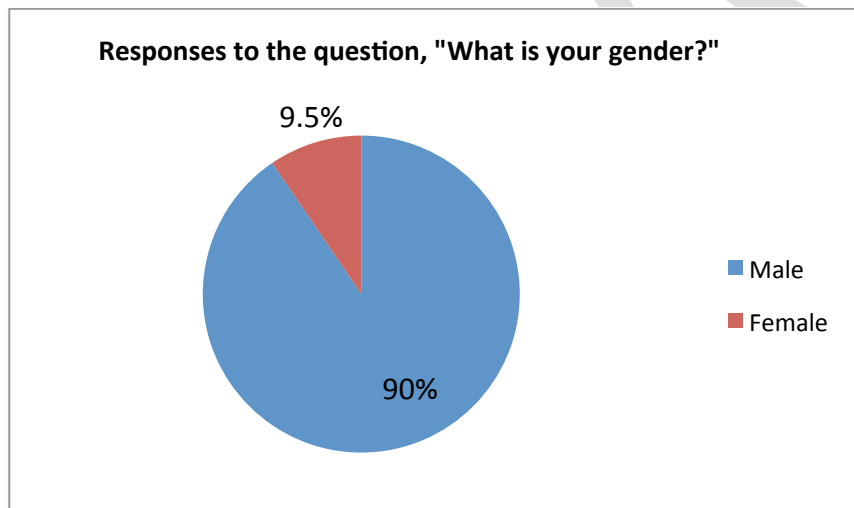


Figure 8. Pie chart graphically showing proportions of male and female respondents in the 2013 elk hunt survey.

Table 51. Descriptive statistics for responses to the question, “What is your age today?”

Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
45.5	15.35	7	89

Table 52. Percents for responses to the question, "What was your total household income before taxes in 2013?"

Income Level	Percent
Less than \$25,000	6.4
\$25,000 to \$49,999	19.6
\$50,000 to \$99,999	43.3
\$100,000 to \$249,000	23.5
\$250,000 or more	3.0

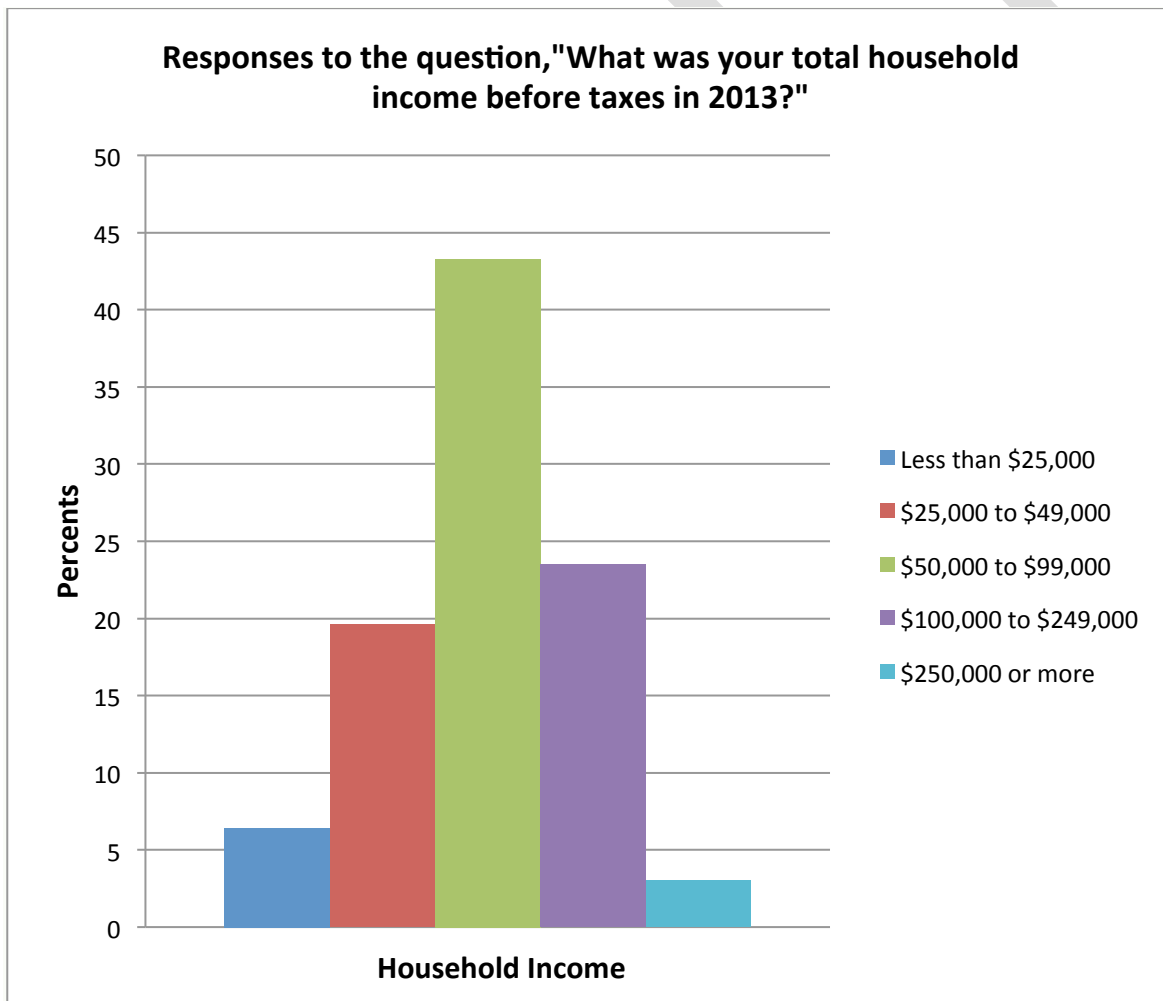


Figure 9. Bar chart graphically showing household incomes of respondents.

Other Feedback

We asked respondents to provide any further comments or feedback they would like to communicate about their experience or the Kentucky elk program using an open-ended comment box at the end of the survey. In the interest of space, all responses are listed in Appendix 15 rather than in the body of this report. We edited responses for grammar or spelling for clarity to readers of this report, but care was taken not to change words so as to alter the intent or meaning of respondents' comments. We also deleted references to individuals' protect respondents' and others' identities.

These additional comments were grouped into 10 categories for reporting purposes, although in some cases they overlapped. Categories used (and number of comments in each) were:

- 1) Positive Experiences and/or Compliments on the Elk Program (120)
- 2) Dissatisfaction with Hunt (1)
- 3) Suggestions for Improvement to the Elk Program (13)
- 4) Concerns about their Hunt or the Elk Program (26)
- 5) Elk Permit Allocation (18)
- 6) Public Access (35)
- 7) Elk Hunt Drawing System (38)
- 8) Elk Hunting Seasons (19)
- 9) Guides and Outfitters (14)
- 10) Law Enforcement (8)
- 11) Other (26)

Discussion

Survey Participation

The adjusted response rate in this mixed-mode survey—nearly 70%—was excellent considering the emphasis given to the online mode. However, good participation through the online questionnaire should not be surprising for two reasons: 1) we had recent email addresses for most members of the sampling frame, and 2) because Kentucky's elk hunt application process has been online-only for several years, requiring applicants to become familiar with completing forms online, either by themselves or with the help of others. The estimate of applicants drawn who actually hunted (894), which was generated from reported participation in this survey, closely matched the number of elk permits sold in 2013 (890). For these reasons, we surmise that results from this survey should be valid.

Communications about Elk Hunting

Findings in this survey highlight the importance of communication with hunters about the Kentucky elk herd. Word of mouth was important for reminding hunters to apply as well as selecting areas to hunt. The variety of communications about elk hunting provided by KDFWR, ranging from application reminder mailings to hunt packets for those drawn to hunt, were also very important to Kentucky elk hunters. KDFWR's and its partners' elk hunt marketing communications should appeal to the variety of hunter motivations identified in this survey, including opportunity to harvest an elk in Kentucky, making special memories with loved ones, elk hunting close to home, opportunity to harvest a quality bull elk, and obtaining a substantial amount of meat.

Expenditures on Elk Hunting

Per capita expenditures by Kentucky elk hunters and their helpers as reported in this survey were substantial. These survey estimates can be used to produce estimates of total expenditures by elk hunters in Kentucky in 2013. The average (mean) reported expenditures per hunter can be multiplied by the estimated number of actual hunters to produce total expenditures estimates (see Table 53). For scouting, average expenditures per hunter totaled \$1,471. For hunting, average expenditures per hunter totaled \$2,644. Estimated number of actual hunters in 2013 was 894, based on 88.5% elk hunting participation and 1,010 elk hunt permits available.

Table 53. Estimated expenditures on Kentucky elk hunting in 2013.

Location	Hunting	Scouting	Hunting + Scouting
Inside Elk Zone	\$1,078,164	\$827,844	\$1,906,008
Outside Elk Zone	\$1,285,572	\$487,230	\$1,772,802
TOTAL	\$2,363,736	\$1,315,074	\$3,678,810

Future Elk Hunt Drawings

Interest in future Kentucky elk hunting opportunities by 2013 elk hunters was extremely high (96%). Participants in this survey indicated that total number of permits, number of permits by hunt type, and availability of public land were all important considerations that would influence future participation. These are no doubt factors that the Department, its Commission, and other stakeholders in the Kentucky elk program should carefully attend to.

Among 2013 elk hunters, there was stronger support for the current 3-year Waiting Period than a 5-year alternative, which was rated more often with opposition by

respondents. Respondents were more ambivalent toward a 1-year waiting period for cow hunt application, whereas the average rating for 3- and 5-year waiting periods for applying again to cow hunt after being drawn between Somewhat Oppose and Strongly Oppose.

There did not appear to be strong preference among 2013 elk hunters for “trophy” (large-antlered) bulls, based on responses to questions in this survey. A majority of respondents indicated that they would harvest any antlered 4x4 bull elk (as hypothetically offered to them in a series of bull elk photographs), with a bull permit in hand and a safe shot presented to them in the field; percents responding “yes” they would shoot ranged from 57-95% depending on the bull pictured. There was also a larger proportion of respondents who said they had no opinion toward balancing greater likelihood of harvesting a large-antlered bull with odds of being drawn for a bull permit, compared with a fairly even split of hunters who were inclined either to favor 1) fewer permits in exchange for increased odds of harvesting a large-antlered bull or 2) vice versa – greater odds of being drawn with less likelihood of taking a trophy class bull. These results suggest that providing maximum opportunity and managing for a quality herd overall may be the optimal strategy for satisfying hunter demands.

Literature Cited

- Crank, D., G. Jenkins and W. Bowling. 2014. 2013-2014 Kentucky Elk Report. Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Frankfort. 13pp.
- Dillman, D. A. 1978. Mail and Telephone Surveys: The Total Design Method. New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. 325pp.
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APPENDICES

**Appendix 1. Online questionnaire used for web-based mode of
2013 Kentucky elk hunt survey.**

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Appendix 2. Printed questionnaire used for mail mode 2013 Kentucky elk hunt survey.

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Appendix 3. “Other” important reminders about applying for the Kentucky elk hunt drawing.

Booth at industry (Archery Trade Association) show

Booth at outdoor expo / show*

I always remember, and remind others, too!*

Kentucky Afield calendar

Kentucky Afield magazine article

Kentucky Hunting & Trapping Guide

Online forum post

Remembered during license renewal process online*

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation communications

*Most frequent response.

