

Hi Everyone,

Happy New Year!

May the adventures and joys of the new year temper the memories of the travails of years past. New year, new beginnings. This is the time of year to rededicate yourself to the values that you hold dear. We do this through continuing our educations, formal or otherwise, and practicing our ideals to improve the world around us. We do this through conservation and outreach efforts. Hunting is more than just going out to kill something. Our ethics as hunters and our conservation activities validate our concern for the health and sustainability of our wildlife and their environments in a changing world.

Hunting is a part of our lives. Some of the best things we can do is to share the serenity, the wonder, the responsibility and the different skills that are necessary for hunting success. Many of these skills could benefit anyone who decides to explore wilderness areas. The integrity of hunters needs to be demonstrated so that it is beyond question. Hunters can do this by treating others with respect and practicing conservation and kindness. Hunters need to exemplify old school values and considerations.

Hunters' Code of Ethics

It is never too soon to review the hunter's code of ethics. The code below is courtesy of the Safari Club International (SCI) at <https://huntforever.org>. The proud ethics and respect of the hunter for the wildlife and its environment is what separates the hunter from the poacher. Not every hunter hunts all the time, but they are always conservationists in thought and deed. They are the embodiment of integrity and the public needs to perceive hunters as such. Our continued ability to hunt depends on it - especially in California.

SCI HUNTERS CODE OF ETHICS

Recognizing my responsibilities to wildlife, habitat and future generations, I pledge:

- To conduct myself in the field so as to make a positive contribution to wildlife and ecosystems.
- To improve my skills as a woodsman and marksman to ensure humane harvesting of wildlife.
- To comply with all game laws, or the sport of fair chase, and to influence my companions accordingly.
- To accept my responsibility to provide all possible assistance to game law enforcement officers.
- To waste no opportunity to teach young people the full meaning of this code of ethics.
- To reflect in word and behavior only credit upon the fraternity of sportsmen, and to demonstrate abiding respect for game, habitat and property where I am privileged to hunt.

California Elk Conservation & Management - CDFW

The information below is from the California Dept. of Fish & Wildlife. For more information go to <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Elk>. You may also want to check out these CDFW resources: Here it the link to the new DFW Elk Management Plan for those who want to review the

entire 481 page document <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=162912&inline> and Here is the link to mammal regulations CDFW submitted to FGC, final vote take place at FGC April meeting <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=162638&inline>. Please Note the change to 354 (f) bow draw weight and 354 (h) carry of firearm. Below is information about California elk and selected sections from the 2018 Elk Conservation & Management Plan. Happy reading. Best management practices are guided by data collection, observation and the best available science.

2018 Elk Conservation & Management Plan



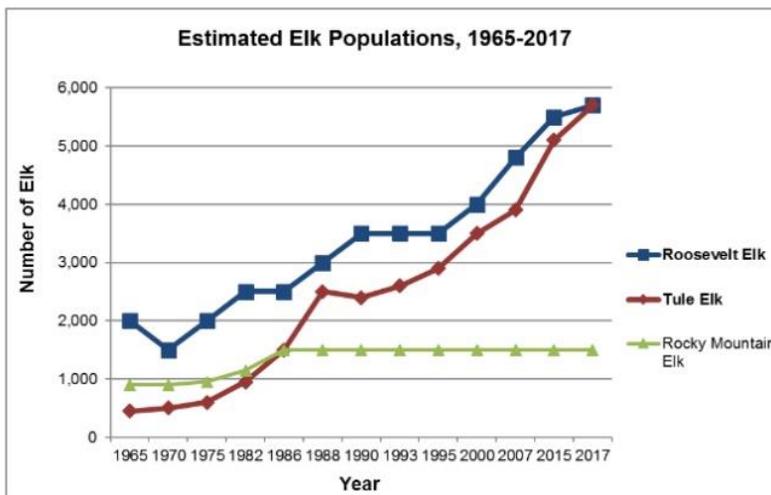
Class: *Mammalia* | **Order:** *Artiodactyla* | **Family:** *Cervidae* | **Genus:** *Cervus*

There are three species of elk that exist in California: Roosevelt (*Cervus canadensis roosevelti*), Rocky Mountain (*Cervus canadensis nelsoni*), and Tule (*Cervus canadensis nannodes*) elk.

