



Wildlife Crossings Program



Disclaimer



The contents of this presentation do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind States or the public in any way. This presentation is intended only to provide information regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies. However, compliance with applicable statutes or regulations cited in this presentation is required.



Wildlife Crossings Program Overview



Wildlife Vehicle Collisions (WVCs) present a danger to human safety and wildlife survival.

- There are more than 1,000,000 WVCs annually (23 U.S.C. § 171(a)(1)).
- WVCs result in a total estimated annual cost of \$8.38 billion (23 U.S.C. § 171(a)(3)).
- WVCs result in tens of thousands of serious injuries and hundreds of fatalities within the United States (23 U.S.C. § 171(a)(2)(B)).
- WVCs threaten the survival of species (23 U.S.C. § 171(a)(4)).



Source: Adobe Stock



Wildlife Crossing Program Components



The Wildlife Crossings Program was established in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (Pub. L. No. 117-58, November 15, 2021), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), and codified at 23 U.S.C. § 171. BIL includes several provisions to **protect motorists and wildlife by reducing WVCs and improve habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species.**





Collision and Carcass Data Methodology

- BIL requires FHWA to develop **standardized methodology** for collecting and reporting spatially accurate wildlife collision and carcass data for the National Highway System (NHS) (23 U.S.C. § 172(c)(1))
 - Consider the **practicability of the methodology** with respect to technology and cost.
 - **Survey existing methodologies** and sources of data collection.
 - Identify and correct limitations of those existing methodologies and sources of data collection.
 - **Consult** with
 - Department of Interior;
 - US Forest Service;
 - **Tribal, State, and local transportation and wildlife authorities;**
 - MPOs;
 - Members of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO);
 - Members of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA);
 - Experts in WVCs;
 - Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); and
 - Other interested stakeholders.



Source: Adobe Stock

Collision and Carcass Data Template and Implementation



- BIL requires FHWA to develop a **template for State implementation** of a standardized national wildlife collision and carcass data system for the NHS that is based on the standardized methodology; and **encourage the voluntary implementation** of the template (23 U.S.C. § 172(c)(2)).
- FHWA must submit a **report to Congress** describing the developed standardized methodology (23 U.S.C. § 172(c)(3)(A))
- FHWA must later submit a **report to Congress** describing (23 U.S.C. § 172(c)(3)(B)):
 - The status of the voluntary implementation of the standardized methodology;
 - Whether the implementation of the methodology and the template have impacted efforts to reduce WVCs and improve habitat connectivity;
 - The degree of that impact; and
 - Recommendations for further study to reduce WVCs and improve habitat connectivity on the NHS



Source: Adobe Stock



Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program (23 U.S.C. § 171)

- Provide **competitive grants** for projects that seek to reduce the number of Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions (WVCs) and, in doing so, improve habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species (23 U.S.C. § 171(b))
 - \$350M total FY22-FY26
 - Provides funding for Construction and Non-Construction Projects

Eligible Applicants are the following entities or a group of such entities (23 U.S.C. § 171(c)):

- **A State Department of Transportation (State DOT);**
- A metropolitan planning organization (MPO);
- A unit of local government;
- A regional transportation authority;
- A special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function;
- An Indian Tribe; or
- A Federal land management agency (FLMA).



Source: Adobe Stock

Best Practices Study and Report (23 U.S.C. § 172(a))



- BIL requires FHWA to conduct a **study of the state of the practice** of methods to reduce wildlife vehicle collisions (WVCs).
 - Update and expand on the "Wildlife Vehicle Collision Reduction Study: 2008 Report to Congress" and "Wildlife Vehicle Collision Reduction Study: Best Practices Manual."
 - Assess the causes of WVCs, the impact of WVCs on motorists and wildlife, and the impacts of roads and traffic on habitat connectivity.
 - Include solutions and best practices for reducing WVCs, and improving habitat connectivity.
 - Review research and data relating to WVCs, and habitat fragmentation from transportation infrastructure.
 - Survey current practices of USDOT and State DOTs (SDOTs) to reduce WVCs.
 - Consult with appropriate experts in WVCs and appropriate experts on the effects of roads and traffic on habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species.