Appendix 4. “Other” important reasons for applying for the Kentucky elk hunt drawing.

Close proximity to home state*

Close proximity to home / ability to make multiple trips if necessary

Conservation / Helping KDFWR

Donate meat to the local community

Elk hunting was on my bucket list

Elk hunting is my favorite type of hunting

Hunt of a lifetime

I've been applying for many years

Love of hunting

Meeting local people and seeing beautiful scenery

New experience

Odds of being drawn for cow hunts

Pride / bragging rights

*Most frequent response.

Appendix 5. “Other” most important factors identified as to why respondents applied for a Kentucky elk hunt permit.

Being able to apply for both sex of elk and weapon type of my choosing*

Have never been drawn for a bull tag

Previously drawn for bull (had to apply for cow)

Made no difference to me

Obtaining meat

Opportunity to harvest an elk

*Most frequent response.

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Appendix 6. “Other” means used by respondents to identify hunt areas to apply for.

Close proximity to home*

Harvest record (Telecheck) data

Information or Advice from Guides/Outfitters*

*Most frequent response. Some respondents listed items that were redundant with response options provided with the question.

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Appendix 7. “Other” means used by respondents to locate property(s) to elk hunt on.

Coal mine lands

Drove around and talked to people in the elk zone

Horse Park in Knott County

Maps of elk zone

Personal knowledge of the area*

Personal scouting

*Most frequent response.

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Appendix 8. “Other” techniques hunters used to hunt elk in the 2013 Kentucky elk hunt.

Calling

Driving and bugling to locate

Four-wheeler for hunting and getting around

Guided (guide/outfitter)

Setting up and calling

Setting up on trails before daylight and waiting for elk to come

Stalking on horseback

Listening to the sound of bugling and getting in front of bull while it traveled

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Appendix 9. “Other” reasons for respondents using archery or crossbows to elk hunt.

Bugling season (hunt during rutting activity)

Challenge of archery

Disability or injury allowed use of crossbow*

Love of/preference for bowhunting*

Only hunt with a bow*

Thrill of close-up hunting

*Most frequent responses.

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Appendix 10. “Other” factors that will influence respondents’ decisions to apply for the Kentucky elk hunt drawing in the future.

Access to non-fee hunting areas (availability of public/open hunting areas)

Cost to apply*

Cost of license and permit*

Elk numbers

Financial situation

Guides with access - availability

Need for meat

Odds of being drawn

Odds by hunt type

Points system – if in effect

Physical ability to hunt / health / age

Season timeframes (early hunting pressure influences cows’ wariness)

Success rate of hunters

Time availability/work schedule

Trophy quality of bulls

Waiting periods in effect

Whether I remember to apply

*Most frequent responses. Several respondents also indicated that they “will apply no matter what.”

Appendix 11. Reasons given for “Depends” responses as to whether respondents would shoot a particular bull elk. Beneath each bull, reasons are categorized by response types.

Bull A

Opportunities for Larger Bulls

if larger bulls in area, then no

If I was paying a guide, I would pass on him. If I was hunting public land it's a shooter.

How many I saw that day.

Better bulls available.

If it was first few days of the hunting period I may wait to see if I had a better chance for a bigger bull

not one first day or upon recommendation of guide

Looks like a young bull, would rather take a shot at a larger more mature bull. But if I were at the end of my hunting season, I might take a shot at this bull

elk would be too young for me

I would want to see how large the body was.

Depends on the number of hunting days that I would have left to find a more mature bull.

There are much bigger KY bulls. Would look for a 300 class bull

Remaining Time to Hunt

depends on when I saw the animal, how much hunting time was remaining

How many days left to hunt

How much time remains in my window of opportunity to harvest

Yes -- if it was close to the end of the hunt.

how much hunt time is left & potential of larger bull

probably not on first day, but would before I went home empty handed

Only if it was the end of the last day of my hunt

maybe on the last day

Depends on if my last day to hunt and I was hand not found a better Bull. then i may take this one but i more of a meat hunter so that's why i say this .

On length of hunt and day of hunt

Depends on my time and availability to actually hunt. If it's the last day I can hunt, I would shoot this bull. If I had the ability to hunt as much as I wanted during the season and have more opportunities, I may pass. It would also depend on how may elk I am actually seeing. If I am not seeing much, that would also weigh on my decision.

If my permit season was coming to an end and I hadn't seen anything bigger up to that point, and/or if earlier scouting didn't show much promise in my area.

How much time I have left to fill my tag.

Last day

Depends on how late in the season and amount of elk I have seen.

Depends on day of the hunt (last or first) and the number of mature bulls that are being seen.

Depends on several factors. 1. How many bulls I was able to locate before season. 2. How many days are left in my season? 3. How many bulls I have been seeing while hunting. So I would not shoot this bull toward the beginning of my season if I have been seeing larger bulls. I would shoot this bull if I was getting close to the end of season.

Depends on end of hunt.

yes if it was the end of season and that all i seen

If it's the first day or last day.

How late in the season it is

How many days I had left. Probably not

How much time remained to hunt?

Would on last day

If it's the last day of archery season yes, otherwise I'd pass.

If it was last day

If hunt was near over

If it was the last day I had an opportunity to harvest an elk, yes. Who knows how long it would be before I had another opportunity.

If it was the last day because he's young

Depends on how long I had to hunt

If last day of hunt probably

On how early of the hunt it is.

Only if it was my last day to harvest one.

If this was the last day and last bull I saw.

Last day only. It'd have to be a really bad year for me to shoot this elk.

If last day of hunt

How many days left

Maybe at end of season?

On time remaining to hunt

If it was late in my hunting season

Depends on the time left to hunt, any bull is a trophy and the meat is great.

only if it was the last day of the hunt

Nearing the end of my hunt.

If it was towards the end of the hunt

Depends on what day of the hunt. Last day is a yes. It's a young bull

Depends on my position of season...on last day yes!

Last hour of the hunt

last day of hunt

If I had seen larger bull in the area and this was early in the hunt, no. Late in hunt, yes

how late in season

only if last day

depends what day of the hunt it is

how much time i had left to hunt

i would want a bull in picture F, but what are we seeing and how long to hunt

how many more days i have left to hunt

only on last chance

would take on last day of bull hunt

towards end of season

depends on how many days left to hunt

last day

Yes if last day of season

What day of the hunt it is

If it was near the end of my hunt week and had not seen nothing bigger or nothing else at all.

Maybe on last day of hunt

Nice bull to shoot after hunting unsuccessfully a few days first

He looks like a young bull. On the first day of the hunt, no. On the last day of the hunt, yes.

If it were the last day or two of season yes I would. If it were the first day or two of season no I would not

Not if he was the first bull I saw during my hunt.

not on first few days , toward end of hunt, sure his a nice bull

Yes but not on the first day or two of the hunt

Past Experience

I would have my first hunt, but not now, I have a 5 x 5.

I killed a real nice Elk last year and I mounted it and I am enjoying the meat I personally would like to see a person that has already killed one the next time around be restricted to killing an Elk with the same or more inches of horns than the 1st one taken in these precious areas.

I may shoot if it was my first time hunting Elk. I would not shoot him if I already harvested an elk in prior hunting seasons, whether a KY Elk or elsewhere.
first bull yes second+ no

Having been on an elk hunt in Kentucky, I know that it's not easy to come across a bull elk. So only given one week to fill my tag, I would Shoot a bull this size given the chance. My biggest complaint about the elk hunt was the designation of only one week to hunt (and I drew the week of Christmas).

I harvested a bull in 2012, a beautiful 5x5. I would likely hunt for a 6x6 up.

Antler Size or Position of Animal

I would want to see how wide he is

If he turned full broadside

On distant to him and if he turned his head back left.

The bull is young, but the shoot look safe

Wait for it to be fully broad side then shoot it.

Broken tine not a perfect rack

Needs better angle

He needs to give me another look

Weather Conditions or Predictions

What the weather looked like in the upcoming days

Hunting Method (for example, archery)

with Archery YES

Yes with archery and no with a gun

Yes If I'm bow hunting and it's the last day

with a bow yes with a gun no

Type of weapon used and how much time remaining to hunt

Archery maybe firearm no

if I had a archery tag

Depends on area i was drawn for and the amount of sign i had seen also whether archery or not.

Not with archery because I can keep coming back to hunt. But if the last days of the gun hunt I would verses wasting a tag because there is a waiting period even if you fail to harvest a bull. The waiting period gets too many young bulls shot before they mature. Waiting period should only apply if you actually harvest a bull and then 3 years is a long time.

yes with archery

it depends on if i am using a bow or gun

Bow only

Bow yes. Gun no

Archery Yes - Firearm No

Bull B

Opportunities for Larger Bulls

depends on what other elk are in area

If I had seen better bulls, no. looks like a younger bull with great potential other encounters of opportunities

If I didn't know of a more dominant bull in the area and the season was proving to be challenging, then probably

Depending on body size. This one looks young but has a good rack.

Remaining Time to Hunt

Depends how much time I had to hunt and how I felt about the amount of bulls in the area I was hunting in.

Depends on days left of hunt.

depends on how many I saw that day

How far into the hunt I was.

how late in season

It depends on if it is early in the hunt and/or how many days I have left in the hunt

It depends on the time of the season

Only if last day

Hunting Method (for example, archery)

Bow yes because he is pushing PY. Rifle no if in the first part of my hunt but yes if in the last part of my hunt. See above answer... Waiting period even if you fail to harvest gets bulls shot. There are much larger bulls in KY

depends on weapon type

If using a bow I would take the animal

bow yes gun no

With a bow any day of the season, would pass early in rifle season.

with a bow yes with a gun no

With Archery YES

not fully mature--great archery bull

Bull C

Opportunities for Larger Bulls

depends on how big his body is

Depends on opportunity at other bulls or if on last day

I have a camera on my phone and I have pictures of older bulls than this and I had never been Elk hunting before until last year.

I would pass early in the season

If that was the only one I saw

if there were larger bulls in that area i would wait

Most likely no. depends on how long I'd been hunting and if I'd seen anything else. Still, most likely no.

Number of Elk Seen

Passed a number this size early in the season

Shoot on last day or toward end of the hunt based on number and size of bulls saw

Very young bull, only take a shot if it was the only bull that I have seen.

Would rather shoot adult bulls - leave younger ones to grow off.

Remaining Time to Hunt

Depend on the amount of elk I have seen and how late in the season it was.

Depends on days left to hunt and if I want meat for the table

Depends on how many days are left to hunt and how much pressure.

end of hunt yes i would shoot

How late in the hunt it would be

How many days I had left to hunt

How many days left do I have to hunt?

How many more days of hunt were left

How much more season is left

How much time remained to hunt?

I would only shoot this bull if it was the end of season and I have not been seeing many bulls. I really would prefer to let this immature bull go. However due to the low odds of getting drawn for a bull tag in KY I would shoot it at the end of season so I have elk meat.

If I was drawn again and this bull presented a safe and legal shot, I would be tempted - especially if the season was drawing to a close. I had several opportunities to harvest bulls this size last year when I drew an archery bull tag, but chose to pass in hopes for a larger bull. However, I never got a chance at a large bull and I walked away from a golden KY elk tag empty handed.

if I were on the Last Day of my hunt; I might "consider" taking him.....not sure

If it is the last day of my hunt, I would shoot it.

