

Survey of the 2018-2019 Season Elk Hunters

Survey Purpose and Methods

KDFWR staff provided a survey to 2018-19 season elk hunters to better understand the opinions and experiences of the hunters. The 2018-19 survey replicated many of the survey questions administered to elk hunters from years prior to provide insights into potential trends in hunter experiences. In 2018, a requirement was made for all elk hunters to complete a post season hunt survey (301 KAR 2:132 Section 7 18(a)). Previously, the post season survey was voluntary. Hunters were notified of this regulation change via email and within the permit letter they received in the mail. A link to the survey was emailed to each permit holder and provided in their MyProfile. The survey was designed using SurveyMonkey®. Elk hunters that did not complete the survey will be blacklisted from applying to all KDFWR administered quota hunts (waterfowl, deer, Sandhill crane, and upland game) for one year.

There were 781 hunter allocated elk permits and 490 (63%) responded to the required survey. The survey contained 32 questions, and it took an average of 14 minutes for each hunter to complete. All of the questions are listed in this summary report. The number of hunters who answered each question is listed immediately following each question. Summary statistics were derived for each question where appropriate. The number of respondents (i.e., sample size) to this survey exceeds the minimum threshold for statistical significance at a 95% confidence level.

Responses to Survey Questions

Q1: Please enter your 11 digit customer ID number to continue (found at the top of your hunting license).

Answered: 490 Skipped: 0

The hunters' customer identification numbers are not provided in this report to protect the privacy of each hunter.

Q2: What type of permit were you selected for?

Answered: 490 Skipped: 0

Bull hunters were more likely to reply to the survey than cow hunters (Table 1). A higher percentage of firearm hunters replied to the survey.

Table 1. Survey Response Rate by Permit Type

Elk Permit Type	Survey Respondents	Permit Allotment
Bull Archery	66 (66%)	100
Bull Firearm Week 1	58 (77%)	75

Table 1 (continued)

Bull Firearm Week 2	51 (68%)	75
Cow Archery	88 (55%)	160
Cow Firearm Week 1	96 (66%)	145
Cow Firearm Week 2	87 (60%)	145
Youth Only Permit	5 (50%)	10
Late Season Antlerless Permit	1 (25%)	4
Landowner Permit (included landowner, voucher and elk restoration permit holders)	33 (58%)	57
Commission Permit	5 (50%)	10
Total	490	781

Scouting Results

Q3: Did you make any trips to the elk zone to scout for elk before your hunt?

Answered: 490 Skipped: 0

Q4: How many days did you spend scouting?

Answered: 256 Skipped: 17

Q5: Did you see any elk while scouting?

Answered: 270 Skipped: 3

Q6: About how much money for the following expenses did you or your group spend while scouting for elk?

Answered: 265 Skipped: 8

Scouting Summary

Approximately half (56%) of all hunters spent a total of 846 days scouting prior to the hunt. Each hunter spent an average of 3.1 days scouting prior to their hunt. Of the hunters that scouted, 44% did not see elk and 56% did see elk. Sixty four percent of hunters that did not scout hired a guide/outfitter. Of the hunters that saw elk while scouting, 122 (80%) did not hire a guide/outfitter and 31 (20%) did hire a guide/outfitter. By comparison, of the hunters that did not see elk while scouting, 76 (64%) did not hire a guide/outfitter and 42 (36%) did hire a guide. It is commonly understood that scouting prior to a hunt will increase a hunters odds of harvesting their quarry. However, scouting had no statistically significant effect on whether a hunter harvested an elk or not. Hunters that hired a guide were removed from this analysis.

Hunters (n=273) and their group members spent a total of \$190,785 for scouting expenses. The average amount of money spent per hunter and their group members was \$701 (minimum \$0 and maximum \$18,450). The majority of the money (\$84,337) was spent on buying equipment with the

average of \$310 spent per hunter and their group members. Table 2 displays the total amount of money spent and average money spent per hunter for gasoline, meals, lodging, equipment, and other expenses.

Table 2. Expenditure Summary for Scouting

Expense Type	Total	Average per hunter
Gas	\$45,136	\$166
Meals	\$25,836	\$95
Lodging	\$26,023	\$96
Equipment	\$84,337	\$310
Other	\$9,453	\$35
Total	\$190,785	\$701

Participation Results

Q7: Did you go elk hunting in Kentucky during the 2018 season?

Answered: 490 Skipped: 0

Q8: Which of the following best explains why you didn't elk hunt after being drawn?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 0

Participation Summary

The majority (93%) of permit holders that responded to this survey went elk hunting. Only 33 of the 490 respondents did not hunt. Seven permit holders said they did not hunt due to a work conflict/obligation. Fifteen identified their reason for not hunting was a family conflict/obligation or an illness (self or family). One permit holder did not hunt due to weather. Five permit holders did not hunt due to lack of elk sign found while scouting and/or they did not draw the Limited Entry Area or Voucher area they wanted. Five permit holders did not hunt elk because their guide/outfitter did not show up, or the guide took their down payment and disappeared, or a guide told the hunter not to bother spending the money, or guides were too expensive/not available.

