

## Elk Scenic Drive

Approximately 600 majestic elk roam the hills of north central Pennsylvania, becoming more visible each fall as the mating season begins and their loud bugle calls reverberate through the valleys. More than 75,000 people travel to Winslow Hill and Benezette Township to view elk in September and October. The Elk Scenic Drive, located in the heart of the Pennsylvania Wilds, is the first major tourism-oriented initiative to promote the region and make the elk herd more accessible to travelers and nature lovers.

### About the Elk

Most of Pennsylvania's elk are descendants of Rocky Mountain elk introduced by the Pennsylvania Game Commission between 1913 and 1926 to restore the state's herd. A sight to behold, a mature male elk (bull) stands 50-60 inches at the shoulder and weighs 600-1,000 pounds, much larger than a white-tailed deer. Females (cows) are, on average, about a foot smaller than the bulls and weigh 500-600 pounds. Elk communicate through body postures, scent and bugles, and can live up to 20 years.

### The Elk Scenic Drive

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania created a 127-mile signed Corridor designed to enhance and guide the visitor experience. It's marked with informational panels, which will direct visitors to elk, other wildlife viewing sites and scenic overlooks along the trail.

### How to Get There

The western end of the drive begins at the Penfield exit of I-80 and includes portions of state routes 153, 255 and 555. The eastern end begins near the Snowshoe exit of I-80 and follows Route 144 north to Route 120. The corridor includes two Pennsylvania Scenic Byways – Route 144 through Sproul State Forest and Route 120 from Renovo to Driftwood.

### Where to See the Elk

Twenty-three viewing sites along the Elk Scenic Drive offer safe and easy visitation, as well as parking. Each site was chosen because of its outstanding wildlife viewing potential and scenic beauty.

Some of the most popular sites include:

- Winslow Hill, currently the most visited elk viewing site in the region with two established viewing areas, off-road parking, pavilion for weekend presentations during the fall viewing season and portable bathroom facilities. Location: Winslow Hill Road, three miles from its intersection with Route 555 in Benezette.
- Sinnemahoning State Park: A new viewing site with a small resident elk herd, viewing platform, off-road parking, overnight camping and opportunities for wildlife viewing, including nesting bald eagles. Location: Viewing area along Route 872, 14.5 miles north of intersection with Route 120 at Sinnemahoning.
- Hicks Run Viewing Area in Elk State Forest: A small area near a cemetery, this is a quiet place and is great for photographing elk and other species. Location: Along Route 555 about 12 miles east of Benezette.

### When to See the Elk

Elk are best viewed an hour or two after dawn, or before dusk. In September and October, the elk mating season or "the rut," bulls can be seen thrashing the ground and locked at the antlers engaged in battles of dominance for the cow. In winter, the dark elk stand out when snow covers the ground. Combine elk watching with other winter sports like cross-country skiing. Spring and summer are great seasons to combine elk watching with scenic drives, wildflower hikes and/or trout fishing.



**For more on Pennsylvania's Elk Scenic Drive or to hear an elk bugle call, contact Christine Farley at 717-234-3052.**