If it was close to end of season. I love the meat

If it was last day

If it was last day

if it was late in season

If it was my last chance I'd take him

if it was my last day

If it was my last day to hunt, then yes I would shoot Bull C

If it was the last day I would

if it was the last day of hunting

If it was the last day of my hunt

if it was the last day of my hunt & last opportunity

If it was the last day, I would still be taking home memories and meat, I might not have a trophy but I would still be happy with my kill.

If it were my last day to hunt. Elk meat tastes better than an empty tag.

if last day of hunt

If last day of hunt for meat

it would probably be late in the season

last couple of days

Last day I would

Last day last hour only

last day of hunt

Last day of hunt

last day of season

last day only

maybe on last day of season

Not on first day of hunt but I would on last day.

Numbers sited, day of hunt

On how long I had already been hunting and how long I still had to hunt

On last day of hunting I would shoot this one rather than not get one on the last day of the hunt

Only if it was at the end of the season.

only if it was late in the season

Only if it was my last day.

Only if last day of the season.

only if the season was nearly over and I needed meat for the freezer

Would probably pass on day 1 and maybe 2 of the hunt, but I would definitely shoot this elk as the hunting window went on. I'm much more of a meat hunter than a trophy hunter

I usually hunt for meat. If it was the last day of the season and I was using a bow I would take the animal.

Past Experience

If I have killed one before (bull)

Only if I'd never killed one before

Hunting Method (e.g. archery)

Archery I probably would toward the end of my hunt. Firearm no

Depends on tag type (archery or gun) and how much time I had left in the season.

if I had archery tag

with a bow yes, no with a firearm

With Archery YES

Bull D

Health of Animal

He has a very nice rack but looks unhealthy and the meat may be bad. Would be worried on eating bad meat

He looks pretty emaciated. I'd want to look at him longer as I'm a meat hunter. I don't hunt antlers

he looks sickly

look sick

looks a little sickly

looks like something is wrong with it

looks sick in picture

looks sick to me

need better look, elk appears sickly

Not sure, he doesn't look too healthy.

This bull appears to be on the decline his body weight is low I probably would take this elk especially with a bow to help with the program if for no other reason

Opportunities for a Larger Bull

Depends on opportunity at other bulls or if on last day

If I hadn't seen anything else in area

Most likely, but not early in rifle season. He's got good main beam length but his tine length may be questionable given the angle of the picture.

not with this background

other encounters or opportunities

Probably would shoot if no other bulls in the area.

Remaining Time to Hunt

Depends on how much time I had to hunt. He looks kind of skinny.

If hunt was near over

If it were end of season

If it were the last day of my allotted hunting time

If very late in season possibly

it would depend how long I had to hunt

It would probably pass on this elk unless it was late in the hunt and I hadn't seen many

Last day

last part of season

Late in hunt, yes

On weapon used and time left in hunt

What day of season

Yes if it was later in the season

Antler Size or Position of Animal

Need a better view to age and also he would have to not be sky lined.

Need to see more of the body and have the bull not sky-lighted.

nice rack but looks poor

Only if was shooting toward a hill.

Probably. Would look through binoculars first and determine mass and points

Very nice bull, poor shot for I can't see what is behind him

Wait for it to turn.

When he presented a safe broadside shot

yes if I could make a safe shot

Yes if it is a safe shot

Hunting Method (e.g. archery

Bow yes. Gun no

Depends on area i was drawn for and the amount of sign i had seen also whether archery or not.

I would if using archery equipment.

If I was bow hunting

With a bow yes

With Archery YES

Yes if firearm, No if archery.

Bull E

Health of Animal

Mature looking body. Antlers are ok. I'd have to see a closer look

Opportunities for Larger Bulls

depends on how many elk i am seeing and how late in season

depends, I would have to think about it

He'd be hard to pass, score wouldn't be great but he seems to have some character.

Hold out for a bigger bull for a couple but may come back for a crack at him

If I had not seen any Bulls and this one walked out I would definitely think about it and probably would take the shot.

If i hadn't seen bigger bulls

Not a bad bull. But if it's early in the hunt and I'm seeing lots of bulls might hold off

Little small

Looks like he is an older bull. If I could determine that then yes I would harvest this animal. If not then he could have another year to grow

Remaining Time to Hunt

Again, Depends on the time left to hunt, any bull is a trophy and the meat is great

How many days I had left to hunt. If it was my last day on the evening hunt, probably.

depends on how many days id have left to hunt

How many days left. Last day maybe/probably

If hunt was near over

If it was last day...last chance....maybe

if i had little time left

If it was late in my hunting season, I would shoot.

If it was near the end of season, and needed to fill tag, or go home empty handed.

if it were the last day of the season yes

If it were the last day yes

last chance

Last day

last day

last day

Last day hunt.

last day of hunt

Late in season yes

Late in hunt, yes

Looks young and can't tell how big, it would depend how late in season it was as to whether i would shoot.

Nearing the end of my hunt

Only if it were the last day of my hunt.

The season is about to close and never got a chance at a Larger Bull I would take this Elk for meat and a wall mount for my home

Yes on the last day of the season

Depends on quality of hunt at the time

Yes, but not on the first few days of the hunt

Antler Size or Position of Animal

(Depends) on the potential for a better rack

please give me two more looks before you run off

Would like to see him looking straight at me, looks like nice fronts, but since I've already harvested a bull I may opt to pass.

would need a better view of overall rack

Can't determine the spread/size from the picture

Hunting Method (for example, archery)

Archery I would

Bow yes Gun maybe not.

bow yes gun no

Depends on area i was drawn for and the amount of sign i had seen also whether archery or not.

Depends on if I was using a bow or if it was last days with rifle.

If I was bow hunting

Only with bow

With bow yes, gun no

With a bow yes

Bull F

No

He's already been shot

I hunted for meat, so I might pass this one. But it is beautiful so... not sure

I would (if I) had seen it alive

I would not shoot at this elk because of the power lines and back ground, and that it hasn't already been shoot and killed.

No, already harvested by another hunter.

No he has been shot, but if he was running in the hills yes !

No, looks like someone already shot it. But it is really nice one

would like to see (better) how OLD he really looks can't tell well enough from picture, I would want to enjoy the meat also

Yes

Are you serious? I definitely shoot that bruiser!!!!

Depends if the question is pertaining to the bull prior to being dead, if so, yes, if not, NO

Yes- If it was not already taken.

I would shoot it twice

I'd shoot this monster twice

If I could hold still I would shoot

if the man wasn't there

Would definitely try to shoot him however would probably be shaking so bad

I would never hitting beautiful animal

Size or Position of Antlers

Can't see the body well enough to get an age idea. It would be tough to pass up either way.

Bull G

No

Not with this back ground

Yes

depends on how excited I get

I would only if I knew 100% it was a clear safe shot (on one behind this bull elk)

If I could get around and have a background to shoot toward.

If it was only option.

If it were old and needed harvested.

Nice bull to shoot after hunting unsuccessfully a few days first

Opportunities for Larger Bulls

depends on if I am seeing any bigger

Depends on opportunity at other bulls or if on last day

Depends on several factors. 1. How many bulls I was able to locate before season. 2. How many days are left in my season? 3. How many bulls I have been seeing while hunting. So I would not shoot this bull toward the beginning of my season if I have been seeing larger bulls. I would shoot this bull if I was getting close to the end of season.

depends what is in the background or where i was sitting what kind of shot I would have

How many more opportunities I may have to hunt elk.

Only on the last day, if I did not have an opportunity to get a bigger one.

Possibly if I did not see an alternative bull with "better" antler development after hunting many hours

Looks like it has a mature body and small antlers If I could determine was a mature animal I would harvest it that it.

Remaining Time to Hunt

Only on last day

Days left in hunt

Again if late in the hunt and had not seen any others or very few...he does look to be older and large bodied Bull. I would absolutely take a long look.

days left in the hunt, or bad weather prediction

Depends on body size and which day of the hunt it was. Late in the hunt – yes

Depends on day of the hunt (last or first) and the number of mature bulls that are being seen

Depends on how many days are left for hunt

Depends on how many elk I am seeing and how late in season

Depends on how much time I have left to hunt. Again, it can be a burden to make a trip to an elk zone especially if I can only manage 1 or 2 weekends to do so. If I am not seeing much sign or elk, and I feel I could kill or go home empty handed, I would take this bull.

Depends on time of season and help available.

depends on when I saw the animal, how much hunting time was remaining, and what the weather looked like in the upcoming days

Doubtfully, but waning moments of last day, maybe

Everything would depend on time frame, if it's early in the hunt probably not.

He's a old bull at the end of my season I would.

How late in season

How long I had been hunting and how much longer I had to hunt

How much time I have left to fill my tag

How much time remained to hunt?

If I run out of time. I would take it.

If it was last day

If it was last day

If it was last day

if it was last day of hunt maybe

if it was late in bow season I would

If it was late in the season

If it was my last day I would. If not I would wait to see what was next.

If it was the last day I had the opportunity to hunt, yes.

if it was the last day of my hunt & last opportunity

If it was the last day, I would still be taking home memories and meat, I might

Not have a trophy but I would still be happy with my kill.

If it were the last day of my allotted hunting time.

If it were the last opportunity on my hunt

If it were my last day to hunt.

if last day of hunt

last couple of days

Last day

last day

last day

Last day last hour only

last day of hunt

Last day of hunt, yes.

last day of season

Last day yes

Last few days of the season - yes. Earlier, probably not

Looks like a very mature bull late season possibly

Looks like an old bull, and probably needs to be harvested, and depends on what day of the hunt.

maybe a last day shooter

Maybe if it was the last day of the hunt so I could have meat.

maybe last day of hunt and no other bulls, I've never shot a bull
on last day only

On length and day of hunt.

On the first day of the hunt, no. On the last day of the hunt, yes.

On time remaining to hunt

Once again depends on tag type and number of days I had left

Only if it was late in season, last day out.

only if limited time in season remains, marginal bull

only if the season was winding down and I needed meat for the
freezer

Shoot on last day or towards the end of the hunt based on number
and size of bulls seen

The season is about to end and I would take this Elk with a Bow for
meat and a wall mount for my trophy room

would depend on the amount of hunting time I had left

Yes I might shoot this bull if I had no other bulls around & I was at
the end of my season

Yes, if it the last day and not knows whether I would get another chance.

Past Experience

Only if I'd never killed one before

Antler Size or Position of Animal

Body looks good, like the 5x5 I killed what a body, rack fooled me a little, toward end of
hunt going for ride home with me

On how many yards because of back ground if you miss

Hunting Method (for example, archery)

again if I had an archery tag

Archery Yes - Firearm No

bow only

Depends on area i was drawn for and the amount of sign i had seen also whether archery or not.

if archery yes and toward the end of season

with a bow yes with a gun no

with a bow yes, no with a firearm

With Archery YES

DRAFT

Appendix 12. “Other” big game animals that respondents had applied to hunt in states other than Kentucky.

Alligator

Dall Sheep

Exotic animals (not specified)

Grizzly Bear

Javalina

Mountain lion (cougar)

Oryx

Wild Turkey

Wild Boar

DRAFT

Appendix 13. "Other" most attractive features of other states' big game hunting programs.