Hunt Area Results

Q9: What area did you hunt?

Answered: 453 Skipped: 0

Q10: Why did you not apply for a Limited Entry Area (LEA)?

Answered: 201 Skipped: 8

Q10: Why did you apply for a Limited Entry Area (LEA)?

Answered: 104

Skipped: 8

Hunt Area Summary

Table 3 displays the number of respondents that hunted in each area with the majority of people (n=313) hunting in the At-Large area followed by the Hazard (n=51) and Straight Creek (n=45) Limited Entry Areas (here after LEA). Four hunters were drawn in 2018 for the late season hunt. The late season hunt was designed to remove elk in two Elk Management Units (here after EMU; Knott County and Mayking) where elk damage has been a concern over a number of years. One hunter who was allocated a late season hunt permit responded to the survey; however, the hunter did not report the name of the EMU where they hunted.

Table 3. Hunters per Hunt Area

Hunt Area	Survey Respondent Hunters	Area Permit Allotment
At-Large	313	540
Hazard LEA	51	72
Prestonsburg LEA	12	12
Tug Fork LEA	15	17
Middlesboro LEA	8	10
Straight Creek LEA	45	59

Below is a list of responses submitted by hunters that answered “Why did you not apply for an LEA?” Comments were compiled as best as possible into categories/themes. Only categories/themes that were listed in five or more comments are reported below, though all comments were reviewed and considered by KDFWR elk biologists. Also, only comments related to the question were reported. The total number of comments for this section using the above criteria was 283.

- 76 (27%) respondents said they did apply for a LEA permit and 22 (8%) hunters put “not applicable” as their answer, which we assumed most of those responses mean the hunter did apply for a LEA and thought the question did not apply to them
- 59 (21%) respondents replied that they had a place to hunt outside of the LEA areas including private and public lands; in addition, hunters tended to hunt areas where they already knew the lay of the land
- 42 (15%) responses came in from hunters that did not understand how to apply for a LEA permit, know much about LEA areas, or know the LEA option existed

- 21 (7%) comments were made saying guides recommended the hunter not apply for a LEA
- 20 (7%) hunters said they did not want to be restricted to one area and liked the flexibility the At-large permit allowed
- 16 (6%) hunters forgot to apply for a LEA permit and an additional 7 (2%) hunters said they were too busy to scout and/or apply
- 14 (5%) respondents said they simply had no desire to apply for a LEA and provided not specific reason why not
- 6 (2%) hunters did not apply because they thought the odds of getting a LEA were too low

Below is a list of responses by hunters that answered “Why did you apply for an LEA?” Comments were compiled as best as possible into categories/themes. Only categories/themes that were listed in five or more comments are reported below, though all comments were review and considered by KDFWR elk biologists. Also, only comments related to the question were reported. The total number of comments for this section using the above criteria was 280.

- 32 (11%) respondents said they did not apply for a LEA permit and 41 (15%) hunters put “not applicable” as their answer, which we assumed most of those responses mean the hunter did not apply for a LEA and thought the question did not apply to them
- 44 (16%) hunters said a guide/outfitter suggested they apply for a LEA
- 41 (15%) respondents said they applied to a LEA because there were more elk in the LEA than At-Large areas and success rates would be higher
- 31 (11%) comments were submitted saying LEAs were just generally better all around
- 24 (9%) specifically mentioned that LEAs would have less hunting pressure from other hunters
- 21 (8%) hunters said they applied to a LEA because they had prior knowledge of the area and 8 (3%) said the LEA they applied for was close to home
- 13 (5%) of the comments that were submitted explained that the hunter thought the LEA gave them a specific place to go and good access to lands with elk
- 12 (4%) hunters said they chose to apply to a LEA because someone suggested they do so
- 7 (3%) hunters applied to the LEA because of the public land access and 6 (2%) hunters applied because of access on private lands they owned or someone they knew owned land where the hunter was allowed to access

Expenditure Results

Q12: About how much money for the following expenses did you and your helpers spend during or after your elk hunt?