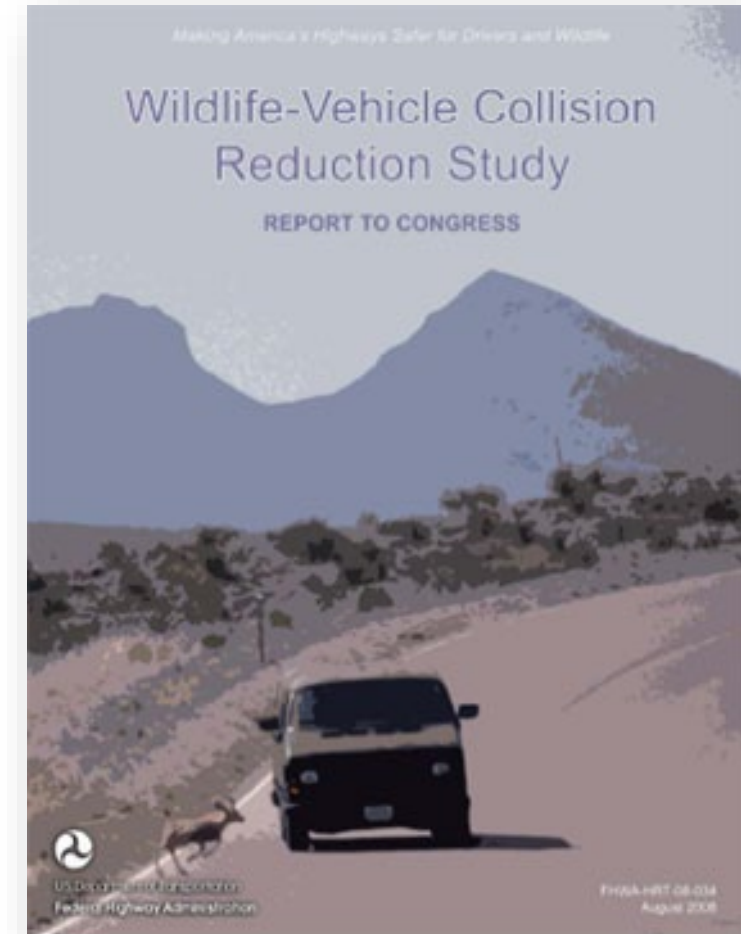


Image Source: FHWA



Best Practices Study and Report (23 U.S.C. § 172(a))

- BIL requires FHWA to submit a report to Congress on the results of the study, including:
 - A description of the causes and impacts of WVCs, and the impacts of roads and traffic on different species.
 - An economic evaluation of the costs and benefits of installing highway infrastructure and other measures to mitigate damage to wildlife, including the effect on jobs, property values, and economic growth.
 - Recommendations for preventing WVCs, including best practices and funding resources.



Image Source: Microsoft Office Stock Images

Guidance for Statewide Transportation and Wildlife Action Plans (23 U.S.C. § 172(a)(3)(B)(iv))



- As part of the report to Congress, BIL requires FHWA to include **guidance for developing a voluntary joint Statewide Transportation and Wildlife Action plan** to address WVCs and improve habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species.
- **Consult with** Federal Land Management Agencies (FLMAs), **SDOTs**, **State fish and wildlife agencies**, and Tribal governments that agree to participate in the development of the guidance.



Source: Adobe Stock

Workforce Development and Technical Training (23 U.S.C. § 172(b))



- BIL requires FHWA to **develop** a series of in-person and online workforce development and **technical training courses** to reduce WVCs and improve habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species, based on the Best Practices Study.
 - Courses shall be available for transportation and fish and wildlife professionals.
 - Courses shall be updated at least once every 2 years.



Image Source: Microsoft Office Stock Images



National Mitigation Threshold Guidance (23 U.S.C. § 172(d))



- BIL requires FHWA to establish **guidance containing a threshold for determining whether a highway must be evaluated for potential mitigation** measures to reduce WVCs and increase habitat connectivity.
 - Consider the number of WVCs that pose a human safety risk.
 - Consider highway-related mortality and the effects of highway traffic on various species.
 - Consider habitat connectivity values and the barrier effect of the highway on the movements and migrations of those species.
- States may carry out the guidance on a voluntary basis.



