

Elk and Ungulate Monitoring
January 7, 2013

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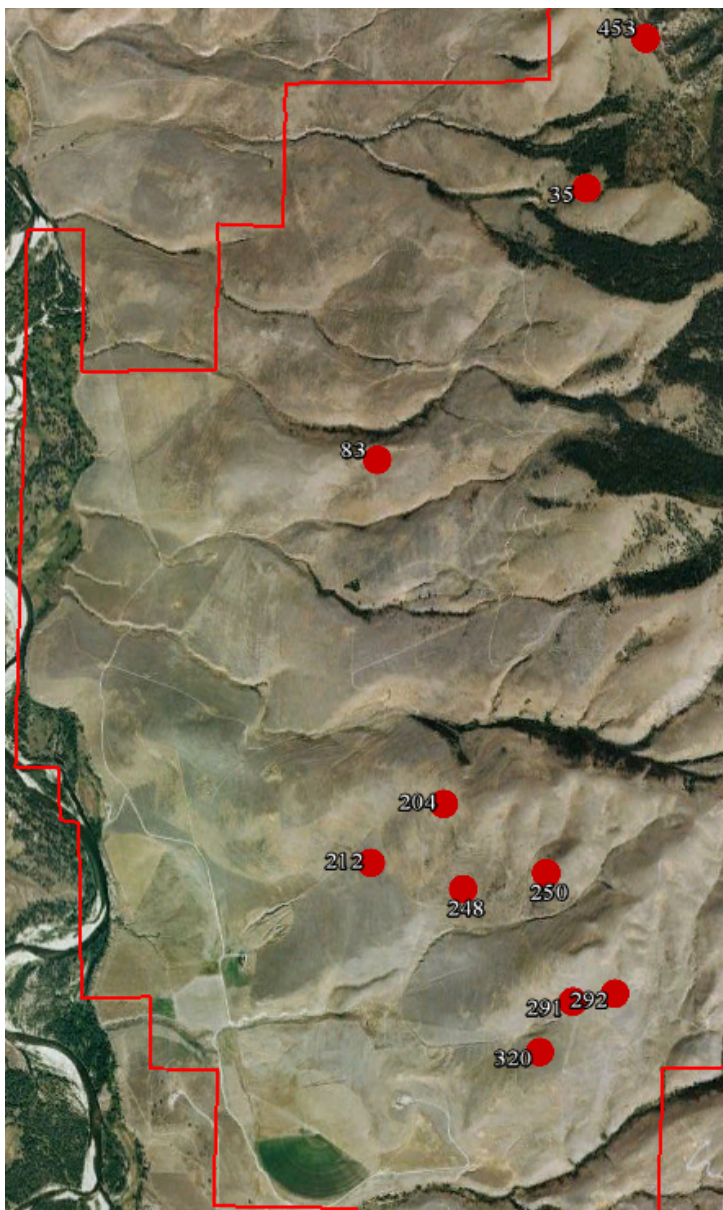
Elk observations in Dec. 2012. The point column refers to the closest bird point count point.