Answered: 440

Skipped: 13

Expenditure Summary

Of the 440 respondents, 433 reported spending some money for their hunt. The total amount of money spent was \$1,076,857 with an average of \$2,356 per hunter and their helpers. The estimated minimum economic impact to Kentucky would be approximately \$2,196,788. The leading expense was for a guide/outfitter (\$459,025) followed by equipment purchases (\$146,755) and then taxidermy costs (\$101,345). There were 186 (42%) hunters that reported paying for a guide/outfitter service. The type of service was not provided. Guides/outfitters provide anything from paid for advice and drop off hunts to full service lodging, guided hunts, and meat processing. The average price paid for a guide/outfitter service was \$2,468. The minimum and maximum amount spent for a guide/outfitter service was \$100 and \$12,000, respectively. Not including the guide/outfitter service fees, the guided hunters spent on average \$1834 (minimum \$90 and maximum \$17150). Do-it-yourself (i.e., did not pay a guide/outfitter service) hunters spent an average \$1,047 for their hunt. The minimum reported expenditure for a do-it-yourself hunt was \$40 and the maximum was \$4,850. Table 4 shows the total, average, minimum, and the maximum amount of money spent for all expenditure types and the count of how many hunters reported spending money on each expenditure type.

Table 4. Hunt Expenditure Summary

	Expenditure Types								Grand Total
	Gas	Meals	Lodging	Equipment	Guide/Outfitter Service	Meat Processing *	Taxidermy **	Other	
Total	\$92,036	\$67,594	\$98,543	\$146,690	\$459,025	\$59,716	\$101,345	\$51,843	\$1,076,792
Ave.	\$207	\$164	\$418	\$524	\$2,468	\$269	\$729	\$943	\$5,721
Max.	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$12,000	\$1,500	\$2,500	\$10,000	\$36,500
Min.	\$10	\$5	\$50	\$15	\$100	\$20	\$15	\$15	\$230
Count	444	413	236	280	186	222	139	55	N/A

* Including skinning, butchering, packing, etc.

** And/or hide tanning

Guide/Outfitter Results and Summary

Q13: Did you hire a guide/outfitter for your 2018 elk hunt?

Answered: 453 Skipped: 0

Less than half (42%) of the respondents reported hiring a guide/outfitter to assist them during their hunt. Bull and cow firearm hunters comprised 34% and 32% of the guided hunters, respectively. Archery bull and cow hunters comprised 21% and 13% of the guided hunters, respectively. Sixty-five percent of the guided hunters had At-Large permits. Of the guided LEA permit holders, 60% had the Hazard LEA area and 23% had the Straight Creek LEA area. Seventy-

two percent of all the guided hunters harvested an elk. The percent of successful hunters are listed in Table 5 by permit type and by guided versus non-guided hunters. Though overall harvest success for non-guided hunters is high (52.4%); guided hunters had 19.5% higher success in harvesting an elk. Hunters that were guided with a week two bull firearm tag had the highest success harvesting an elk after youth permit holders with 100% success.

Table 5. Percent of Successful Harvests by Permit Type for Guided Hunters versus Non-guided Hunters

Permit Type	Guided	Non-guided
Bull Archery	55.6%	60.0%
Bull Firearm Week 1	71.0%	65.5%
Bull Firearm Week 2	86.2%	42.9%
Cow Archery	73.9%	27.1%
Cow Firearm Week 1	80.0%	67.7%
Cow Firearm Week 2	65.4%	48.3%
Youth Only Permit	100.0%	100.0%
Overall Percentage	71.9%	52.4%

Hunt Description Results

Q14: Which of the following techniques did you use while elk hunting?

Answered: 453 Skipped: 0

Q15: How many hours per day (on average) did you spend elk hunting?

Answered: 453 Skipped: 0

Q16: How many different days did you spend elk hunting?

Answered: 453 Skipped: 0

Q17: Approximately how many elk did you see while hunting?

Answered: 453 Skipped: 0

Hunt Description Summary

The type of harvest techniques used by hunters were spot and stalk mostly on foot, spot and stalk mostly with a vehicle, using a blind or tree stand over a water source, using a blind or stand over a food source, and using a blind or stand over a trail or travel corridor. The majority (69%) of hunters used the spot and stalk method while mostly on foot. Two hunters reported using all of the hunt types, 10 reported using four types, 24 reported using three types, 93 reported using two types, and the majority (n=324) reported using a single type of hunt method.

On average, hunters spent a little over eight hours per day hunting for a total of 3,819 hours spent in the field, hunting. There was no statistically significant difference in the amount of hours spent hunting in the field relative to the type of permit a hunter held; however, guided hunters tended to spend an average of one extra day in the field. The average amount of days spent hunting for each permit type is reported in Table 6 based on harvest success and whether a hunter was guided or not. As expected, unsuccessful hunters spent more days in the field on average than successful hunters likely as a result of spending more time trying to harvest an elk.

