

New poll examines public opinion on wildlife and migration corridors in Wyoming

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Wyoming voters support efforts such as helping landowners install wildlife-friendly fences to aid in wildlife migration, according to a new poll. Credit: Joe Riis Photo

Results from a new statewide poll of 400 registered voters in Wyoming and an online focus group of 20 Wyoming residents on topics related to wildlife and migration corridors are now available from the Ruckelshaus Institute and Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming.

The poll and online focus group were organized by the William D. Ruckelshaus Institute, in partnership with the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions at Duke University.

Findings from the poll show that voters [support](#) a range of policy actions related to the conservation of big-game [migration corridors](#), but that the intensity of support declines when the action is perceived to negatively impact the state's economy. Respondents showed strong support for constructing highway over/underpasses within migration corridors and helping landowners install wildlife-friendly fences. Conservation actions perceived to limit oil and gas development received less support from respondents.

Results indicate that wildlife is very important to residents' quality of life and to Wyoming's economy, and that declines in big-game populations are perceived as an extremely or very serious problem by a majority of respondents. Highways and development were found to pose the greatest perceived threat to big-game migration. Focus group participants, in particular, emphasized the need for an approach to conserving migration corridors that balances wildlife needs with Wyoming's economy.

"These results show that Wyoming voters support a range of policies to maintain big-game [migration](#) corridors," says Drew Bennett, Whitney MacMillan Professor of Practice of Private Lands Stewardship in the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources. "Voters overwhelmingly support actions such as constructing new overpasses to allow animals to cross highways in key areas and clearly recognize the human safety and [economic benefits](#) these structures provide from reducing vehicle collisions."

The poll was administered by Lori Weigel, of New Bridge Strategy, and surveyed 400 randomly selected registered voters in Wyoming. Full results can be found [here](#).

The [poll](#) was conducted May 6-9, with a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4.9 percentage points statewide. The study was supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation as part of wider research

on Americans' attitudes toward conservation and the environment.

Provided by University of Wyoming

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