| Date | Time | Count | Location | Point | Notes |
|-------|-------|-------|----------------------------|-------|--|
| 12/3 | 8:01 | 34+ | Partridge Alley | 291 | moving toward 277; some out of view |
| 12/3 | 8:37 | 256 | Indian Ridge | 204 | moving SE from Tongue Creek |
| 12/3 | 15:43 | 136 | Foothills sagebrush | 250 | some out of view |
| 12/4 | 7:42 | 172 | W of Whaley | 292 | |
| 12/5 | 8:16 | 79 | Foothills sagebrush | 212 | |
| 12/5 | 8:21 | 73 | Partridge Alley | 291 | |
| 12/5 | 16:38 | 3 | Indian Ridge | 204 | moving north toward Tongue Creek |
| 12/5 | 16:41 | 33 | Foothills sagebrush | 248 | moving north |
| 12/10 | 9:21 | 309 | Sapphire Ranch | | |
| 12/11 | 10:01 | 44 | Baldy Draw | 83 | on north-facing slope within draw |
| 12/11 | 10:33 | 19 | North Draw | 35 | bulls moving south |
| 12/11 | 10:42 | 5 | North Draw | 35 | bulls, moving south along same path as previous group |
| 12/11 | 10:44 | 7 | Boondocks | 453 | bulls, moving south across Little Baldy saddle toward point 448 |
| 12/11 | 10:59 | 7 | North Draw | 35 | the group seen at 10:44 reemerges following the same path as previous two groups |
| 12/12 | 14:40 | 216 | Foothills sagebrush | 248 | spread across points 213-248-264 |
| 12/16 | 13:47 | 32 | Foothills sagebrush | 250 | |
| 12/17 | 9:13 | 55 | West side of valley | | |
| 12/17 | 9:20 | 48 | Sapphire Ranch | | |
| 12/18 | 8:54 | 110 | Sapphire Ranch | | not all visible |
| 12/18 | 12:12 | 225 | Sapphire Ranch | | same group as observed earlier |
| 12/19 | 8:32 | 63 | S fork Partridge Alley 320 | | moving north; not all visible |
| 12/19 | 8:45 | 15 | Sapphire Ranch | | |
| 12/19 | 10:53 | 63 | S fork Partridge Alley 320 | | same group as observed earlier |
| 12/31 | 9:56 | 125 | Sapphire Ranch | | |
| 12/31 | 10:00 | 67 | W side of valley | | |

December 11: A group of 17 bachelor elk process single file across



Elk locations on MPG Ranch during Dec. 2012.



On December 11, a large number of bachelor elk (31 in all) moved south from the Boondocks and Little Baldy into the forested slopes above North Draw.



While bachelors cross the saddle, 44 cows and spike bulls rest and graze on a north-facing slope in Baldy Draw.



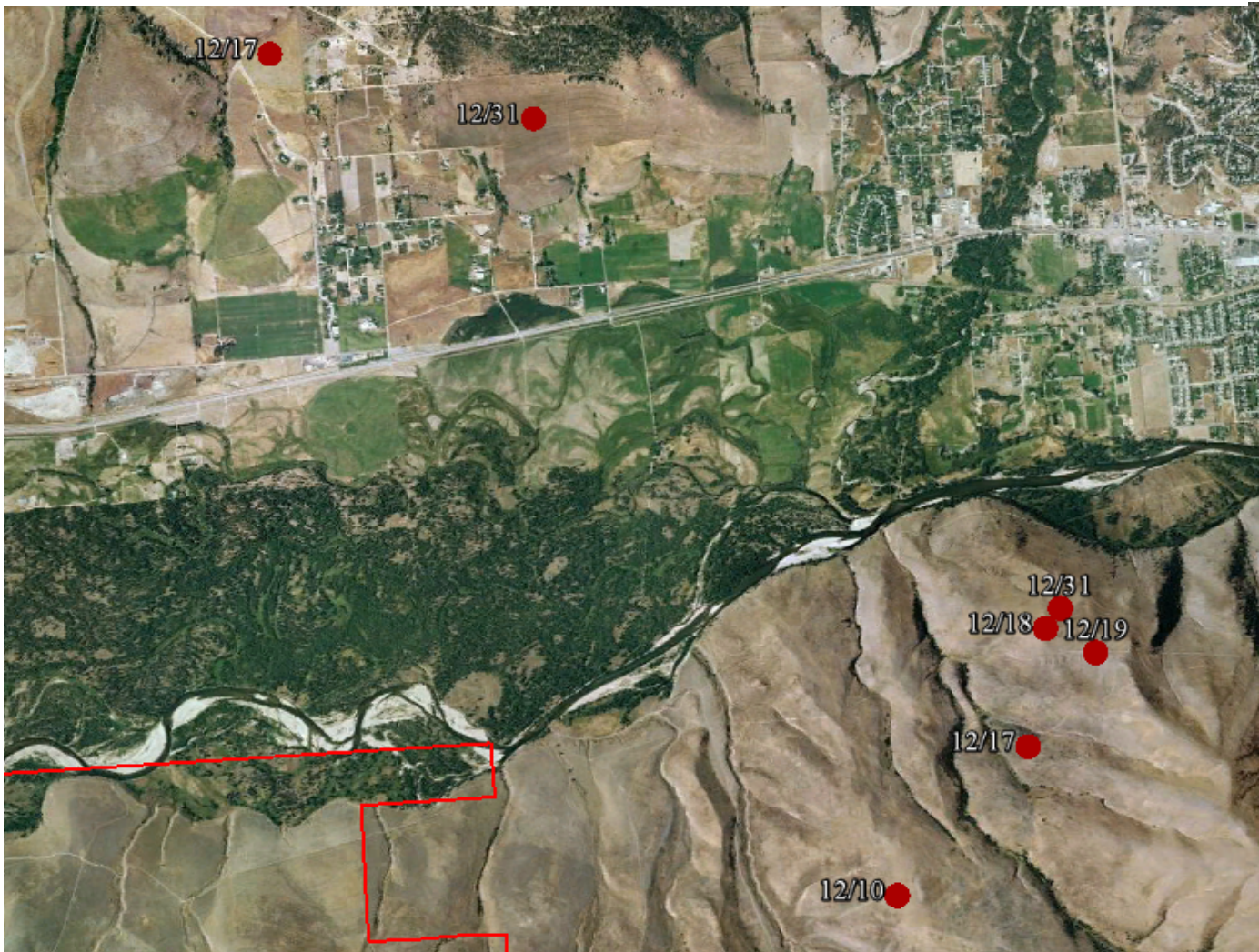
Three separate bachelor groups cross the exposed hillside, following almost exactly the same path. The first group, 19 bull elk, move in single file and then congregate as they enter a draw. Two smaller groups of 5 and 7 follow within 30 minutes.