Table 6. Average Number of Days Spent Hunting by Permit Type and Guided vs Not Guided Hunters

Permit Type	Average # of Days Spent Hunting				
	All Hunters	Harvested	No Harvest	Guided	Not Guided
Bull Archery	10.1	8.0	13.0	7.3	13.6
Bull Firearm Week 1	3.5	2.7	5.3	3.4	3.6
Bull Firearm Week 2	3.9	3.3	5.1	3.1	4.9
Cow Archery	6.5	5.6	7.2	6.0	6.8
Cow Firearm Week 1	2.9	2.3	4.3	2.8	2.9
Cow Firearm Week 2	3.6	3.0	4.2	3.6	3.5
Youth Only Permit	12.8	12.8	N/A	9.0	18.5
Commission Permit	6.4	5.5	10.0	7.3	3.0
Landowner Permit	9.7	10.0	8.9	13.4	6.7
Overall Average	6.6	5.9	6.7	6.2	5.5

There were a total of 6,948 elk sightings by 453 hunters, 5,118 cow elk and 1,830 bull elk. We do not know how many of the same elk were seen by multiple hunters. The average number of sightings was 11 cows and 4 bulls per hunter. The maximum number of bulls and cows seen by one hunter during their entire hunt was 40 and 300, respectively. Archery hunters saw more elk than gun hunters and week one hunters saw more elk than week two hunters (Table 7).

Table 7. Average Number of Elk Sightings by Permit Type

Permit Type	Average # of Sightings	
	Cows	Bulls
Bull Archery	14.0	6.6
Bull Firearm Week 1	5.0	2.8
Bull Firearm Week 2	2.9	1.8
Cow Archery	16.1	4.7
Cow Firearm Week 1	13.5	3.2
Cow Firearm Week 2	8.8	3.5
Youth Only Permit	23.6	13.0

Harvest Results

Q18: How many elk did you shoot at but miss?

Answered: 448 Skipped: 5

Q19: How many elk did you hit and not recover?

Answered: 453 Skipped: 0

Q20: Did you harvest an elk during your hunt?

Answered: 453 Skipped: 0

Q21: How far from a maintained (paved or gravel) road was your animal when it was harvested?

Answered: 274 Skipped: 179

Q22: What habitat type was your elk in when you harvested it?

Answered: 273 Skipped: 180

Harvest Summary

There were 369 harvest attempts reported by 359 hunters. A harvest attempt included missed shots, hit and not recovered, and harvesting an elk. There were 40 hunters that reported shooting at and missing one elk while 10 reported missing two and one reported missing three. There were 13 hunters that reported hitting one elk and not recovering it while two reported not recovering two elk and one reported not recovering three elk (Table 8). Ten of the elk hit and not recovered were by bull archery hunters followed by three, week one bull firearm hunters. The majority (n=32) of missed shots at elk occurred during cow archery and firearm seasons. None of the youth only permit holders reported missing or hitting and not recovering an elk. Harvest success is displayed in Table 9 based on permit type. Refer to the ["2018-2019 Elk Report"](#) for the completed harvest success statistics summarized via data from the [Telecheck system](#).

Table 8. Total Number of Hunters that Shot at and Missed Elk and those that Shot an elk but did not Recover it.

	# of Elk			Total
	1	2	3	
Missed Elk	40	10	1	51
Not Recovered	13	2	1	16

Table 9. Harvest Summary by Permit Type

Permit Type	Survey Reported Harvest			Permits Allotted	Permits Sold	Telecheck Reported	
	Yes Harvest	No Harvest	Total Reported			Yes Harvest	No Harvest
<i>Bull Archery</i>	35 (56%)	28 (44%)	66	100	95	48 (51%)	47 (49%)
<i>Bull Firearm</i>							
<i>Week 1</i>	36 (65%)	19 (35%)	60	75	71	38 (54%)	33 (46%)
<i>Bull Firearm</i>							
<i>Week 2</i>	33 (69%)	15 (31%)	50	75	72	45 (63%)	27 (37%)
<i>Cow Archery</i>	29 (41%)	41 (59%)	71	160	113	35 (31%)	78 (69%)
<i>Cow Firearm</i>							
<i>Week 1</i>	65 (71%)	26 (29%)	92	145	135	81 (60%)	54 (40%)
<i>Cow Firearm</i>							
<i>Week 2</i>	44 (53%)	39 (47%)	84	145	124	59 (48%)	65 (52%)
<i>Youth Only</i>							
<i>Permit</i>	5 (100%)	0 (0%)	5	10	9	9 (100%)	0 (0%)
Total	275 (61%)	178 (39%)	453	710	619	315 (51%)	304 (49%)

Over half (61%) of the hunters that responded to the survey reported harvesting an elk. Roughly half (51%) of the hunters that successfully harvested an elk did so without the assistance of a guide. A higher percentage (36%) of hunters had success harvesting their elk over a mile from a maintained road (paved or gravel). Twenty percent of hunters harvested their elk a half mile to one mile from a maintained road, 21% were one quarter mile to a half mile from a maintained road, and 23% were less than a quarter mile from a maintained road. Harvest success and distance from a maintained road was not significantly different for any of the permit types; however, youth hunters tended to harvest their elk less than a half mile from a maintained road. It is important to keep in mind, however, that a study written by Stedman et al. 2010¹ discovered deer hunters carrying global positioning system (GPS) units over estimated the distance they were from roads by <2.5 times. The majority of hunters harvested their elk in open mine land/grassland (33%) or the edge of two or more habitat types (32%). Twenty-one percent of hunters harvested their elk in thicket/shrubby cover and 13% harvested their elk in the interior of a forest. The majority of bulls were harvested in a thicket/shrubby cover or the edge of two or more habitat types. Proportionately, more bulls than cows were harvested in the forest interior. Cows were typically harvested in open mine land/grassland habitats or the edge of two or more habitat types.