Elk Management Program

California's elk herds are a valuable resource to outdoor enthusiasts of all types. In order to ensure the long-term sustainability of elk populations, the CDFW has established conservation and management objectives to maintain healthy herds, reestablish elk in suitable historic range, provide public educational and recreational opportunities to enjoy elk, and to alleviate conflicts involving elk on private property.

CDFW's Elk Management Program (Program) is made up of branch and field biologists who work together coordinating projects across the range. The Program its activities, and staff are supported almost entirely by hunters through the purchase of California hunting licenses and elk tags. Additional support for elk conservation comes from federal funds derived from the Pittman-Robertson Act or Wildlife Restoration Act.



{ Estimated elk population numbers in California, 1965-2017. }

Ongoing projects within the Program include population assessment studies, movement or migration studies, monitoring and research projects to improve our understanding of population dynamics, responding to public inquiries related to elk, and providing guidance and expertise to other agencies, universities, non-governmental organizations, and private entities interested in the conservation and management of elk.

One example of the Program success is that CDFW has safely and successfully captured and relocated more than 1,200 elk since 1975 using a variety of capture techniques, including chemical immobilization of individual elk, hazing groups of elk into winged corral traps, baiting elk in small corral traps, and chemical/physical restraint of animals using a helicopter and dart- or net-gun operation.

The efficacy of a particular capture technique is determined by various factors such as safety, cost, desired age/sex structure of the capture group, and purpose of the capture (e.g., translocation, biological testing, or marking). The statewide tule elk population has increased from three herds totaling 500 elk in 1970, to 22 herds with approximately 5,700 elk today. This is a tremendous accomplishment and no small feat in a state that is now approaching 40 million people. It demonstrates and highlights the long standing and strong conservation and management practices by CDFW. The ability to build upon those early reintroduction concepts, establishing innovative capture techniques, and continued implementation of management actions that have resulted in and created opportunities for natural range expansion of tule elk continues to be a tremendous success.

Selections from the CDFW Elk Conservation & Management Plan

A. Goals and Objectives

Effective conservation and management of elk requires reliable information on population size, density, age structure, fecundity (birth rates), mortality (death rates), sex ratio, and their use of habitats throughout the year and over time. This plan establishes a framework for an ongoing monitoring program to evaluate elk populations and habitat conditions. Monitoring population trends and the details of habitat use, and distribution will help the Department understand how elk use the landscape and interact with other wildlife species. The goals and objectives identified in this plan and its provisions for information gathering and monitoring will help the Department maintain, restore, and enhance sustainable elk populations into the future. It will allow the Department to modernize strategies for recreational use, establish goals for coordination with governmental agencies, Tribes and the public, and develop methods to alleviate resource conflicts.

F. Hunting

Hunting is a primary tool available to help manage elk populations. Recreational hunting opportunities for elk produce revenue that directly supports the management of not only elk, but conservation of diverse habitats across the landscape that benefit multiple species. Hunting tags are currently available through the Department's public Big Game Drawing, the Private Lands Management (PLM) program, Cooperative Elk Hunting (T14, CCR, §555), the Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Program, tribal harvest, and in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Defense (T14, CCR, §640). The PLM program issues tags to cooperating landowner/operators to distribute or market at their discretion (thus providing landowners with an economic incentive to accommodate elk and/or tolerate some level of conflict with elk).

Although this allows elk harvest on private property and manages elk population levels for some herds, PLM tags can be extremely expensive or otherwise unavailable to most hunters.

To encourage protection and enhancement of elk habitat and provide eligible landowners opportunity for limited elk hunting on their lands, the Department may establish Cooperative Elk Hunting areas and issue license tags to allow the take of elk.

Landowners of not less than 640 acres of critical elk habitat within an elk tag quota zone are eligible for a limited number of tags. The number of cooperative elk hunting license tags shall not exceed 20 percent of the number of public license tags for the corresponding public hunt and shall be of the same designation (i.e., antlerless, spike bull, bull, or either-sex) as the public license tags.

The Department's SHARE Program could meet the high demand for elk tags and provide some level of elk harvest on private property. Under the SHARE program, participating landowners receive monetary compensation and liability protection in exchange for allowing access to or through their land for public recreational use and enjoyment of wildlife. SHARE is funded through permit application fees. The program is relatively new and has provided limited public hunting opportunities for deer, wild pig, upland game,

waterfowl and elk. The SHARE program could expand to provide additional opportunities to hunters, as well as economic incentives to landowner participants.