Elk locations outside MPG Ranch in December 2012.

Points are north and west of the ranch boundary (shown with a red line).

N →



As December progressed, elk spent more time off of the ranch. Herds were typically seen to the north on the Sapphire Ranch. Smaller herds also frequented the fields on the west side of the valley, which require elk to cross both the Bitterroot River and Highway 93.

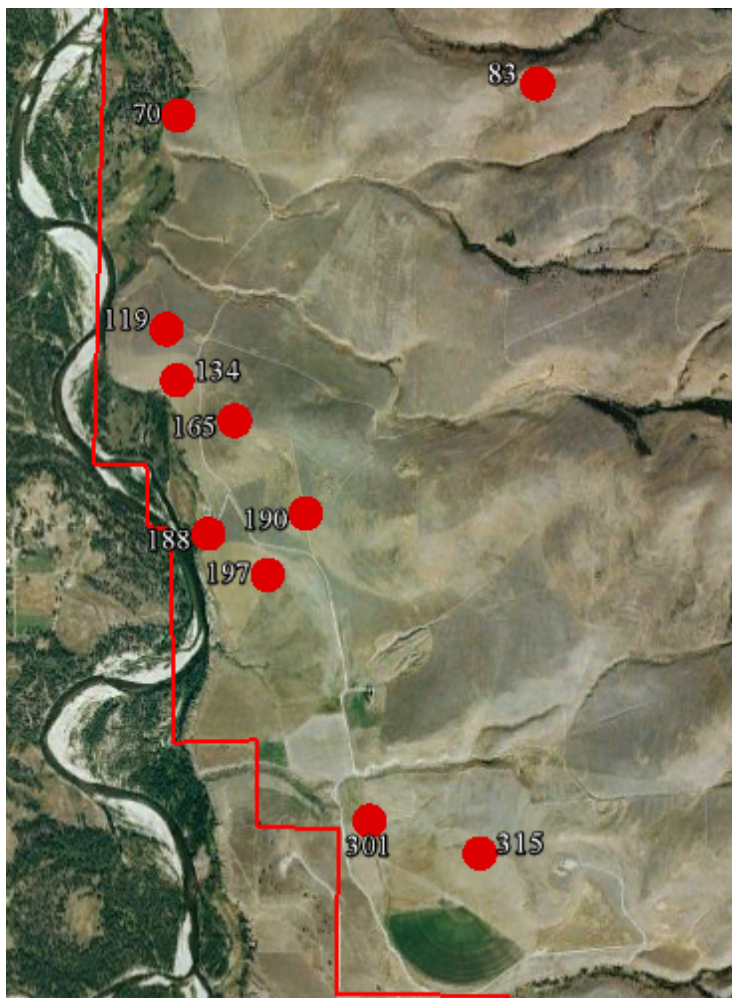
December 31: 67 elk bedded down on a field on the west side of the Bitterroot valley.