Satisfaction Results and Summary

Q23: Thinking back over your entire 2018 elk hunt, how satisfied were you with your elk hunt overall

Answered: 453

Skipped: 0

¹Stedman, R., D. R. Diefenbach, C. B. Swope, J. C. Finley, A. E. Luloff, H. C. Zinn, G. J. San Julian, G. A. Wang. 2004. Integrating wildlife and human-dimensions research methods to study hunters. *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, 68(4) 762-773.

The majority (64%) of hunters had some degree of satisfaction with their 2018 elk hunt (Figure 1). As you can see in Figure 2, those hunters that harvested an elk were more likely to say they were satisfied with their hunt overall. Furthermore, hunters that were at least somewhat satisfied with their hunt tended to see double the number of cows and bulls (n=17.4 elk) compared to hunters that were somewhat to very dissatisfied with their hunt experience (n=7.3 elk). Hunters that were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied with their hunt on average saw 14.1 elk. There was no statistically significant difference in overall satisfaction (p=0.28) of the hunt experience relative to whether a hunter hired a guide/outfitter or not. Week one bull and week one cow hunters tended to be the most satisfied with their hunts. Satisfaction declined the most for week two bull and week two cow hunters. Cow archery hunters tended to have a more dissatisfying hunt compared to bull archery hunters. See Figure 3 for satisfaction results relative to permit type. Regardless of which area a hunter hunted in, their satisfaction was generally high overall (Figure 4). However, more hunters tended to be dissatisfied with their hunt experience when hunting in the At-large and Hazard LEA areas.