Elk hunt tags are in high demand in California, with over 36,000 applicants for the 320 general draw elk tags (bull, antlerless and either-sex) issued in 2017. Additionally, the 2010 Final Environmental Document on elk hunting (California Department of Fish and Game 2010) states not more than 100 antlerless and 139 bull elk would be removed under the PLM program. In 2017, 247 PLM elk tags were issued and 63 antlerless and 102 bull elk were harvested through the PLM program. Allocation of tags through the general draw system in comparison to those issued through the PLM program is a concern to many hunters in California. The Department understands that conditions vary from EMU to EMU and recognizes development of new strategies or approaches might be necessary to address local conditions. For example, to keep the general hunting public engaged, the Department recommends that the number of PLM tags issued should not exceed 50 percent of the tags issued through the general draw (including SHARE elk tags and PLM tags donated to SHARE for the general public).

This recommendation is an effort to meet both the demands of the general hunter and PLM operators. Implementing this recommendation would require a change to Title14, CCR.

G. Depredation Response and Alleviation

The growth in elk populations and expansion of range has resulted in increasing agricultural/private property complaints in areas with high concentrations of elk, such as northern California and the coastal range of central California. In some areas, the damage is chronic and not related to total numbers of elk, but to location and situation. The Department's response is guided by statute in FGC §4181. Specifically, elk depredation provisions require the Department to document damage, provide a written summary of corrective measures, and determine minimum viability of the herd.

The Department responds to reported game damage situations as promptly as possible. The Department initially gathers information about the type of damage, characteristics of the property, and any previous history of depredation issues. The Department then works with the landowner to identify and implement appropriate techniques to alleviate or prevent future damage. Some techniques to alleviate elk depredation appear in Appendix C.

Issuing depredation permits can effectively resolve some conflicts when readily identifiable individual animals cause property damage. When depredation becomes chronic and/or large-scale problems occur involving numerous elk, the Department will emphasize regulated hunting and co-management with Tribes (when appropriate) to alleviate conflicts.

Through the Cooperative Elk Hunting and SHARE programs, landowners experiencing depredation conflicts within established public elk hunt zones can partially offset economic losses by charging a hunting access fee.

Depredation permits can be issued as a technique when hunting and/or other methods do not adequately alleviate recurring depredation conflicts.

For example, where hunting programs are infeasible, the Department can work with landowners to implement non-lethal techniques such as fencing and hazing to alleviate long-term depredation conflicts. In many situations, the greatest reduction and prevention of damage may be accomplished using multiple damage control techniques. Using a single technique by itself generally does not resolve chronic elk depredation problems. If those conditions leading to depredation are not changed or elk are not excluded through long-term techniques (such as fencing) then damage is likely to continue or resume at some point in the future.

Individual EMUs with population levels below the maximum population objective that experience human-elk conflicts in a portion of the EMU may warrant targeted management actions. As elk and human populations continue to grow, it is likely that depredation conflicts will continue or escalate, requiring development of additional innovative techniques. One such technique used in other states (such as Oregon) is implementation of depredation hunts. The possibility of implementing surplus game hunts (as specified in FGC §325) is an alternative if other methods prove unsuccessful. Surplus game hunts can occur after an investigation and the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) finds the elk population has increased in any areas or districts to such an extent that a surplus exists, or that damage to public or private property, or overgrazing of their range occurs.

Resolutions for The Outdoorsperson

The following New Year's Resolutions were published in Outdoor Hub at www.outdoorhub.com. Consider adopting these resolutions for your own this year. Access to public lands is one of the most important assets that we have. How many of us in this state have sufficient property of our own to support the harvest of wild game unless that land adjoins other large parcels or public lands? Making the environment a better place is kind of a cliché. But picking up after ourselves and others and sharing experiences with friends is easy and pleasurable. Engaging in these resolutions can only enrich our lives.

10 New Year's Resolutions for the Hunter/Angler/Outdoorsman

By Randall Bonner

With the 2018 New Year comes a vehicle for change and renewal. As hunters and anglers, we are used to adapting to our surroundings and conditions to improve our success. There's always room for improvement, and here are 10 resolutions to ponder and promise to ourselves to become better stewards for the outdoors.

1. Become an advocate for public land.

Join organizations such as [Backcountry Hunters and Anglers](#) and the [Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership](#). Call or write your elected representatives to preserve access to public lands and national parks. Get involved and network with other public land advocates to work toward common goals.