Being able to bowhunt the rut without inexperienced gun hunters everywhere

Being able to hunt different parts of the country

Chance to harvest animals different than those in my home state

Hunted in a group at age 14

Hunting in beautiful country

Hunting in such beautiful country

I like to "points" systems that other states use for elk tags - increase opportunities associated with applying year after year without actually going on a hunt. This also allows the state to increase revenue as people build points during years that they actually have no interest in hunting.

I lived in Alaska for almost 20 years

Kentucky didn't offer elk or bear at that time

Landowner tags

Potential trophy size

Preference points and some guarantee that I would eventually draw after a certain number of applications

Success rates

Appendix 14. States other than Kentucky represented by survey respondents.

Alabama

Arizona

Florida

Georgia

Idaho

Indiana

Maryland

Michigan

Mississippi

Missouri

New Hampshire

New York

North Carolina

Ohio

Pennsylvania

South Carolina

Tennessee

Utah

Virginia

West Virginia

Wisconsin

Appendix 15. “Additional comments” provided by respondents.

Note: These comments were edited for spelling and grammar, but care was taken to retain the apparent meaning of respondents’ comments. References to individuals’ or business names were removed, and typically replaced with more general descriptions in brackets; for example, “[KDFWR staff member] or [Guide/Outfitter].”

Positive Experiences and/or Compliments about Kentucky’s Elk Program:

“As the father of a young man who had a cow tag, I will forever cherish the memories of “the hunt”. We look at the photos often and recall the conditions and experience. The only unpleasant experiences were when we were sitting on a stand, only to have an ATV “buzz through” our hunt! The highlight of the hunt was when we were able to stalk within 30 yards of 2 nice bulls who were bedded down in the middle of the day and observe them for 30 minutes. Now that, my friend, “was worth the price of admission!”

“Would love to go again while my health is good.”

“Would like to thank all the friendly people (in) the South At-Large Area”

“What a great opportunity to hunt such magnificent animals. To me archery hunting is the only way to hunt this animal, as long as I can draw a bow. “

“We had a great time; we camped with the people from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and they treated us great. Thank you for the experience. It was something me and my friends will never forget. We saw lots of animals had a lot of encounters [with elk]. Weather was perfect... just a wonderful time.”

“(It) was a hunt of a lifetime for me. I always wanted to go on an elk hunt with my dad and he was able to. (I) cannot wait until he gets drawn. He has been out of state several times and never has gotten one [an elk]. Please help me get him drawn next year. Would be a dream come true.”

“Thanks [for this] opportunity; this was my 2nd Kentucky bull and my 11-year-old grandson, son, and son-in-law are “ruined” now!”

“It was a great experience that I got to spend with my dad and friends.”

“Very glad for [KDFWR staff’s] help on the hunting area. Very pleased with the cost. Excellent meat to feed our big family.”

“Truly enjoyed the hunt and opportunity. It wasn’t what I thought it would be. The hunt in itself lasted about 45 minutes. (I) was expecting to go [hunt] all day or a couple of days. Got lucky on my bull.”

“Awesome experience! (I’m) proud to be a Kentucky resident. Greatly appreciate KDFWR!!!!!!”

“Before I get too old I would love to be able to tag a nice bull elk; this would be my greatest hunt of all right here in our own state of Kentucky and I thank you all.”

“I’m honored to have harvested a beautiful 6x6 Kentucky bull in 2013.”

“Elk are majestic animals – (I’m) so thankful to have been able to hunt elk and enjoy the beautiful scenery so close to home. “

"Elk restoration has been awesome. KDFWR has done a great job not only (with) elk but also deer. I was also blessed with 165" plus whitetail. Both elk and whitetail harvested in Pike County."

"Enjoyed my hunt. One of the best I have been on."

"Enjoyed the experience and the chance to explore some of the great views of the Kentucky countryside. (The) people were very friendly and did not look down on the hunters as a nuisance; that has happened to me in another state."

"Enjoyed the experience sharing hunt with spouse and son."

"Experience of a lifetime! Great Hunt!"

"Great experience. Thank you. Nice work."

"Great hunt, very challenging."

"Great opportunity for hunters! Good job KDFWR."

"Great time and memories"

"Great to be able to at least have chance to elk hunt in Kentucky"

"Had a great time with my family...was (only) 1 of 10 kids to be drawn for elk tag"

"Had a wonderful time!"

"(As) mentioned earlier, I had a family emergency in 2013 and couldn't make the hunt. My son and I both applied again hoping we may get lucky to get another chance to hunt an elk. I think it's a great opportunity to hunt an elk in our state. I think KDFWR has done a good job with the elk in eastern Kentucky."

"Hats off to the KDFWR for doing a fantastic job with all the wildlife in the state! Keep up the good work. Also with the work at the summer camps for the youth."

"Hunted on Thunder Ridge (property) near Hyden; everyone involved enjoyed themselves. ATV riders were a nuisance. I would go back every year if I could. I would pay much more to go."

"I am a 72-year-old Kentucky female resident; my children and I own and manage a western KENTUCKY [farm] and we know and appreciate the value of both domestic animals and our Kentucky wildlife. I have a deep and abiding love for Kentucky and her natural resources... one of which is her wildlife. I have hunted all my life... mostly small game. I believe in Kentucky's elk restoration program and have supported the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation/restoration program in Kentucky for several years. One of the highlights of my life was being drawn for a cow permit for the 2012 Kentucky hunt. With the help of one of Kentucky's great guides I had the opportunity to harvest a cow... Still waiting for that bull (permit)!!! Maybe 2015 will be the year!"

"I am grateful to the KDFWR for giving me the opportunity to hunt elk. I may have not have been able to afford to go out of state to hunt."

"I am happy to be drawn for the 2013 elk hunt it was an once-in-a-lifetime chance to be drawn. Hopefully I can be drawn again."

"Now that I have shot an elk in Kentucky, I will only apply for bull tags. I think the higher odds of getting drawn for the cows tags is a good thing. It would be great if that continued. People that are truly hunting for the sport because they enjoy the outdoors will be just as happy if they shoot a cow. A great friend of mine was also drawn for a cow tag last year. He shot a cow with his rifle. I don't think you will find two happier guys than us and we both shot cows."

"I am just thrilled to have the opportunity to hunt elk in Kentucky. I will apply every year I can, and I encourage all of the expansion of the herd that's possible for even more opportunities. It is great for the Kentucky economy in an area that needs it!"

"I am very grateful to have been able to harvest an elk in Kentucky. I had an awesome experience!!"

"I am very proud to have the opportunity to hunt elk in Kentucky. You are doing a great job!"

"I am very thankful for the opportunity and that I was able to have a successful hunt and harvest an elk. I feel this is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for most people and was very pleased with my experience. I will continue to enter the drawing in hopes of getting another chance to elk hunt in the future."

"I am very thankful for the opportunity this hunt provided me and my family last year. God bless, [Hunter's Name]"

"I appreciate the opportunity to be able to hunt elk in Kentucky. I have killed a bull and a cow with my bow and consider myself to be blessed to have had these opportunities. I think KDFWR does a great job in managing the elk. Thank you KDFWR, as I feel that you are doing an excellent job with Kentucky's resources. "

"I appreciated the opportunity to hunt and harvest an elk here in my home state. It will be a memory that I will treasure the rest of my days."

"I cannot say enough about how helpful your KDFWR staff was to me on my hunt. I hunted the Caney (LEA) area and the people in charge of the area were simply great! Thank you for a wonderful hunt."

I can't wait to get drawn again! I had a pleasurable time. "

"I could have harvested a bull elk on more than one occasion, or at least had an opportunity. Thank you folks and the whole Fish and Wildlife Department for what you do. You are appreciated!"

"I did not harvest an elk but had a great time. KDFWR has done an excellent job with the Commonwealth's overall wildlife program. I have no complaints and I am honored to be able to hunt elk in Kentucky."

"I didn't hunt in the area I live. I know the area I live and know where big bulls are but didn't get to hunt them. I'm happy with my bull but wanted a bigger one."

"Other than the waiting period I had a great hunt; the elk in Kentucky is the best program you have ever started. Keep up the good work."

"I enjoyed my hunt in 2013. I harvested a mature cow. I wish I had been drawn in 2014. I would love to get the opportunity to harvest a mature bull."

"I enjoyed my hunt tremendously and appreciate the help and effort of the KDFWR that made it possible. Thanks a lot!"

"I enjoyed myself very much. I would do it again in a heartbeat."

"I thoroughly enjoyed my time hunting, and greatly anticipate the opportunity to go again. "

"I feel blessed that I was able to hunt elk in Kentucky, I really hope the elk continue to flourish in our eastern counties. I hope that everyone that wants to hunt these animals has an opportunity to do so in their lifetime. I met some wonderful people while elk hunting and made some lifelong friends. I will be bringing my family to elk country this summer/ fall (and years to come) to

hopefully spend some time scouting with some of the guys that worked so hard to make my hunt something I will never forget.”

“I feel blessed to have had the opportunity. I feel that KDFWR has done an incredible job reintroducing and managing the elk herd. I brag on it often.”

“I greatly appreciate the opportunity to hunt Kentucky elk.”

“I had a great hunt last year; I have an 8-year-old little girl that can't wait to get drawn. She was mad that it didn't happen this year, but I said that she has time. But she asked, ‘When (will I get drawn)?’ ”

“I had a great hunting experience, but my truck was broken into on the hunting area. They stole camera equipment, all butchering equipment, guns and more....but I did have elk in front of me every morning and evening I hunted the area. If I would have harvested the cow elk that was in front of me on the afternoon they broke in, I would never have been able to get her off the mountain. I am glad I did not shoot. I can say this: I saw more game in Kentucky on public land than I have in any other state that I have hunted! I also had a whitetail deer permit and came very, very close to harvesting the largest whitetail I have ever seen in a hunting situation. We helped an "old timer" drag out a nice buck on our first morning in the Straight Creek LEA and met some of the nicest folks, some that I still keep in touch with. I do plan on coming back to Kentucky to hunt sometime soon, whether it is elk or whitetail. Just had a fabulous time! And the campground we stayed in had some incredible off-roading too, we had a blast! “

“I had a wonderful experience elk hunting in my home state of Kentucky. My son was with me and the experience was unforgettable. Our guide was excellent, and the hunt was very professional and challenging. We enjoyed the trail hiking too. I hope to someday get a tag for a trophy bull elk.”

“I had an overall very pleasing experience hunting elk in Kentucky. I always apply for the archery cow and bull tags. I had never hunted elk before, but now am hooked for good. Thanks for an amazing experience.”

“I had the hunt of my life in my home state. Thank you, KDFWR.”

“I have taken 4 Kentucky elk. A huge 6x6 in 2005, a cow in 2008, a 5x5 in 2010, and a cow in 2013.”

“I hope KDFWR will continue their good work.”

“I like(d) it a lot, (would) like to be drawn again, and it was great!”

“I love what the KDFWR has done for habitat improvement and accessibility to hunt all species in Kentucky. Thanks team. I harvested a nice 5x5 and have KDFWR to thank for that.”