Figure 1. 2018 Elk Hunter Satisfaction

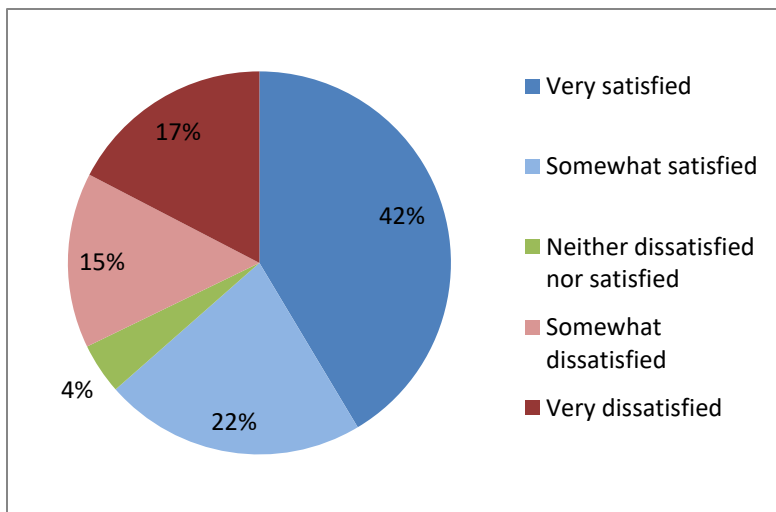


Figure 2. Satisfaction vs. Harvest Success

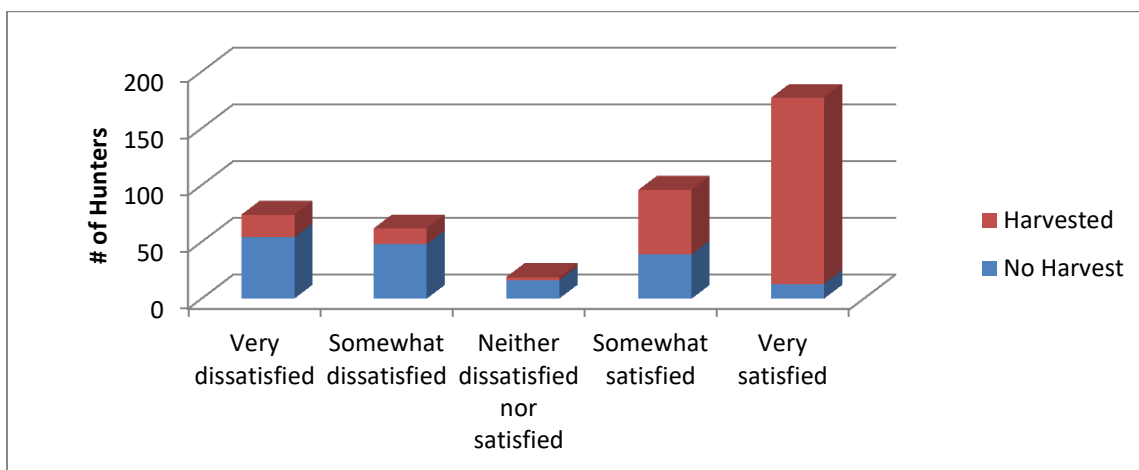


Figure 3. Hunter Satisfaction vs. Permit Type

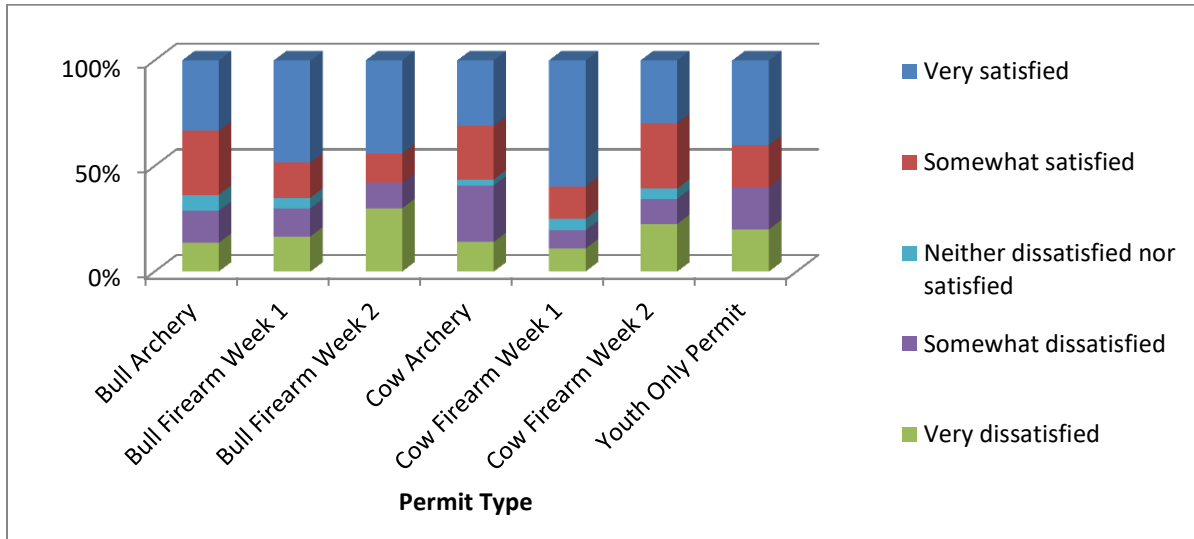
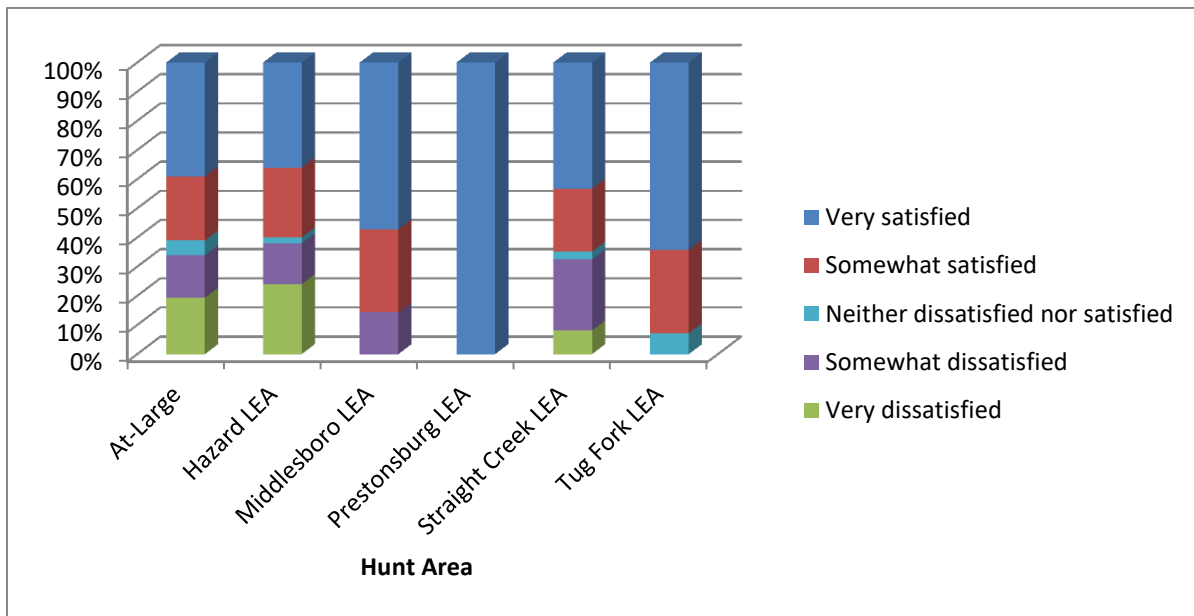


Figure 4. Hunter Satisfaction vs. Hunt Area



Voucher-Cooperator Program Results

Q24: KDFWR and cooperating landowners have partnered on a program (Voucher-Cooperator Program) that provided elk hunting access on private property. Did you sign up to elk hunt on a Voucher-Cooperator Program property?

