



Wildlife crossings would make OR highways safer, save money

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New legislation would help build more wildlife crossings across Oregon highways to make roads safer for people and animals.

Research shows that Oregon has the highest likelihood of wildlife crashes among West Coast states, with nearly 5,000 damaging or deadly collisions in 2022.

Wildlife collisions are costly and dangerous for drivers and take their toll on wildlife as well.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife estimates that nearly 15 million animals are killed on Oregon's roads each year.

Karl J. Findling is on the board for the Oregon Backcountry Hunters and Anglers. He said it is time for Oregon to do more to address the problem.

"Oregon is behind nearly all Western states, with only five and a potentially new sixth crossing," said Findling, "where some states such as Colorado have 50."

Crossings have been shown to significantly reduce wildlife collisions. For example, an underpass near Bend cut them by more than 85%.

Findling said that along with driving population declines in many species, when you factor in medical and vehicle repair costs, collisions with wildlife are pricey.

"I've seen numbers around \$7,000 per collision with a deer," said Findling, "but what's striking is \$73,000 when someone hits an elk."

Although polls show [wildlife crossings have broad, bipartisan support](#) across the state, Findling said funding wildlife crossings remains a challenge due to high costs.

But, said Findling, with all the money they save, [crossings pay for themselves within 15 years](#).

"When we see these crossings go in," said Findling, "the returns are close to \$3 for every dollar invested."

<https://www.publicnewsservice.org/2025-03-04/environment/wildlife-crossings-would-make-or-highways-safer-save-money/a95623-1>