Image Source: Microsoft Office Stock Images

Bridge and Tunnel Inspection Standards and Training



- Congress declares that it is in the vital interest of the U.S. to ensure adequate passage of aquatic and terrestrial species, where appropriate (23 U.S.C. § 144(a)(2)(F)).
- As part of the National Bridge and Tunnel Inventories, FHWA must **determine if the replacement or rehabilitation of bridges and tunnels should include measures to enable safe and unimpeded movement for terrestrial and aquatic species** (23 U.S.C. § 144(b)(6)).
- When the Training Program for Bridge and Tunnel Inspectors is first revised after the enactment of BIL, the revision must include techniques to assess passage of aquatic and terrestrial species and habitat restoration potential (23 U.S.C. § 144(i)(3)).

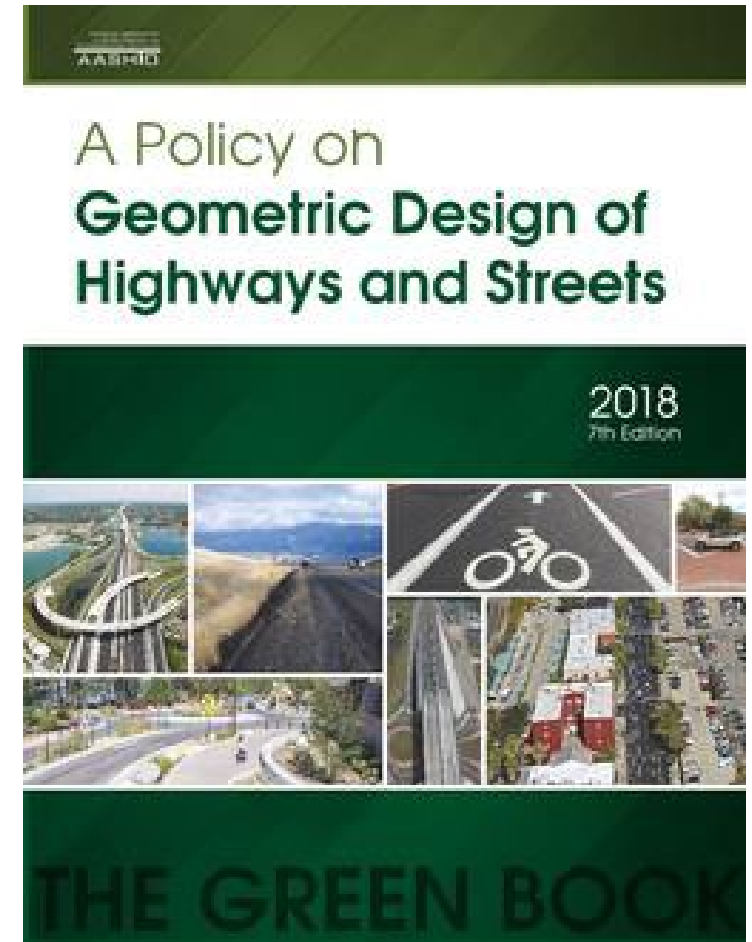


Image Source: Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Montana Department of Transportation, and the Western Transportation Institute.

Wildlife Crossing Design (23 U.S.C. § 109(c)(2)(F))



- BIL requires FHWA to **consider** “Wildlife Crossing Structure Handbook: Design and Evaluation in North America” (2011) in developing **Design Criteria** for the NHS.





Wildlife Crash Safety Research Priorities

- FHWA must **include a representative** from a State, local, or regional wildlife, land use, or resource management agency in the Advisory Committee on Transportation Research and Development (23 U.S.C. § 515(h)(2)(D))
- In carrying out ITS research and development, FHWA must give **higher priority** to funding projects that enhance safety through improved crash avoidance and protection, crash and other notification, commercial motor vehicle operations, and infrastructure-based or cooperative safety systems, including **animal detection systems** to reduce the number of WVCs (23 U.S.C. § 516(b)(6)).
 - Note that this is one of 7 listed priority areas.



Image Source: Microsoft Office Stock Images



Questions?

Website Link: <https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/programs/wildlife-crossings>

Email: wildlifecrossings@dot.gov