“I really enjoyed being able to apply for a youth hunt, and going with my dad to harvest an elk”

“I really enjoyed my hunting experience in eastern Kentucky, very different territory than what we have here in Western Kentucky. Rough country over there, but was an experience that I will always remember and support. Would love to do it all over again (and) would not change a thing. Well...maybe (I) would get in better shape before hand”

“Thanks for what y'all do. All conservation officers I talked to about hunting elk have been very helpful. [Other KDFWR staff members] were very helpful”

“I really enjoyed my hunt. “

“I sure as heck enjoyed my hunt in 2013”

"I surely enjoyed my hunt and was successful. Even if I had not killed an animal I would do it again. But I think we should concern ourselves with Kentucky residents before out-of-state(ers) and not make it all about the dollar. Thank you very much."

"I think KDFWR is doing a great job"

"I think the Elk program in Kentucky is absolutely a wonderful thing. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to have been able to go for a cow hunt in 2014 if I never get another tag I will always carry the memory of that one. I certainly would love to be able to go harvest a bull at some point. I wish you the best of luck and will always be supportive of your efforts."

"I want to thank all KDFWR wardens in the local area. They were all a big help in my harvest of a bull elk. The locals helped just as much. Big thanks to [KDFWR staff member] for all his help in my harvest. I spent a lot of time in eastern Kentucky loving every moment!"

"I want to thank [KDFWR staff member] and all his associates for the opportunity to enjoy Elk in Kentucky free ranging. I harvested a bull elk in Martin County with muzzle-loader scoring 338 inches. Thanks for everything. [signed, Hunter's Name]"

"I want to thank the KDFWR for the opportunity of one of the most challenging and most rewarding hunts of my life. I was impressed with the restoration efforts and the amount of information provided for the hunters. Still... hats off to you for the opportunity to hunt such a beautiful creature."

"I wanted to say thank you for the opportunity and hope that Kentucky continues the excellent work with our natural resources."

"I was very pleased with the hunt opportunity, quality of the animal, and KDFWR personnel"

"I would like to say thanks for wonderful time elk hunting. I can't wait to put in for the hunt again."

"I would like to thank everyone in Kentucky for the great time I had while hunting there last October. The people in Kentucky were great every place I went. Always ready to help with anything that I needed. My guide service did what they said they would do. The butcher that processed the meat did a great job. I look forward to my next hunt in your wonderful state. Sincerely, [Hunter's Name]"

"I'd love another opportunity to harvest an elk, I really don't ever need a bull I prefer the cow to stock my freezer with hormone-free free range meat. I had the most incredible experience during my elk hunt."

"It was a great experience! It was my first time hunting ever. Great time."

"It was a great hunt"

"It was a great hunt and a wonderful experience"

"It was a great hunting experience. There was plenty of public land to hunt in a beautiful area."

"It was a great hunting opportunity for me, and the elk program is being handled well. Hope it continues to grow"

"It was a wonderful hunt -- thanks for the opportunity"

"It was amazing and I really appreciate the opportunity for the hunt of my life."

"Keep up the good work and thanks for the opportunity to hunt elk in Kentucky."

"Kentucky appears to have a great Elk herd and while I feel that experiencing an elk hunt is like nothing I've ever experienced, I know it was due to my guides work and of course the health of

the Elk herd. I have memories I will take to my grave and it's all due to the tremendous success of the Elk herd. One can lose focus through success, I just hope KDFWR remains focused on the "health" of the elk. Thank you, [Hunter's Name]"

"KDFWR is doing a wonderful job! Keep up the great work!"

"KDFWR does a great job in what they do. State needs to sound more [obtain more publicity] for their work."

"KDFWR was helpful in answering my planning-related questions. Thanks for making this experience an option. We love the elk meat and will never forget the experience my son and I had together on this hunt. Unlike any other hunt I've ever been part of. I was not able to locate a (meat) processor to take in elk on 12/24. So I had to take back to Northern Kentucky, which created some challenges. Thanks again."

"Love the elk hunts in my home state. Lots of good info provided by KDFWR compared to other states. Would like to see more tags for residents. Keep a good thing going."

"I and my husband put in for lottery every year. I got (drawn) in 2012 and 2013 for cow and dropped (harvested) one both years."

"My elk hunt was a trip of a lifetime that I never thought I would be able to do."

"My elk hunt was the best hunt I was ever on and I got a cow elk with my dad."

"My Kentucky elk hunt was a wonderful experience, all of the wardens and KDFWR staff were great people to talk with and meet. They made the experience even more pleasant. I sure hope that my wife or I get drawn again. We can hardly wait for the next drawing. Thanks so much."

"My name is [Hunter Name] and my cow elk hunt was the greatest hunt I've been on because it was at home with my two sons! Thank you!"

"My nine-year-old son was the one drawn for a 2013 cow elk tag with a rifle. We had a wonderful hunt together and he was able to harvest a very nice cow elk. Although my son was drawn in the regular cow/rifle draw, I am very thankful that there are special opportunities for kids with a separate drawing just for them. Thanks so much!"

"My time elk hunting in Kentucky was awesome. The people were great and the wildlife was too!"

"My wife and I had a blast hunting."

"Everything is just right! The game wardens and people were really helpful and I had a wonderful experience and can't wait to get drawn again!"

"Overall, I loved my elk hunt in Kentucky!"

"Overall, it was a great experience. I made many memories with family and friends, I learned a lot about the habits of elk, and got to see these magnificent creatures roaming in the hills of my home state. It was surreal at times. "

"Thank You for bringing the elk back to Kentucky. I dreamed of hunting elk in Kentucky as a little boy and my mom told me that there were not elk in Kentucky. My dreamed was shattered, but then you brought them back and I was able to kill a big bull and I got to do it with my son and that made it even better. So thanks again for all of your hard work and I look forward to maybe getting to go with my son or grandson when they get a chance to kill a Kentucky elk. I am a big hunter. Now that a lot of people stop applying because they don't think they will get drawn; that's good for the guys that apply every year regardless, but I think the preference point system is better because, you will get drawn at some point. Thanks a lot!!!!!"

“Thank You for the blessing to hunt for Bull Elk in an area close to my house in Kentucky”

“Thank you for the opportunity to harvest an elk cow. The experience was much appreciated. KDFWR staff are doing a great job!”

“Thank you for the opportunity to hunt Elk. I love what the KDFWR is doing with the Elk restoration and the lottery however the system is not without flaws. I was drawn for a Bull Elk firearms tag fall 2013. After the first 2 days [my guide/outfitter] quit on me so I had to get a back up plan. The KDFWR allowed me to switch my zone to South-at-Large since I lived in Harlan, Kentucky. This helped some, but by the end of the hunt I was unable to harvest/kill an elk. “

“Thank you for the opportunity you have gave me. I killed a 5X5 bull elk with a firearm and it was the best time I have ever had in my life. I will never forget it!”

“Thank you for the opportunity. Great experience hunting with brother-in-law in Kentucky for elk. Being able to plan our own hunt and have a good chance of harvesting a bull was an awesome experience.”

“Thanks for all your hard work!!”

“Thanks for bringing elk back to Kentucky”

“Thanks for bringing elk back to Kentucky and for the best state in the union for a hunter.”

“Thanks for the 2013 hunt I had with my son. Best 4 hunting days of my life.”

“Thanks for the opportunity to hunt elk in Kentucky.”

“Thanks for giving me a chance to hunt in Kentucky. I had fun hunting there with my dad, who has taken 12 elk in Colorado. I was about to give up because there were other hunters on quads (4-wheelers) and using radios to cut the elk off in front of us. My dad wasn't happy so we left and went back to Indiana. Two days after Christmas we decided to make the 4 hour journey again. My dad spotted elk about a mile away, so we took off and I didn't think I would make it. We got close and I shot my elk at 130 yards. She was very old--one of the first ones turned loose [original release animal]. She wasn't very healthy. My dad said she was a sack of bones and wouldn't make it through the winter. [Guide/Outfitter] helped us get it out (of there). Thanks again.”

“The only problem I have with the elk hunt is that I didn't get drawn this year. I think it is a great program and hope to get drawn again in the future. It was a hunt of a lifetime!”

“I've heard you will have 4 choices next year for the (elk hunt) lottery. To me that means the odds are going to be worse to get (a) tag so KDFWR can double their income. I would like to thank KDFWR for the hard work and opportunity to hunt elk in Kentucky; it was the best hunting experience of my life and would like to get to hunt them again before I die. Took 12 years to get a (permit), which is too long.”

“I would like to thank KDFWR for their hard work in bringing elk back to Kentucky. It was the best hunting experience of my life and would like to hunt them again.”

“This hunt is a good educational experience.”

“This is a great opportunity for avid hunters to create revenue in the state instead of traveling out of state to hunt elk.”

“This is a great program and I really appreciate the opportunity to hunt an animal [elk] such as this.”

Dissatisfaction with Hunt:

"I was very dissatisfied with the hunt. I scouted a area in the Middlesboro area with a friend who lives there and it was not off limits; he called me the day before my hunt as I was en route and informed me the area had been closed between the time I had scouted and my hunt, which I was not informed of. I contacted the local game warden who confirm this and that all of the area south of 25E from Pineville to Middlesboro was but off limits which wasn't at the time I scouted that's 12 to 14 miles of land that had been taking away and the reason he gave me was that some poaching had taking place in another area and they were going to use elk from the close area to restock it which is sort of unfair to people who had already put their time and money in try to find a place to hunt so as you can imagine its real hard try to fine some place new to hunt in just a few hour I was put in touch with another game warden because the one in bell county didn't have any idea where we could go and the warden from Leslie county sent us to one area which was a long drive on opening morning since we had a room already in Middlesboro there is a big difference in 10 minutes to your hunting area and having to drive a hour and a half so I didn't sign up this year because I still have a bad taste from my experience I'm still undecided whether I will sign up for 2015"

Suggestions for Improvement to the Elk Program:

"As to the number of bull elk tags allotted, my preference would always be that the best options for the health of the resource be followed. Take what the resource will allow, but not to the point of endangering the genetic health of the herd."

"Was drawn for a firearms cow elk tag, for the first week of firearms season, in Straight Creek LEA. I hunted three days and spotted fourteen elk, thirteen of which were bulls. The cow that I did take on the third evening of hunting was a yearling cow hanging out with three rag horn bulls. Was a little concerned about the big difference in the sex ratio that I saw while hunting Straight Creek LEA. In 2012 I was assisting an uncle who was drawn for archery cow tag in the area which is south at large now. We saw thirty two elk in several days of hunting with the majority being cow elk. During my uncle's hunt we only saw seven different bulls, the cows were so I should have found a group of cows."

"Great job. I would like there to be more information out there about how to hunt them we did a lot of walking because we were afraid to drive around in a truck and spot them and then stalk them a lot of people we talk to said it was ok but we were not sure"

"Hunting on the LEAs would be much more effective with the use of ATVs or UTVs. There is way too much ground to cover on foot and some of it is very remote. If the options for ATVs or UTVs are out then I believe elk hunters should be permitted to set up a hunting camp."

"The trophy quality and age structure just wasn't what I was looking for. I'm not going to pretend I know as much as you guys [KDFWR], spending two weeks in the area, but I do hope there is a plan in place to grow some quality elk 340+ [inches]. "

"The strip mine lands that are public closest to my house have become overgrown. Controlled burning or some mowing would do wonders. As the grass slowly left, so did the elk (from Elk Forest WMA, Asher Access Area). Also, I don't much care for trapping our elk and trading them. Seems like a lot die from stress when in captivity. Overall I am satisfied with our Elk Program."

