

The Underrated .270 Winchester

By [Randy Wakeman](#)



Some will scoff at the notion of the .270 Winchester, introduced in 1925, as being a underrated chambering today. Yet, when you realize that the .270 and 300 Winchester Magnum have essentially identical exterior ballistics, and factor in the better bullets available today, the .270 Winchester is a bit more capable than you might think.



Guns & Shooting Online members can refer to Chuck Hawks' expanded rifle ballistics summary

https://www.chuckhawks.com/subscribers/tables_charts_lists_page/rifle_ballistics_summary_exp.htm and Chuck's expanded rifle recoil table

https://www.chuckhawks.com/subscribers/tables_charts_lists_page/recoil_table_exp.htm .

Here are the ranges at which the bullet drops 3" (the maximum point blank range) when zeroed for a maximum 3" rise for a few typical factory loads. These are calculated for a scope mounted 1.5" above the line of bore. (See the "Rifle Trajectory Table" on the Tables, Charts and Lists page for other calibers and loads.):

- .243 Win/100 grain = 283 yards
- .257 Wby Mag/120 grain = 317 yards
- .270 Win/130 grain = 294 yards
- 7mm Rem Mag/150 grain = 305 yards

- .30-30 Win/150 grain = 225 yards
- .308 Win/150 grain = 267 yards
- .30-06 Spfd/180 grain = 263 yards
- .300 Win Mag/180 grain = 290 yards
- .338 Win Mag/225 grain = 274 yards



Above: Dad, Randy, and perhaps the world's best professional hunter, Karel Haelele of KeMonati Safaris.

Over the years, when not hunting with a muzzleloader, I've used the .270 to take more game than any other cartridge. That includes not just lighter animals like pronghorn, blesbok, and caribou, but also red hartebeest, moose, and blue wildebeest. The blue wildebeest, more correctly the brindled gnu or black-tailed gnu, can hit eight feet in length head to rump, up to 4.8 feet tall at the shoulder, weighing up to the 640 pound or so area. While it may look like a crazed, strange, maverick cow, it is an antelope. The sub-family Alcelaphinae is a group

of large, nomadic antelope native to Africa: the brindled gnu is related to red hartebeest and the blesbok that are also from the Alcelaphinae sub-family. They may look clumsy, yet they have been clocked at over 50 miles per hour. For those who doubt the effectiveness of the .270 Winchester with a 130 grain Hornady Interbond on the "poor man's water buffalo," the blue wildebeest, take a look.

Taking an old blue wilderbeast Video: <https://youtu.be/3qGgeuDhUMg>

By no means is the .270 the only cartridge suitable for elk and blue wildebeest as well as deer, nor is it the penultimate chambering of all time. However, the widespread availability of loads, rifles, and its moderate recoil combine to make it a very solid choice for many, many applications.



With some of the latest loads, like the Hornady 145 grain ELD-X round shown below, the .270 Winchester looks better than ever.

INPUT VARIABLES

Ballistic Coefficient:	.536	Velocity (ft/s):	2970	Weight (GR):	145
Maximum Range (yds):	350	Interval (yds):	50	Drag Function (I):	G1
Sight Height (inches):	1.5	Shooting Angle (Deg.):	0	Zero Range (yds):	250
Wind Speed (mph):	10	Wind Angle (Deg.):	90	Altitude (ft):	0
Pressure (hg):	29.53	Temperature (F):	59	Humidity (%):	78

Ballistic Results - 270 Win 145 gr. ELD-X

RANGE (YDS)	VELOCITY (FPS)	ENERGY (FT.-LB)	TRAJECTORY (IN)	COME UP (MOA)	COME UP (MILS)	WIND DRIFT (IN)	WIND DRIFT (MOA)	WIND DRIFT (MILS)
0	2970	2840	-1.5	0	0	0	0	0
50	2881	2672	1	-2	-0.6	0.2	0.3	0.1
100	2794	2513	2.5	-2.4	-0.7	0.6	0.6	0.2
150	2708	2362	2.9	-1.8	-0.5	1.3	0.8	0.2
200	2625	2218	2.1	-1	-0.3	2.3	1.1	0.3
250	2542	2081	0	0	0	3.6	1.4	0.4
300	2462	1951	-3.4	1.1	0.3	5.3	1.7	0.5
350	2382	1827	-8.3	2.3	0.7	7.3	2	0.6