White-tail deer observations in Dec. 2012. The point column refers to the closest bird point count point.

| Date | Time | Count | Location | Point | Notes |
|-------|-------|-------|----------------------|-------|---|
| 12/3 | 8:12 | 5 | N center pivot | 197 | |
| 12/3 | 8:47 | 1 | Clubhouse floodplain | 188 | |
| 12/3 | 15:24 | 2 | Sainfoin bench | 70 | two does |
| 12/4 | 7:47 | 2 | Partridge Alley | 301 | |
| 12/4 | 7:51 | 1 | Clubhouse | 190 | |
| 12/4 | 7:52 | 6 | N center pivot | 197 | |
| 12/4 | 7:53 | 2 | Clubhouse floodplain | 188 | moving from point 188 to 175 |
| 12/5 | 8:32 | 2 | N center pivot | 197 | |
| 12/5 | 8:36 | 1 | Rock pile | 119 | |
| 12/5 | 8:39 | 1 | Floodplain | 134 | |
| 12/5 | 10:02 | 1 | Baldy Draw | 83 | |
| 12/31 | 9:12 | 5 | S center pivot | 315 | |
| 12/31 | 9:24 | 1 | Lower Indian Ridge | 165 | buck running downhill toward floodplain |

White-tail deer locations on MPG Ranch during Dec. 2012.



Whitetail deer observations in December are concentrated in agricultural fields and open landscapes.

This year, I observed an average of 2.3 white-tail deer in a single location during December. In December 2011, the average was 3.7.

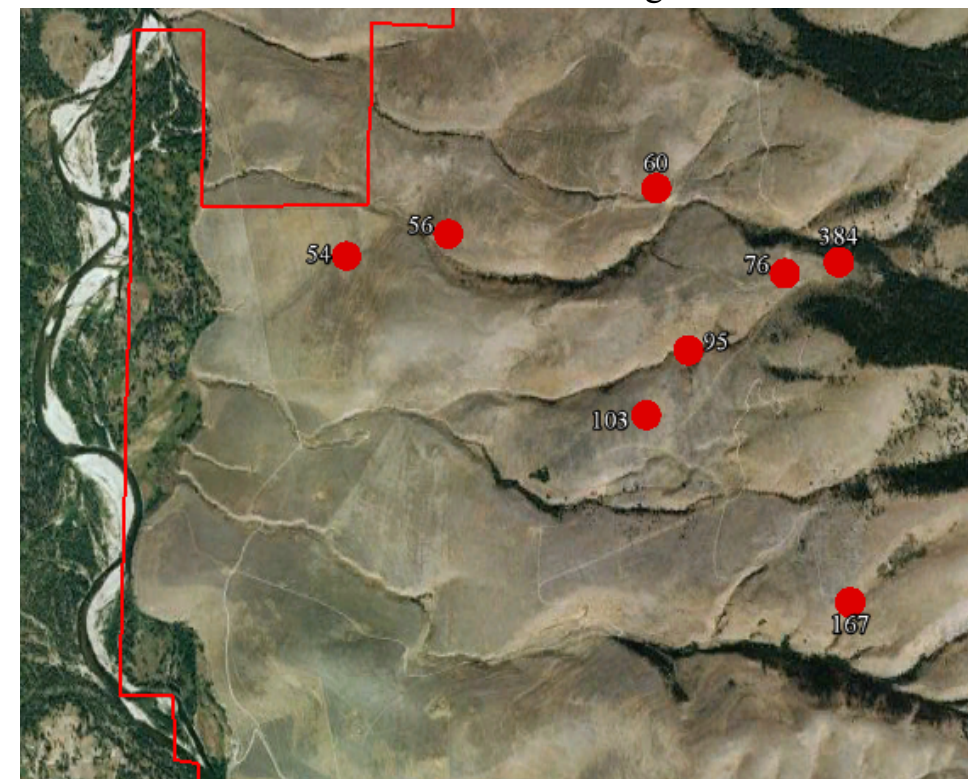


Throughout my December observations, I have seen fewer white-tail deer in conspicuous, open places. Deer tend to flee as soon as humans or vehicles come into view.