"I like the hunting experience the size of the animal is not why I hunt. I think too much emphasis is put on antler size, not on the hunting experience. There too many rule changes made to make big antlers, not for the health of the herd."

"I understand the waiting period on the bulls, but I do believe 3 years is a little long. I don't think that it should be based on if you get drawn, but if you harvest a bull. Too many people feel pressure to shoot small bulls because they know they will have to set out 4 years before they even get a chance to hunt a bull again. Also small one and two year old bulls should be protected so they can reach maturity."

"Keep everything [the way it is], so the average person can hunt."

"Make it as expensive to hunt for out-of-state hunters as it is for Kentucky residents to hunt in other states"

"More permits, they are dying of old age. Why not let the people enjoy the hunting and the state to make more money to support the elk. This is a no-brainer."

"Need to plant food plots on public lands to attract the elk to areas other than active strip mines"

"Funding should be made available for controlled burns in the restoration area; habitat in some areas is becoming overgrown."

Concerns about Hunt and/or the Elk Program:

"Very concerned about why the elk population isn't continuing to increase at a steady pace."

"Based on my experiences, I do not believe Kentucky has the elk population it says they have. I believe if there are elk turned loose in an area you should not be denied the right to hunt them by coal companies just because they are on coal company land; the state stocked those elk , not the coal companies"

"End of season cow hunt was a joke, didn't even see an elk, even going to elk viewing stations."

"The elk program is a joke, I and everyone I know and people I work with think so. It is commercialized. It's like you bring elk here just to make money on them. KDFWR--until they eat someone's garden up, or cause an accident on (a) roadway, then they are not theirs--they need to spend some money paying for damages the elk cause."

"Enjoyed the hunt, but the amount of people driving in the hunting areas in vehicles greatly detracted from my experience and lessened my opportunities and cost me some chances as well."

"I enjoyed my experience elk hunting in Kentucky, but I was frustrated with the number of hunters I encountered. Hunters would block roads with their vehicles so no one else could pass. I had hunters walk up on me a number of times. While hunting for my archery cow I seriously saw more hunters than I did elk. "

"I found the licensing and LEA process to be a bit confusing. A lot on hunting areas located in and around hunting areas and I could see people getting lost and/or in the wrong areas if they were not familiar with map-reading and GPS equipment."

"I guess I'm disillusioned, but I never saw or heard an elk during my hunt. Possibly due to only having a cow tag and the elk had been pressured during bull season. I consider myself an experienced elk archery hunter, having shot several bulls out west on self-guided property over the past twenty years."

"I have a problem with so many nonresident hunters being drawn. I know many residents who have entered every year since the lottery started and haven't drawn. Some are older people who may never be drawn to hunt elk in their home state, but have to watch people on hunting

shows from out of state get an opportunity they will never get. It makes me mad that they may die before being drawn.”

“We saw very few elk. [Guide/Outfitter] said that too many had been trapped from the area and also too many were harvested from the same area--the strip mines on the Hazard LEA.”

“I did not experience this, but have heard of guides harassing people for their services and trying to scare off elk when they refused. The area I hunted was very large but in two hard days of hunting I only saw two elk. “

“I was disappointed with the number of elk seen while helping other hunters prior to my hunt. Therefore, I did not hunt using my cow archery tag.”

“It took me from the year 2000 until 2013 to get drawn for first week of cow (season). Some people have hunted three different years.”

“It seems like there are a lot of Kentucky employees wrapped up in this elk hunting... making money off of it. It would have been nice to have more help from (KDFWR staff). I never got much help from them at all. You have outfitters buying the rights to hunt a place and leaving the little guys having to hire them if they want to hunt. It makes it hard for an individual to hunt an elk cheap—without spending \$1000 to \$2000 dollars just for a guide.”

“Keep the number of permits low. Residents in eastern Kentucky were remarking about population and lack of really big bulls. That's one of the main draws. It's the chance of a lifetime to kill a 300-inch trophy class elk. Also, if a hunter wounds a collared animal, please tell them where it is. Nobody wants to wound/kill a beautiful animal like an elk and not have the opportunity to harvest it. All that happens is another bull gets shot and now there are 2 less bulls”

“Love spot and stalk in the West. Our terrain may be too thick overall to have the same experience.”

“My experience with private landowners in the area was that they did not like KDFWR bringing "outsiders" in and guiding for them. A lot of them felt they were bullied into letting them hunt.”

“In my experience, access to hunt in Martin County is very limited. The amount of elk is very low. Hold cow permits for several years. Tried to answer survey online, but the computer froze when I logged on.”

“Personally, I think the entire elk population and hunt should be reviewed. From what I know and hear, population is down some, very few calves, and many people don't understand the nonresident situation. We have a great thing but we have room for improvement.”

“Residents of elk restoration counties should be allowed to hunt anywhere in their county, be it LEA or at-large areas. Archery bull (hunting) should be (allowed in) any zone after firearm season. “

“Shouldn't have raised the tag price and should be more people drawn from Martin County because we like to hunt, too.”

“Some people do not have computers and will not put in for the elk drawing because of that. Most people I talk to say they will not put in because of the difficulty on the computer. I believe you would receive more support if you would make it easier to put in for the drawing, such as we do with deer permits in stores. I myself do not have a computer.”

“The elk population is suffering in eastern Kentucky, and the population is NOT as high as many claim. We need to reduce the available permits for 3 years to let the population surge.”

“The opinion that local hunters and KDFWR agents have of nonresident hunters smacks of animosity. Most people are very welcoming, but many in the groups described make an out-of-state hunter feel very unwelcomed.”

“Guides are ruining elk hunting in Kentucky by leasing public land and posting it.”

“I think Kentucky should charge nonresident hunters the same fee as their state charges Kentucky hunters.”

Elk Permit Allocation:

“Would like to see less archery tags or (make them) harder to draw or something; people (are) applying that have never shot bow or own a bow, I know some elk are being wounded. Would rather see bow hunters get 5 tags and youth hunters get 75 tags...just my thought”

“Who allowed bow hunters to hijack the lottery? Bow permits should be more in line with whitetail kill ratios. Bowhunters can hunt with bows without any special bow-only permits allotted to them. Why do they deserve to have doubled the odds of getting drawn over gun hunters?”

“I believe the ratio of bull-to-cow permits are good unless the numbers begin to decline, then if they do then the permits need to be reduced likewise. “

“For cow archery -- Make all areas available.”

“I also think that for the ticket draw if you win you should be able to shoot either sex and the same should apply more frequently when a permit is issued; I did not see a cow but I saw 3 different bulls on 3 different days; I could have filled a tag in this case.”

“I think you could increase the number of youth tags. This would allow more kids to enjoy hunting.”

“I would like to see 10-15 tags allotted to the counties in the elk restoration zone. This gives people who live here in and around these animals a little better opportunity to hunt them. If I had to travel > 2 hours just to hunt, I don't think I would have.”

“I would like to see Kentucky residents have more of an opportunity at getting picked for a bull elk tag. I understand the revenue that non-resident hunters bring to the state but it does seem a little unfair with the limited number of tags allowed each year. Maybe you could have it to where residents only could apply for the bull archery permits or something to that effect. Thanks for taking the time to do a survey and make the effort to make it a better experience for every hunter.”

“Add youth numbers and take away adult numbers to keep youths hunting.”

“I would support more tags going to Kentucky residents.”

“Kentucky residents should be considered in majority of hunts with one-year waiting period for bulls and no waiting period for cows. Archery hunters should be allowed to hunt either sex if drawn for bull tag and have more freedom to hunt as the deer hunters throughout the elk season other than the elk gun hunting season. A tag should be good for any elk.”

“More youth elk tags!”

“I would love to see more tags allotted to the youth (permit) drawing. It is a hard hunt, but a great experience for both the kids and the parents.”

“People should also be allowed 1 cow permit (or 1 bull permit every 3 years) for their own private property--ONE tag per private property, not per person. Also, KDFWR needs to issue special permits/drawings for mining companies to raffle off in exchange for allowing the general public to hunt on their land. They own too much elk territory for the public to be denied access, and hunters are fed up with having to pay extorted fees for guides on private property.”

“There are way more than 10,000 in my opinion. I saw hundreds of animals on the two properties I hunted in Knott County and I can only imagine how many there really are throughout elk zone. There needs to be more tags offered than a 1,000, probably double that. I also think the local people in the elk zone should be able to get tags if any go unclaimed. They have to deal with property damage and can't do anything about it. It also seems to me that the elk hunt is becoming more about making money than hunting.”

“There needs to be more tags offered. (There are) way more elk than 10,000 (elk). Also, I believe out-of-state tags should be lowered to 5% or less to give more Kentuckians the chance. Please increase tags so more people and I can have this great opportunity. Thanks.”

“You have a good elk program but I think residents should have higher odds of getting drawn than non residents...just an opinion.”

“There should be a larger percentage of permits given out to hunters that live in the (elk) restoration zone, than out-of-state permits.”

Public Access:

“I wish there was more information on public land in the elk zone, and which are known to regularly have elk. It wasn't until a few days before my trip that I found out that the place I planned to hunt (Dewey Lake WMA) had very little elk activity.”

“The lack of clarity in regards to the places I could hunt was very frustrating. It seems to me that the state has this as a money getter. If you don't have a guide your success is not going to be very good!”

“You need to get the hunting back on Kentucky Rivers (property).”

“Giving more hunters the opportunity to hunt elk in Kentucky and maybe trying to get more public land for hunters that don't know where to hunt for elk. Thank you”

“I am concerned that the next time we hunt there will be less public land available.”

“I do not understand why Paintsville Lake WMA is open for elk hunting as there are no elk there at all.”

“KDFWR also needs to secure more public hunting areas if possible.”

“I did most of my scouting on Kentucky River property. I did not find out that I could not hunt Kentucky River property until later; it seems that KDFWR should come to an agreement. I was raised up in Perry County and I was very disappointed when I could not hunt Kentucky River property. I know people that have hunted it in the past. No one informed me that I couldn't hunt Kentucky River (property) until it was too late.”

“I don't think there should be any zones or EHUs if you get drawn you should be able to hunt wherever you want as long as it is within the 16 counties. “

“I drove through several counties knocking on doors and talking to people and only had one person willing to let me hunt on his property (60 acres). I would love to see private land access,

possibly block management areas especially for the farmers that are having problems with the elk.”

“I also found that much of the Straight Creek LEA was not accessible unless you were hunting coal mine property. In driving around the Straight Creek LEA, much of the land looked like it was private or no parking for hunters. I still enjoyed my time in the woods as always though.”

“Detailed access road info to the hunting areas would be helpful, a lot of the access/entry points are not marked or posted and hard to determine.”

“Try to get Kentucky Rivers (property) on board again”

“I think elk hunting in Kentucky is a blessing to all hunters who have an opportunity to get to go and experience it. And the ability to hunt on public land is a good thing because not all can afford to hire the guides, which charge high amounts for something you can do yourself with the right knowledge, experience and scouting of an area. The loss of public land I feel takes away from some hunters because even if you’re drawn if you can’t afford a guide and don’t know anyone with land in the elk zone it makes it tough for those types of hunters and I wish the state had an option for them.

“I think that there should be more help available to find elk. It was very difficult going to an area that you do not know anything about. Very hard and people do not like outsiders.”

“I think there should be more public land that is not leased up by locals or that you have to hire a guide on. Some people may not be able to afford guides after they spend so much on everything else or if they want to mount the head of a nice bull.”

