



A Survey of Public Opinions on Wildlife Crossings

Support for Wildlife Crossings Is Widespread Among Respondents



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Respondents**



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Introduction

Roadkill is all too familiar for Americans. Most everyone has seen the unsettling – if not gruesome – death poses along the sides of highways and roadways: dead deer, coyotes, bears, turtles and more. Every single day, motor vehicles in the United States kill roughly one million¹ vertebrate animals – more than 14 times the capacity of a standard NFL football stadium.

As humans, we are not immune to the dangers of wildlife collisions either. A study² estimates that there are 1-2 million wildlife-vehicle collisions with large animals every year in the U.S., causing 26,000 human injuries, 200 human deaths and \$8 billion in property damage, health care costs and lost work days.

One might assume that vehicle-wildlife collisions are an unavoidable risk. But increasingly, road planners are turning to wildlife crossings – bridges over and tunnels under America's busy roads – to prevent such collisions.

There are more than one thousand wildlife crossings³ across the country, and every year brings new construction projects. The data tell us that these crossings are working. When placed in areas of known wildlife movement, wildlife crossings with elements such as fencing have reduced wildlife-vehicle collisions by up to 97%.⁴

Reconnecting habitats

Crossings do more than prevent collisions. They help to reconnect habitat that has been bisected by roads full of fast-moving cars and trucks. When habitats are too small for hunting, grazing or finding a mate, animals often have no choice but to risk their lives by crossing busy roads and freeways.

In Florida, wildlife crossings have increased the gene flow⁵ of, and prevented vehicle collisions⁶ with, Florida black bears. At Banff National Park, studies show that crossings have a positive impact on wildlife by reducing roadkill, increasing food and shelter access, and even decreasing stress levels in wildlife.⁷ In Arizona, one wildlife overpass was used more than 6,000 times by bighorn sheep, bobcats, deer and coyotes between its construction in 2016 and spring 2020.⁸

Do people know about crossings, and what do they think?

Because wildlife crossings are a relatively new conservation initiative, we wanted to learn whether Americans are familiar with the concept, as well as whether they support crossings and the creation of more throughout the country. Additionally, we wanted to learn the extent to which Americans have experienced roadkill.

Here are some of the key findings of the survey:

- 37% of those surveyed were unfamiliar with the concept of wildlife crossings;
- Upon hearing the definition of a crossing, 87% of respondents supported the idea of building new crossings across the country, and in a separate question, 85% also supported a crossing project nearby or in their state;
- We presented information that crossings are expensive to build but also produce cost savings from reduced vehicle-animal collisions, and we then asked whether the savings needed to eventually surpass the costs of the crossing in order to be worth the effort. By nearly a three to one margin, 64%, respondents said that the crossing is worth it even if the savings never surpass the costs.
- Finally, 25% of those surveyed said that they had hit a large animal with their vehicle, either as a driver or passenger.

We conducted surveys in a variety of locations: the Southeast, Midwest, Southwest and West. We received answers from people in small towns in rural areas, in suburbs and in cities. We received input from people of all ages. While we didn't ask people about their politics, half of the locations we surveyed were represented by a Republican in their state legislature, and half by a Democrat. Support for wildlife crossings stayed consistently high, suggesting that this may be a rare issue that enjoys more consensus than disagreement.

Survey Results

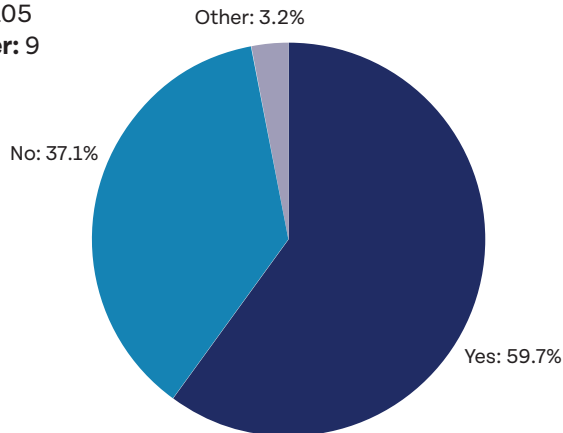
QUESTION 1

Are you familiar with the idea of a wildlife crossing?

Yes: 169

No: 105

Other: 9



QUESTION 2

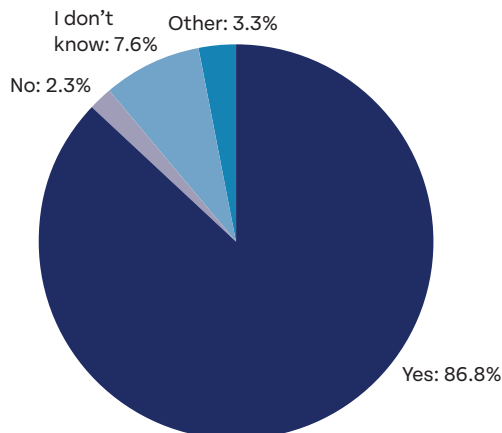
Wildlife crossings are structures that allow animals to safely cross roads – for example, bridges and tunnels. Do you support the idea of building more wildlife crossings across the country?

