

## Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions and Crossing Infrastructure Fact Sheet

### Human Safety:

- Oregon drivers face a 1 in 180 chance of hitting an animal, which is the highest rate of West coast states.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2020, ODOT recorded 5,997 wildlife collisions, with deer and elk collisions accounting for the vast majority, and for every recorded collision, there are likely 2 additional collisions that go unreported.<sup>2</sup>
- From 2014 to 2018, ODOT reports that wildlife collisions caused an average of 2.2 casualties and 453 injuries per year.

Animal Type	WVC Count, 2020	Total Count, 2016-2020
Antelope	5	47
Bald Eagle	2	12
Bear	31	233
Big Horn Sheep	2	4
Cougar	11	63
Deer	5,573	29,885
Elk	263	1,455
Golden Eagle	1	5
Hawk	12	42
Mountain Goat	2	8
Owl	22	95
Wild Game - Small	73	511
<b>Total Count</b>	<b>5,997</b>	<b>32,360</b>

### Economic Costs and Benefits of Wildlife Vehicle Collisions and Crossing Infrastructure:

- In 2021 dollars, the average cost of a deer collision is \$8,530 and an elk collision costs \$22,539, accounting for vehicle repairs, injuries, towing and emergency crews, value of the animal, and carcass removal and disposal.<sup>3</sup>
- With this average cost, deer and elk collisions in 2020 in Oregon cost roughly **\$53.4 million**.
- The Lava Butte Wildlife Crossing Project on Hwy 97 near Burns, OR, constructed in 2012, saw an 80% reduction in deer collisions within the first year,<sup>4</sup> while other studies show that wildlife crossing structures that guide animals over or under highways reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions by up to 97%, when placed in areas of known wildlife movement.
- Given the high cost of deer and elk collisions, wildlife crossing structures can quickly pay for themselves if placed near wildlife collision hotspots, while also radically reducing the number of collisions to make our roads safer for

Wildlife Infrastructure	Price Range	Description
Large Mammal Wildlife Underpass	\$250,000-\$600,000	This depends primarily on the size and materials (bridge span, metal arch, concrete box, etc). Crossings suitable for a range of large mammals should be at least 7m wide x 3.5m high.
Single Span Overpass	\$1-\$2.5 Million	This type of overpass is for two-lane highways and can vary in price depending on the width of the structure, and terrain.
Double Span Overpass	\$2.75-\$7 Million	This type of overpass can span four or more lanes of traffic. This price varies depending on terrain, structure width, and the number of lanes spanned. For example, a double span overpass in NV spanning four lanes cost \$2.75M, while a double span overpass in WA spanning six lanes and a median with difficult terrain cost \$6.2M.
8' Ungulate-proof fencing	\$42,000-\$64,000 per mile	This price includes escape ramps or "jump outs."
Cattle guards	~\$30,000 each	Cattle guards are used to limit some animals from entering the highway at access roads and driveways. *They are not effective for all species (like bears), and may be a safety concern for target ungulate species.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://newsroom.statefarm.com/animal-collision/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.publish.csiro.au/wr/WR20090>

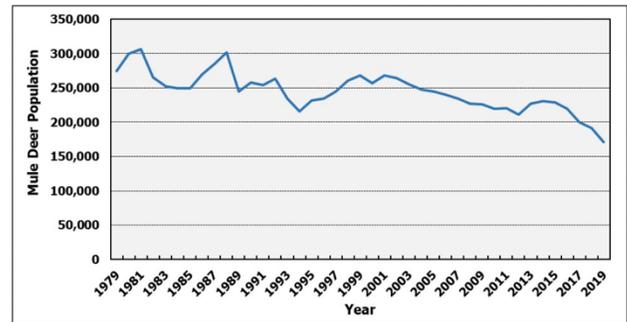
<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss2/art15/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=28482c80c9cc49a1aa2310adb3289e89>

people and wildlife and providing safe passage for all species large and small.<sup>5</sup>

## Environmental and Climate Resilience Benefits of Wildlife Crossings:

- Research has shown that roads can create a barrier to wildlife moving to locate water, food, mates, and shelter, and to fulfill other needs, which may reduce gene dispersal and undermine long-term population viability.<sup>6</sup>
- Oregon mule deer populations have been in a steady decline for many years, and while many factors contribute to that decline, reducing deer collisions and increasing wildlife movement can help alleviate pressures mule deer face.<sup>7</sup>
- Threatened species, such as the Pacific marten found throughout coastal Oregon, are known to face mortality from vehicle collisions,<sup>8</sup> and wildlife crossings can help prevent further losses triggering a listing under the Endangered Species Act and other regulatory burdens faced by landowners.
- Expanding culverts and bridges to allow for aquatic and terrestrial passage not only benefits wildlife, but also makes our infrastructure more resilient to climate change and extreme weather events, such as flooding. This protects our infrastructure investments in the long-term and ultimately saves taxpayers money.



## Wildlife crossings are supported by a large majority of Oregonians:<sup>9</sup>

- 2020 polling found 75% Oregonians support additional public funding for wildlife crossing infrastructure.
- 86% of Oregonians support building wildlife overpasses and underpasses in concentrated migration areas, with 57% strongly supporting, and maintaining open corridors for wildlife to migrate is supported by 88% of Oregonians.
- Oregon lags behind other western states in constructing wildlife crossing infrastructure, and making state funding available can be leveraged to make Oregon projects more

<sup>5</sup> Table on wildlife crossing structure costs provided by the Center for Large Landscape Conservation

<sup>6</sup>[https://training.fws.gov/courses/csp/csp3112/resources/Transportation\\_Projects/Wildlife\\_Vehicle\\_Collision\\_Reduction\\_Study\\_2008.pdf](https://training.fws.gov/courses/csp/csp3112/resources/Transportation_Projects/Wildlife_Vehicle_Collision_Reduction_Study_2008.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>[https://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/big\\_game/mule\\_deer/docs/Oregon%20Mule%20Deer%20Initiative%2015-19%20July%202021.pdf](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/big_game/mule_deer/docs/Oregon%20Mule%20Deer%20Initiative%2015-19%20July%202021.pdf)

<sup>8</sup>[https://www.fws.gov/oregonfwo/ExternalAffairs/News/2015/Coastal\\_Marten\\_Final\\_Species\\_Report\\_April\\_2015%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.fws.gov/oregonfwo/ExternalAffairs/News/2015/Coastal_Marten_Final_Species_Report_April_2015%20(1).pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2020/04/pew-wildlife-corridors-topline-survey-memo-032420.pdf>



attractive to receive newly allocated funds provided by the Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.