“The Hazard LEA was very difficult to navigate and I know that frustrated a lot of hunters I met in the field so maybe we could get some better boundary information.”

“I was a little surprised at the limited places to hunt and the commercialization of the hunts. If I wanted to spend a lot of money hunting elk I would go out West and have a real elk hunt. I think more public land to hunt is needed. “

“It’s hard for an individual to find quality land to hunt, without going with a guide, due to the land being leased up by the outfitters. If it’s private, and has elk on it, it is more than likely leased by an outfitter, and off limits to elk hunters going at it alone.”

“Public land is no place for elk hunting with deer hunters running around. This is also true on private land. I found this out firsthand (with) 4x4s everywhere. Please do something before next year’s drawing. Thank you very much.”

“Let me preface my statement by saying I am a professional forester who has spent a significant amount of time in the woods looking at land. My biggest complaint is that Caney LEA was not marked and easily identified. As a non resident who lives a significant distance away the maps provided and what was on the ground were not easily identified. All in all it was a great experience. I did think the area had been hunted to death. We only saw 5 elk on the public land area all of which were bulls and of course I had a cow tag. It also seemed when I called [KDFWR staff] in the area their standard response was that I needed to hire a guide. That was not my objection—although I have hired guides before in other states—I wanted to do it myself. I hope these comments help. Although I did come home empty handed it was a good experience overall.”

“It is a little difficult to figure out the areas...especially if you're not from the state.”

“Maps of areas to hunt are a joke, as I run into unmarked private property.”

“Markings need to be clearer in hunting area. We were on someone’s private land and thought we were on public land.”

“Need a better map on website showing what is public and what is leased. It was very confusing what was huntable and what was leased while on ICG land”

“Open up more land, either private or state owned for hunts”

“My only remark would be for the KDFWR, if possible, to make public land a little more accessible/well known. But again, it was a great experience and it is awesome to have the opportunity to hunt elk in Kentucky.”

“Public lands are hard to locate with adequate access.”

“The Caney LEA is too small, since approximately half of the WMA property in Caney is land-locked with no access thru surrounding private properties. This concentrates the hunters drawn for Caney on the WMA areas that can be accessed. All that activity runs the elk off the accessible WMA areas within Caney.”

“The huntable areas need to be better marked or defined so the hunters know for sure where they can legally hunt. I had to get help from a local to tell me where I could hunt. Without his help we would have been lost!”

“The maps on KDFWR's website are confusing. I hunted in Straight Creek LEA. It was difficult to discern what was public land and what was mining property, from the maps and on the ground. There are not a lot of clear boundary lines marked. I spoke with the conservation officer in the area, and he told me that he could not convict anybody for trespassing based on KDFWR's maps. Aside from that, I enjoyed the hunt. Thanks for all of your hard work!”

“The only other thing I have to say is that the land available for the average elk hunter to hunt without paying a high guide fee is getting very limited. It’s turning in to a money-making opportunity...”

“The public land borders in the LEA were marked very poorly, and we spend a lot of time trying to decide if we were on public or had crossed onto the private land”

“The public land was poorly marked and identified. Was not sure of the boundaries or where some of the land was.”

“There is not enough public hunting land available with reasonable access. The land is over-traveled, over-hunted and the size of the tracts make the movement of the herds to adjacent private property particularly appealing and easy to quickly move off the public land. Had I not had a guide who eventually got permission to hunt an active coal mine I would not have harvested an elk. The public areas are way too limited and not in the prime areas of the elk restoration zone.”

Elk Hunt Drawing System:

“2013 was the first time I've been drawn for an elk hunt... I've been applying since it started. Would like to see some sort of point system like we have in Deer Quota Hunts.”

“As I mentioned earlier, I am a fan of the preference points system.”

“Would like to keep the opportunity to hunt elk in Kentucky open to as many Kentucky residents as possible. Understand the need for non-resident hunters to enjoy as well but our state brought the Elk back and our residents deserve the rewards of that effort.”

“Wish the drawing was for Kentucky residents only.”

“Wish Kentucky did preference points to increase odds of getting drawn for bull tags, especially for bowhunters like myself”

“I think that fewer tags should go out-of-state and the number of archery tags should go up. The odds for people who are over 62 and residents of the state should be higher, reason (being that) every Kentucky resident should have the opportunity; the odds are stacked against the older generation. Should be a separate drawing category and half the number of tags, once drawn in the age category for bull then they would only be allowed to apply in the open category in the future.”

“Being a lottery I don’t see the reason for having to wait three years before you can apply again (if you are drawn for a bull permit); Kentucky is just missing out on extra money that the program can use!”

“Eliminate the waiting period. Keep the draw like it is; equal chance for everyone.”

“I agree with all about the drawing except that someone that draws a bull tag should have to wait to apply again. Cows are not such a big deal, but definitely on bulls. Everyone should have a chance. I didn’t get to hunt this past year for the tag I received, but I will only apply for bulls from now on.”

“[Through my work] I have a large network of people I know throughout the state. I have talked to several people who know different people who have been drawn several times. The statistical likelihood of someone being drawn several times for a bull tag in Kentucky is very low. I am not suggesting anything inappropriate is being done but when someone gets drawn multiple times in a relatively short time frame it gives that impression. I do like that the bulk of the tags go to residents. I grew up in MI and they also have elk hunting. Nothing like Kentucky. In MI, you can only get drawn one time in your life for a bull tag. I like, in Kentucky, that if you get drawn for a bull tag, you can apply again once you wait the 3 years. I would not mind if the waiting period increased from 3 years to 5 years (for bull permits). I also like that each year you publish the odds of getting a permit for each weapon type and gender of elk. This allows people to make an informed decision about what permits to apply for. I intentionally apply for cow-firearm and cow-archery because of the odds of getting drawn. I wanted to be able to say I shot an elk in Kentucky. I shot a cow with my bow. Something not many people can say.”

“I get tired of hearing people complain that the elk draw is rigged. It’s a lottery and most will never draw a tag.”

“I did not like the double draw - draw a tag, then draw an area. It is probably fair, but I got stuck with a cow-archery tag. When I learned that the bull season started well before the cow season, and the [KDFWR staff] I spoke with reaffirmed - I knew my chances were slim. “

“I don’t care for the waiting period. “

“I don’t think residents should have a waiting period for cows but maybe non-residents should, I 100% agree with a 5-year waiting period on bull tags for both residents and non-residents! Also, if a rule is passed for a longer waiting period for bulls I’d like to see it apply to people who have been drawn in the past as well , lets say if you was drawn 3 years ago and now its a 5-year period then you still have 2 years to wait . If passed, then the people who have harvested a bull in the past will have to wait until it’s been at least 5 years . I’d also like to see more youth-only tags drawn!!”

“I drew a bull permit in 2010. I harvested a bull in 2010 and would like to hunt cows (in the future). I like everyone having to choose 2 hunts because it increases my odds for cow archery.

I have also been drawn twice for cow archery and will stop participating if the odds for cow archery are over 1/20.”

“I have been lucky twice in the elk draw. They were both for cow but I was glad for the opportunity. I don't mind to set out two or three years after I've been drawn. I would also like to see the people of eastern Kentucky be drawn more. I have no clue how to regulate that, but it would be nice for them.”

“I hope that after my 3-year wait that it doesn't take another 7 years before I'm drawn again. While hunting I spoke to several hunters who had been drawn 2 or 3 times before in Kentucky.”

“I like the way Kentucky's program is set up. I have heard people wanting to go to a point system, etc. I don't think that will help people get a tag any faster than by putting in for a tag now the way it is set up. Thank you for all the work you do.”

I liked the pre-2011 format, allowing several time periods and weapon choices to harvest an elk. If you want the extra \$10 dollars you could allow application for bull and cow tags separately. I recall it was previously \$10 and you weren't allowed a choice of bull or cow tags, if drawn you were assigned a cow or bull tag randomly. “

“I think you could increase your tags per year.”

“I strongly recommend a point system (for Kentucky residents only). Applicants should be able to accumulate points each year they do not get drawn (like some state whitetail quota hunts do). On the current system, it is possible for an applicant to apply his/her entire life and never get drawn. I do not believe this is fair because everyone should have an opportunity to hunt these animals in their home state.”

“I think KDFWR needs to look towards resident point system like they have on their state WMA hunts. I have BEEN drawn TWO times for cow tags I have been lucky, but everyone should get a chance. The point system could help on this. Some people think your system is rigged. I think the system IS fair, BUT THE POINTS SYSTEM WOULD MAKE PEOPLE FEEL BETTER ABOUT THE DRAWING. I know several people THAT quit applying BECAUSE THEY THINK THE SYSTEM IS RIGGED. THANK YOU FOR THIS CHANCE TO HUNT”

“I think less out of state people need to be allowed to hunt. That way more residents of Kentucky have more opportunities.”

“I think preference should be given to Kentucky residents”

“I think that a point system should be considered for people who apply each year. “

“I think the draw should be on a preference point system. The more you put in the better your odds.”

“I think the elk hunt should be on a preference point type system.”

“I would love to see a preference point system for bulls.”

“Many people are concerned with the lottery process in Kentucky. Many people feel it is fixed and not a fair process? I travel for a living and hear these comments on a regular basis. I feel KDFWR should correct this and be transparent in their dealings with the public. Thanks.”

“Maybe in the years to come start a point system”

“My annual income should have nothing to do with this survey about my elk hunt experience. I would like to see a one year wait for anyone that is drawn for a Kentucky elk hunt. It's hard to imagine hat someone drawn 3 straight times for elk permits is randomly selected by a computer.”

“Thinking there should be a point system for the years not drawn so some don't have to wait so long to go (elk hunting).”

“Please consider a point system elk draw.”

“Please go to a preference point system. I've been drawn twice but have several friends that have put in since day one and are giving up.”

“Point system would be nice”

“Should award preference points if not drawn to increase / reward a person that put s in for lottery year after year”

“Then I find out that even though I did not harvest an elk I had to wait 3 years before I could put in for a bull elk tag. That is incredible that a person, especially a resident, especially that I did not kill would have to wait for 3 years before I'm eligible again. After talking to some of the popular guides, I have actually heard of the same people in high places with money have received a tag multiple years. I just think as a lifelong resident of Kentucky and a Commonwealth employee that we should have the opportunity to apply and potentially get drawn for another elk after having been drawn especially if we do not harvest an animal. I'm not speaking of what's fair because that is the nature of hunting but we should at least have the opportunity again the next year(s).”

“Some people have been drawn for a bull tag two years in a row.”

Elk Hunting Seasons:

“Again, my biggest complaint was only being given one week to fill my tag. Especially because I was given the week of Christmas. I almost didn't get an elk because of this.”

“Archery dates and hunts should be the same for crossbows and compound bows.”

“My 2013 cow elk hunt was very disappointing. One reason (was that) I got drawn for second firearm season, so I lost days of hunting so I could spend with my family at Christmas.”

“I did not hunt this year because I did not have a buddy hunter during the dates and times that my tag was pulled for. It was too close to Christmas. I also had issues finding a guide during that time. Thanks. Hoping to get another chance at a better time to hunt.”