Yes: 262

No: 7

I don't know: 23

Other: 10



QUESTION 3

No matter how you answered, for you, what is the most compelling reason to build a wildlife crossing?

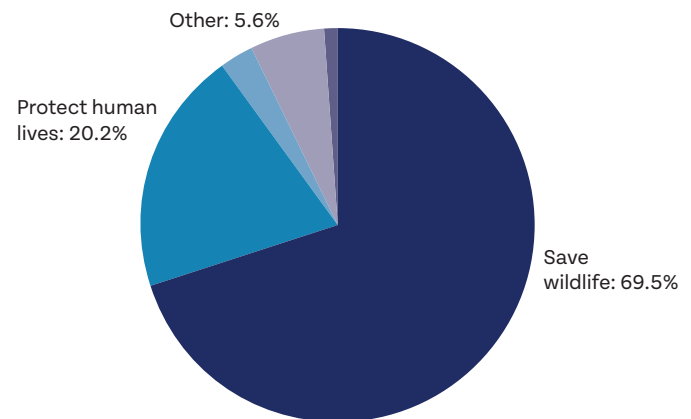
Save wildlife: 210

Protect human lives: 61

Save money on car repairs, insurance and medical bills: 10

Other: 17

None of the above / Nothing is compelling: 4



QUESTION 4

Whether or not you support wildlife crossings, for you, what is the most compelling reason NOT to build a wildlife crossing?

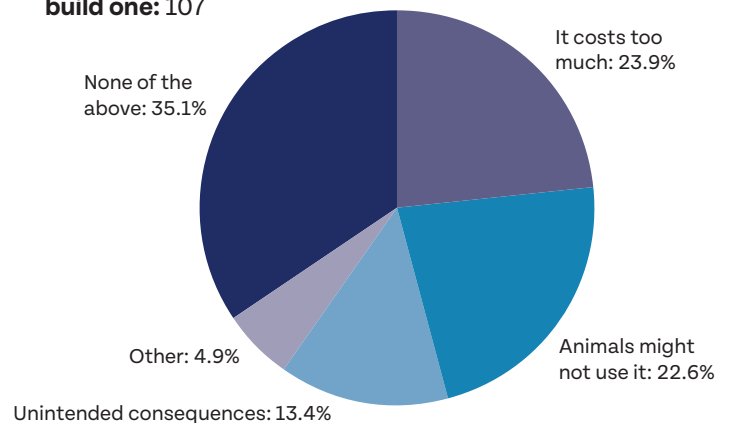
It costs too much: 73

Animals might not use it: 69

Unintended consequences: 41

Other: 15

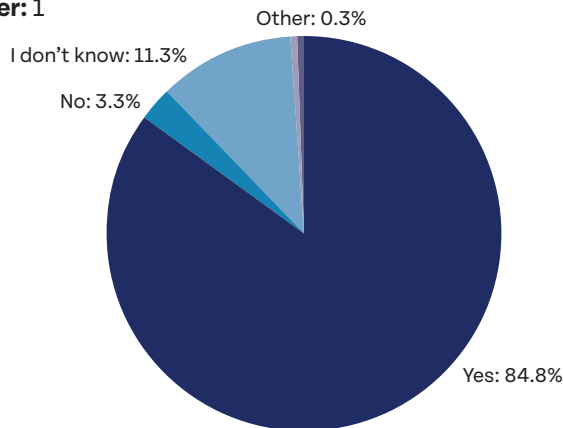
None of the above / There's no compelling reason NOT to build one: 107



QUESTION 5

(Question about a crossing project local to the survey location) Example: CalTrans is building a wildlife bridge on US 97, north of Weed. The purpose is to allow elk, deer and other animals to cross safely. Based on what you know, do you support this new wildlife bridge?

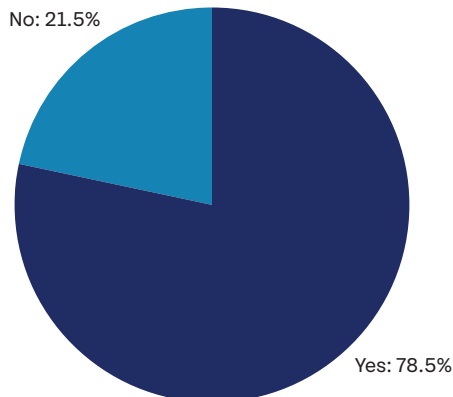
Yes: 256
No: 10
I don't know: 34
I don't care: 1
Other: 1



QUESTION 6

Have you seen any roadkill (large or small) in the past month?