Answered: 453 Skipped: 0

Q25: Did you hunt on the voucher property you had access too?

Answered: 103 Skipped: 0

Q26: What voucher property did you hunt?

Answered: 103 Skipped: 0

Q27: How many days did you hunt and scout on the voucher area?

Answered: 103 Skipped: 0

Q28: Approximately how many total elk did you see on the property while hunting and scouting?

Answered: 103 Skipped: 0

Q29: How can KDFWR improve the Voucher-Cooperator Program?

Answered: 453 Skipped: 37

Voucher-Cooperator Program Summary

Please note, as reflected in the amount of people that answered the questions in this section, that some hunters misunderstood that voucher properties were different types of areas than Wildlife Management Areas, Limited Entry Areas, and Hunter Access areas. The hunters that misunderstood the meaning of a voucher property were removed from analyses in this section. Voucher-cooperator properties were assigned on a first come, first serve basis. The majority of the respondents (n=311; 67%) did not sign up/were not successful in signing up for a voucher-cooperator property to hunt elk. Of those hunters that did get a voucher property (n=103) and reported it accurately on this survey, 84% did hunt on the property. Table 10 displays the number of hunters that signed up for each voucher property based on permit type. Just below 50% of the hunters hunted and scouted two to five days on their voucher property. Twenty-seven percent hunted/scouted one day, 17% hunted/scouted five to ten days, and 8% hunted/scouted 11+ days. Table 11 reports the number of elk people saw on average in each voucher property.

Table 10. The Number of Hunters that Reported Signing up for each Voucher Property

Voucher Property Name	Bull Archery	Bull Firearm Week 1	Bull Firearm Week 2	Cow Archery	Cow Firearm Week 1	Cow Firearm Week 2	Grand Total
Beech fork	2	0	0	0	2	0	4
Blue Diamond North	4	1	4	3	5	3	20
Blue Diamond South	0	0	0	3	5	0	8
Buffalo Branch	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Cambrian	2	0	0	2	6	0	10
Corrigan	0	0	0	1	0	2	3

(Table 10 Continued)

Corum	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Decoy Tract	0	1	0	0	1	1	3
Elkhorn Coal Tracts	0	2	3	3	4	0	12
Gilbert Wagers	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
Hardburley	1	1	0	0	0	2	4
Highway 476 Tract	1	0	0	1	1	1	4
Hoskins Tracts	0	0	1	1	1	1	4
Johnson Tract	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Lost Mountain	2	0	0	1	0	1	4
Meta tract	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Patti Mattie Tracts	3	1	0	0	0	0	4
Revelation Energy	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
RH Group Tracts	1	1	0	2	1	0	5
Thunder Ridge	0	0	2	1	3	1	7
Total	18	10	12	19	30	14	103

Table 11. Elk Seen in Each Voucher Property by Hunters

Voucher Property Name	Number of Elk Seen Scouting and Hunting			
	0	1-10	11-30	31+
Beech fork	2	2	0	0
Blue Diamond North	3	15	3	0
Blue Diamond South	1	3	4	0
Buffalo Branch	1	0	0	0
Cambrian	3	3	4	0
Corrigan	1	2	0	0
Corum	2	0	0	0
Decoy Tract	3	0	0	0
Elkhorn Coal Tracts	8	2	2	0
Gilbert Wagers	3	0	0	0
Hardburley	4	0	0	0
Highway 476 Tract	3	1	0	0
Hoskins Tracts	2	2	0	0
Johnson Tract	0	0	1	1
Lost Mountain	2	1	1	0
Patti Mattie Tracts	3	0	0	0
Revelation Energy	0	1	0	1

(Table 11 Continued)

RH Group Tracts	4	0	1	0
Thunder Ridge	1	0	6	0

* Numbers in each white and blue row represent the number of hunters that saw the associated number of elk listed in the second row

Below is a summary of the results from the question “How can the KDFWR improve the Voucher-Cooperator Program?” Comments were compiled as best as possible into categories/themes. Only categories/themes that were listed in five or more comments are reported below, though all comments were reviewed and considered by KDFWR elk biologists. Also, only comments related to the Voucher-Cooperator Program were reported.