Mule deer observations in Dec. 2012. The point column refers to the closest bird point count point.

| Date | Time | Count | Location | Point | Notes |
|-------|-------|-------|---------------------|-------|--------------------|
| 12/3 | 8:58 | 7 | Tongue Creek | 167 | |
| 12/3 | 15:26 | 7 | Spurge Hill | 54 | |
| 12/3 | 15:31 | 1 | Baldy Draw | 56 | |
| 12/11 | 9:27 | 6 | N fork Sheep Camp | 95 | 5 does, 1 yearling |
| 12/11 | 9:37 | 2 | N fork Sheep Camp | 95 | 2 - 4x4 bucks |
| 12/11 | 9:51 | 2 | Foothills sagebrush | 60 | 2 does |
| 12/17 | 9:31 | 6 | Sheep Camp | 103 | 1 buck, 5 does |
| 12/18 | 11:43 | 2 | Baldy Draw | 384 | 1 doe, 1 yearling |
| 12/18 | 11:44 | 3 | Baldy Draw | 76 | |

Mule deer locations on MPG Ranch during Dec. 2012.

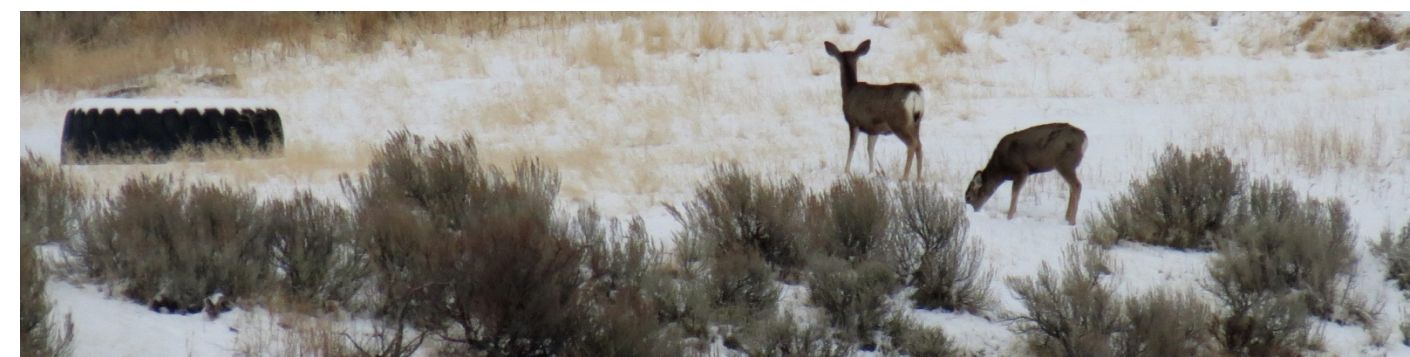


Observations also show different habits in mule deer between December 2011 and 2012.

Average group size of mule deer was 5.8 in December 2011. December 2012 observations give an average of 4.

In December 2011, I observed 79 mule deer in one day, the greatest number during the winter months last year. So far this year, the highest count was 55 mule deer on November 26, 2012.

Two mule deer does graze on an open bench near point 60.



Two mule deer does survey from a rocky rise.



Mule deer are most often found in moderately dense bitterbrush communities, and they are well adapted for living in this environment.

When mule deer encounter a mild threat, they often move away slowly, unlike the swift, sudden flight of white-tail deer. However, when alarmed, mule deer may shift to a faster method of escape called *stotting*. This motion uses the full force of all four legs at once to bound up and over rough terrain and shrubs. Each jump can take a deer as high as three feet and as far as 15 feet (Mule Deer Working Group 2003).

Here a mule deer's tracks cover a distance of around eight feet between bounds out of a steep draw.