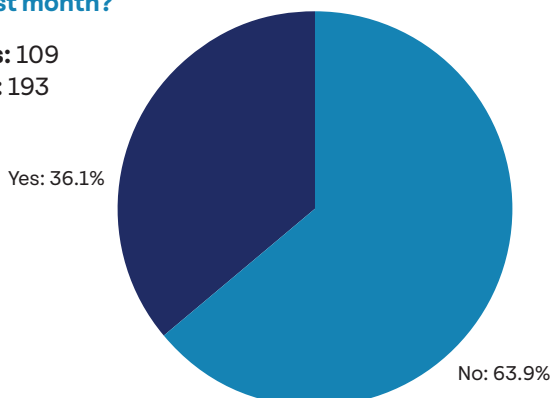
Yes: 237
No: 65



QUESTION 7

Have you seen deer, elk or other large animal roadkill in the past month?

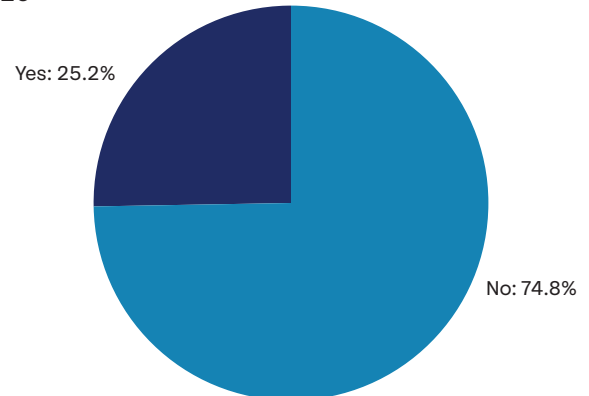
Yes: 109
No: 193



QUESTION 8

Have you EVER hit a large wild animal, for example deer, while driving or as a passenger?

Yes: 76
No: 226



QUESTION 9

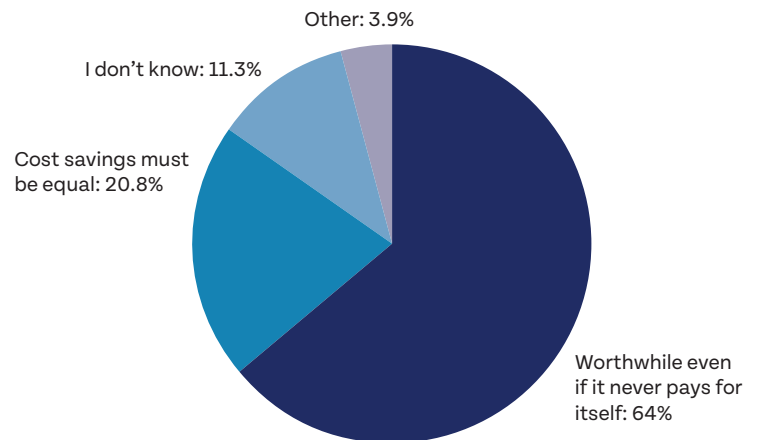
Over time, wildlife crossings save money due to fewer wild-life-vehicle collisions, but they can be expensive to build. How important is it, for you, that the cost savings are equal to or higher than the cost of building the crossing?

The cost savings must be equal to or higher than the cost of building the crossing: 59

The crossing is worthwhile even if the savings never equal the cost: 181

Other: 11

I don't know: 32



QUESTION 10

Outside of wildlife crossings, are there other environmental concerns that you care about or would like to see addressed?

Answers varied

Methodology

The wildlife crossing survey was conducted over a four month period between January and April 2025. We conducted the survey at 10 different locations throughout 9 states. Our surveyors collected responses at the following locations:

Location	Zip Code	City	State	Party of State Rep.
Shopping Center	48910	Lansing	Michigan	Democrat: Kara Hope
Public walking space	30308	Atlanta	Georgia	Democrat: Park Cannon
Publix	32779	Longwood	Florida	Republican: Doug Bankson
Raley's	95648	Lincoln	California	Republican: Joe Patterson
University of Missouri	65211	Columbia	Missouri	Democrat: Kathy Steinhoff
University of Texas at Austin	78712	Austin	Texas	Democrat: Gina Hinojosa
Long Leaf Park	28403	Wilmington	North Carolina	Democrat: Deb Butler
Shopping Center	97056	Scappoose	Oregon	Republican: Darcey Edwards
Dunsmuir Supermarket	96025	Dunsmuir	California	Republican: Heather Hadwick
Shopping Center	80516	Erie	Colorado	Republican: Dan Woog

Surveyor Instructions

Surveyors would get the attention of passing people and ask for their participation in a short survey on wildlife crossings. The surveyors would then read each question out loud as it appears on the sheet. They would mark down the respondent's answer. Surveyors began by asking permission from grocery stores in the area to conduct the survey there, but if they were unable to get permission, they went to a public area to do the survey instead.

Location selection

When deciding on where to conduct surveys, we took multiple factors into account. We wanted to ensure that many surveys were taken near a wildlife crossing, or that the location was in a state where wildlife crossing projects existed. We chose to conduct surveys at grocery stores or public areas, in an attempt to get a general representation of the area. We chose both rural, urban and suburban areas. Further, we wanted to ensure that we surveyed areas with both Republican and Democratic state representatives.

End Notes

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