- 164 (32%) people replied that they had no comment, no idea how to improve the program, or they did not look into the program
- 56 (11%) comments were submitted asking for adding additional properties to the program and/or allowing more hunters on certain properties
- 41 (8%) hunters claimed they knew little to no information about the program and 27 (5%) comments were made explaining that signing up for the program and the program in general was hard to understand
- 38 (7%) comments were reported asking for more information on the use of the property by elk, how many elk use the property, and the benefits and drawbacks of the property to help the hunter decide which property to choose
- 35 (7%) comments were reported saying the hunter had issues with determining boundaries of the properties and asked for better maps of the properties and more signage. Some hunters also mentioned having trouble using the ArcGIS mapping application provided by the KDFWR
- 24 (5%) comments were submitted asking for better road access, improved road conditions, and all gates to be open
- 21 (4%) hunters replied that the program needed no changes and 6 (1%) hunters wanted the program removed entirely
- 21 (4%) comments suggested the KDFWR provide reminders and additional notifications to hunters about signing up for the program
- 15 (3%) comments were made saying it was too difficult to get signed up for a voucher property using the first come, first serve process and 9(2%) hunters suggested switching to a random draw process instead
- 15 (3%) comments were made by hunters suggesting guides/outfitters be removed from being able to access the voucher properties; while 7 (1%) hunters reported wanting guides to have full access to all voucher properties.
- 14 (3%) comments were submitted asking that other users (e.g., ATV riders, non-elk hunters, horseback riders, houndsmen) be prohibited from accessing voucher properties during the elk hunts
- 10 (2%) comments were included asking for better enforcement of the laws on voucher properties and poaching was thought to be occurring on the voucher/nearby lands
- 6 (1%) hunter reported the voucher properties needed habitat improvement for elk

- 5 (1%) hunters wanted other hunters to release their voucher access for other hunters to sign up for if the original hunter decided not to hunt the voucher or as soon as they decided not to return to the property

Additional Results

Q30: Which of the following types of lands did you elk hunt on?

Answered: 449 Skipped: 4

Q31: Have you ever hunted big game (deer/elk/moose/caribou) before your 2018 Kentucky elk hunt?

Answered: 487 Skipped: 3

Q32: If you have additional comments or recommendations, please enter them in the box below.

Answered: 291 Skipped: 199

Summary of Additional Questions

Roughly the same percentage of hunters hunted on private (38%), public (27%), and both private and public lands (35%). Private land included Voucher-Cooperator Program properties due to their restrictions of use and the limited number of hunters allowed on the lands. There was no significant difference in the type of permit a hunter held and the type of land they hunted on. Guided/outfitted hunters tended to hunt more on private lands or both private and public lands, not just public lands.

Only 8% of hunters who hunted for elk during the 2018 season and responded to this survey have not hunted other big game species. Of those hunters that have not hunted big game in the past, 52% did harvest an elk during the 2018 Kentucky elk hunting season.

Below is a summary of the results from question 32. Comments were compiled as best as possible into categories/themes. Only categories/themes that were listed in five or more comments are reported below, though all comments were review and considered by KDFWR elk biologists.

- the most common comment (n=90; 18%) was that the elk program was doing well overall followed by hunters saying they thought the elk population was lower than in the past and/or below the desired level (n=76; 16%)
- 38 (8%) comments were posted wanting the elk program to stop moving elk out of the state or to other areas within the elk zone
- 34 (7%) comments were received expressing dissatisfaction with the elk program overall
- 34 (7%) comments were reported asking the elk program to provide more information on the area where elk occurred and how the elk used the landscape; 5 (1%) hunters suggested the elk program conduct a voluntary orientation class to teach hunters about the areas and elk hunting before their hunt

- 27 (6%) comments were entered saying they had an issue with a guide/outfitter and 5 (1%) hunters wanted guides prohibited from accessing public land ; 10 (2%) comments were submitted that said they had a good guide experience
- 24 (5%) comments were submitted asking for a reduction in the number of cow elk permits issued and three hunters wanted bull permits reduced as well
- 23 (5%) hunters had no additional comments to add
- 23 (5%) hunters claimed they had an issue with other users in the field while they were hunting and wanted restricted use or all other users to cease activity during the elk hunts; specifically hunters wanted other hunting seasons shut down during the elk hunts
- 21 (4%) comments were posted by hunters saying they could not or it was understood that many other hunters could not afford a guide/outfitter service, which they said makes hunts more challenging
- 18 (4%) hunters wanted more enforcement of laws in the elk zone and 10 (2%) reported seeing or hearing of poaching elk in the area they hunted
- 13 (3%) hunters want the regulation removed that prohibits elk permit holders from applying to another elk hunt for three years
- 11 (2%) comments were made asking the elk program and landowners to do more habitat work to improve the land for elk
- 11 (2%) hunters claimed there were too few trophy quality bulls in the area they hunted
- 7(1%) hunters asked for more areas to hunt elk in the elk zone
- 7 (1%) hunters want better signage to help determine boundaries to elk hunting areas