“I drew a cow archery tag and the deer muzzleloader season came in the same weekend. Terrible planning. Multitudes of gun hunters in orange on public land shooting guns make it pretty much impossible to get a shot at a cow with archery tackle. It would have been nice to get a chance to hunt the elk before guns started cracking. Cow elk were very difficult (to hunt) as they were always in groups. Had plenty of opportunities with bulls in range but the cows were very tough.”

“I had put in for the elk drawing every year since the first year and finally got drawn in 2013. I got a late season firearm tag which fell the week of Christmas, and that is the only time I see my family. I did not get to go on the hunt during that week due to my mother passing away. However I don't agree with holding a hunt during Christmas. I would like my chances to improve since I was unable to hunt, and while I'm still young enough to go.”

“The late season 2nd cow hunt is not as easy as everyone may think”

“I wish it wasn't during the late muzzleloader season. (Pressure from) other hunters had the elk very skittish. I wouldn't have the elk hunts during the same time as a gun deer season. The deer hunters were pushing the elk into the heavy timber before light. We got lucky on a group of

cows that ran to us after a deer hunter shot at first light. Again we were just able to get in front of them with the vehicle before they disappeared into the timber.”

“I think all Kentucky residents should have the opportunity to hunt elk in their home state. I also believe that the elk should be able to thrive outside the elk zone, so there would be a chance to have a regular season like we have with deer.”

“The season should be longer as well”

“I think the bow hunters that want/or get drawn for a cow tag shouldn't have to follow in behind the gun hunters. It is hard enough with a bow as is. And when you're chasing after spooked animals it's much harder because you can't shoot near as far!”

“I was very disappointed being drawn to hunt the week of Christmas. I felt I should not have to decide whether to hunt or spend time with family.”

“I went second week of cow season which included Christmas and my birthday. Otherwise, I would have hunted longer.”

“If I try again, I wouldn't want to go for a cow. The weather at that time of year hindered my ability to get there. The bull hunt is early enough that weather isn't a problem getting to Kentucky to hunt.”

“Late muzzleloader needs to be moved back to November the 29th on a Saturday thru Dec the 7th Sunday, so it doesn't cross with cow elk season. They also need to be moved back so elk hunt two is not on Christmas Day ever a gain--it's very hard when you have family. The real problem is also bad weather. Besides late muzzleloader. “

“Plan elk hunts separate from muzzleloader deer, it made it difficult with so many people running wild with deer. Promote women to hunt. I really enjoyed it, but I do not know another woman who's been drawn.”

“Please move archery hunts, cow especially, to before rifle season.”

“Seasons need to be looked at a little closer in my opinion, whitetail season opens for archers a bit before guns, and this does not seem to hurt gun hunters. I had GREAT success scouting cow elk pre-season! It was a whole different ball game when archery season opened after guns. I saw two cows in daylight hours, on private property. I could have hunted more if I could have afforded to miss that much work, which I could not. I think it's a great thing Kentucky is doing with the elk, but I do feel short-changed spending what I did to see what I did in season!”

“The experience would be much better if weeks were done via lottery rather than via appointment. Many people are simply unable to get off work or spend time away from their families during Christmas week. Even if they were assigned, maybe there could be a system set up to allow hunters to swap weeks with other hunters with similar problems.”

Guides and Outfitters:

“There is a lot of shady activity going on in regards to the guides/outfitters. That needs to be more regulated somehow. I saw and heard lots of complaints about them being double booked, selling bookings to other guides, and flat out [misleading] customers.”

“Better handle on paid guides--putting too many in (particular hunting areas).”

“I did not hunt. I had trouble with outfitter on coal company land. Not a good experience”

“Difficult to try to book guide when you don't know your hunting area yet”

“I also do not like outfitters leasing up all the property. There should be a way for more locals to get a chance to kill elk as many have resentment that they can't hunt them (not me).”

“If anyone wants a reference, I'll vouch for [Guide/Outfitter] -- he did an excellent job as my guide.”

“I had a successful hunt, due to using a guide. I was going to try and do a self hunt, but since I was not from the area and I did not know the areas, which are large and all property lines are not marked very well, maps need to be improved, it would be very easy to get off public ground. Even after scouting I elected to hire a guide. I put all my trust in the guide (which he should be held accountable since you're paying for this kind of service) that he would keep me on the legal side of property lines, since he is from the area and offering his services.”

“Kentucky elk hunters need a way to get feedback from past elk hunters concerning guides. I hired my first guide [Guide/Outfitter] for the first 2.5 days and he didn't even know the roads, much less anything about the elk in Straight Creek LEA; and he was in such poor physical condition that I feared he would have a heart attack from climbing one hill. This hunt was pretty much shot as soon as the game warden stopped by on Friday before the hunt and informed him that he could not use his 4-wheeler to travel on. I didn't even know he had planned to use a 4-wheeler!! We didn't as much as see, hear or smell an elk in 2.5 days. My second guide [Guide/Outfitter] was top-notch in all aspects, and we had no problem getting an elk and saw many more. Both guides looked great on paper, but what a difference when you meet them. Remember, a guide is only going to give you references of people they know will speak well of them.”

“KDFWR should check out some of the guides on their list before sending out information. Some had bad reputations and others had not guided in years. I called them all.”

“Looks like the guides are taking over all the best spots to hunt. Everywhere we went there were guides driving clients around messing up others opportunities.”

“Guides are too high priced for what is more or less a trespass fee for access to the green grass.”

“Our outfitter was [Guide/Outfitter]. They were very knowledgeable and professional. Hunt of a lifetime!”

“I was not very happy with my guide, but my uncle and I got the job done”

“Really enjoyed the experience, but some of the guides take advantage of the seasons. Hunters should really be encouraged to shop around and outfitters should be limited to the number of hunters they may book.”

Law Enforcement:

“You need more control to prevent poaching. I had several locals comment about the herd being down due to poaching. The county game warden paid us a visit in our camp and commented that he was the only warden in the county.”

“Start hanging all poachers ☺”

“I followed the rules in my 2013 cow archery hunt, but took a tag home at the end of the season. The public land in the south is not that good because the local people ran the elk out with ATVs and did not obey the signs and land laws. There should be stricter enforcement for the area. I spent my hard-earned money down there and the amount of help or conservation officer

presence is very little, if any. I would have liked to have seen a local C.O. and asked some questions.”

“I got drawn for a cow. The elk was in brush and I accidentally shot a spike bull. Didn't see the horns until I walked up on the elk . I followed all the rules, called the game warden, my tag and the meat were taken and I had to go to court and pay fines. I and others felt that this was unfair; this did not stop me from applying this year. There should be a size limit on the spikes that determines punishment.”

“I suspect that the 7x7 bull I shot late in the afternoon of [date specified] was taken during the night. We found two pools of blood two feet in diameter about ten feet apart, but no elk. I have other information that leads me to believe this.”

“I will say the game warden in the area was very helpful and took me around and showed the area to me. I don't remember his name but give him high praise.”

“It's hard to put a limit on bull tags because y'all want them to get bigger bodies and antlers. When residents kill them at random out of season, just for fun. I heard of these practice taking place all the time when I was on my hunt.”

“The Kentucky elk lottery is very good for the state's economy. I just wish they would do something to regulate the deer hunting. I've seen (this) in our court system: illegal deer hunters caught and then judges throw the charges out. We have a fantastic natural resource in deer if we could just capitalize on it.”

Other:

“With my mobility problem I should have applied only for firearms permits”

“Way too many horses running around loose on Hazard LEA”

“Very sad I missed my opportunity to hunt a cow elk last year. Unforeseen circumstances forced me to stay home instead of scouting and harvesting an elk.”

“Did [KDFWR staff member] create this survey?”

“I did not get to hunt. My outfitter backed out on me. I did not have enough time to hire another one. The medication I was taking at the time did not allow me to scout myself. I missed an opportunity of a lifetime to shoot a cow with a bow.”

“I am worried about wolves coming into Kentucky following the elk population. This could be harmful to hunters and the elk population. Any future regulations on predators of elk?”

“I did not hunt/use my tag in Kentucky last year due to injury.”

“I didn't get to hunt because I had to have surgery. Sorry, but hope to get drawn again so I can have the meat.”

“Also I would like to see the traditional archery option (recurve/longbow) when Telechecking an animal--not just archery or crossbow .”

“I live in Wolfe County; my first choice was Hazard, second was North At-Large Area. I got stuck in Straight Creek LEA and could not afford the gas to make trips to that area to scout. Guides are so expensive, I could buy a small black angus cheaper--I had a cow tag. If I had plenty of money & didn't have to work, it wouldn't have mattered where I got drawn to hunt. As it is, I just couldn't afford to go.”

"In question #30 it would be good if your survey clarified whether you would shoot the bull as it stands in the pictures provided or if the shooter would take a bull with a set of antlers or similar age if there was a good shot. I was rather confused by this question."

"I want a bull tag"

"I was drawn for a cow gun permit, but did not end up going to hunt. A friend of mine had a coworker of his that is a hunter that said he would be interested in being my scout and going as my scout on the actual hunting trip. Well at the last minute (the night before we were going to leave) this guy backs out on me. So I'm left to find someone else that would be my scout & help me carry the meat out for this trip. Long story short, I couldn't find anyone that could go on such a short notice on the week of Christmas. So I didn't make it down to go hunting. I was rather bummed out to say the least. Moral of the story: find someone or several people, early on in the process, and people that you definitely know and trust. I really hope that some day I get drawn again to have that chance at harvesting a majestic Cow or Bull in my home state of Kentucky."

"I was unable to hunt in 2013 but was drawn for a cow with a bow. I have a friend that lives in the area where the hunt was to take place and he has harvested an elk in the past so I had an advantage. I did not receive the postcard in the mail like I have in the past so I missed out on applying this year."

"I would like to know how old the elk that I harvested was. I was told they would send the tooth off to find out the age and I have not heard anything yet. Please let me know if this information is available. My phone number is [phone number] thank you."

"I would like to receive information about the BOW workshops. I tried to get this on the Internet, but it went out and I didn't finish."

"I would like to see mule deer introduced in the same area as the elk to add some different experiences."

"I would love to have participated in the hunt for which I was drawn in 2013, but switching companies for which I am employed prevented me from doing so. Real heartbreaker."

"I would love to kill a bull or cow. I got drawn in 2013 but was overseas when I got home and didn't have time to go and then my hunting partner backed out at the last minute. I didn't get to put in for this year, but next year hope I get to in time. I can't wait. Thanks."

"Of the pictured bulls some looked immature; one maybe two looked a little old, one of the older looking bulls look ill. BOTH antlers and quality of meat are important to me; if I had a bull tag, if I would not eat the meat, I would not shoot animal."

"Permits are too high for deer in Kentucky, but elk are ok"

"Please respond via email whether or not the KDFWR is supposed to provide public land to hunt in LEAs. My email is [email address]"

"Saw a ton of bulls. Saw one bull that probably was a record breaker. Sadly, I was drawn for a cow not a bull so I could only watch in awe. There a plenty of big bulls out there. The cows seemed to be almost nonexistent in comparison. Saw 12 bulls in one day in 4 or 5 different spots. No luck as my only cow spotting were irretrievable or before sunrise so I did not shoot."

"Stop the firearms hunters from scouting during archery season"

"Successful hunt thwarted by [guide name] horseback guiding business interrupting our stalks on three different occasions in Beech Creek area of Kentucky River Properties assigned to us."

"You [KDFWR] to need ask [elk hunters] "are you meat hunting or just head hunting for a bull or both"