2. Clean up the mess others leave behind.

Take the time during each outing to not only leave areas as you found them, but to improve their existing conditions. Picking up after yourself isn't enough. Take a few pieces of garbage with you from the beach, river, or the woods and dispose of them properly.

3. Study hard.

Do your homework. Put in the time and effort to learn more about animal behavior patterns, new areas, changes in landscape, regulations, and new techniques or gear to improve your success. Don't just read a few articles online but go to the library and check out a few books on different subjects that are pertinent to your outdoor experience.

4. Take up a new hobby.

If you're a target shooter, take up hunting. If you shoot a rifle, take up archery. If you fish with a baitcaster, try out a fly rod. You don't have to be an expert at everything but diversifying your portfolio will prevent you from becoming limited to enjoying only a small facet of one particular activity that can be done in more ways than one.

5. Bring a friend.

Introduce someone to an outdoor activity that you love. Share the joy that it brings you with someone else, as well as your knowledge. Pass your wisdom on to someone younger. Experience the rewards of being a mentor.

6. Document your experiences.

Leave more footprints, take more pictures. Sure, you can share them on [Instagram](#), but make it a point to take some photos worthy of printing and framing. Compile some of your video clips into a short film. Write about it in a blog or a journal. If you really want to get creative, capture some of your favorite scenes and memories by turning them into works of art.

7. Make more time for the outdoors.

Whether you need to re-arrange your schedule, or simply commit to staying motivated to devote a little time after work to get outside, rain or shine, make it happen.

8. Get more exercise.

Sure, this is a bit of a cliché New Year's Resolution, but there are plenty of ways to apply it to your existing outdoor activities. Walk a little farther down the riverbank. Use your oars instead of your electric motor. Pack a lunch and track your animals a little longer on your hunts. Push yourself to the limit, and then go just a little bit further.

9. Reflect on your own behavior and improve your ethical standards.

You don't have to open a self-help book for this one, just take a moment to reflect on mistakes you've made or things you regret from the past year, then make a promise to yourself not to repeat them. Did you lose an animal? Did you mishandle a fish you intended to release? Did you throw out freezer-burned meat because you harvested more than you could eat? How can you prevent yourself from making the same mistakes this year?

10. Waste less, enjoy more.

Instead of breasting out your ducks and geese, then tossing the rest in the trash, check out some of [Hank Shaw's recipes for legs and wings](#). Save the livers for making [ravioli](#). Use the caulfat from your big game to make [crepinettes](#). The possibilities are endless, explore new culinary territory and expand your palate.



Life Lessons Through Bowhunting

The next item is from Outdoor Hub at www.outdoorhub.com. The skills and lessons acquired as a bowhunter will help a person shine in other facets of their lives, too.

10 Reasons Why Bowhunting Makes You a Better Person

OutdoorHub Staff Writer: Keenan Crow

Bowhunting teaches us so many valuable life lessons. The moment you pick one up and are able to connect on a target down range, you will inevitably be drawn into a world that teaches about respect for nature and all living things, a thing or 2 about patience, and many more! Here are 10 reasons why bowhunting makes you a better person:

1. Respect for Nature

There is nothing like arriving to your treestand in the dark, waiting for the sun to rise. You develop a love and respect for nature that will grab a hold of you and keep you coming back over and over. Cherish the beauty of all of God's creations and learn to appreciate those smells, sights and sounds. Begin to understand, in a very real way, the circle of life, the cycle of the seasons, and how fragile, yet substantial, the ecosystem is.

2. Patience

Patience, patience, and, oh yeah, more patience. It's easy to let your mind wander after hours of sitting still in a deer blind. There's always a nice comfy couch and hot cup of coffee waiting for you back at home. However, in the deer woods, patience is rewarded with fridges full of venison steaks and trophy racks mounted on the wall.

3. Dedication

It takes a special breed of person to be willing to wake up before the other 94% of Americans that don't hunt to go sit out in the cold, dark woods. Nobody ever said hunting was easy though, and it's entirely up to you to develop that drive and dedication to push yourself out of bed and into the woods.

4. Organization

Preparation is key to bowhunting. It's early in the morning and easy to forget something, but it takes only one time forgetting that warm hat or pair of gloves that makes you curse at yourself all morning for not being better organized. You soon learn to lay out all the gear you need ahead of time and double check everything BEFORE you leave in the morning.

5. Story Telling

There's just something about every bowhunter that makes them great storytellers. Bowhunters are fully engaged and can break down every little detail of their hunts, even down to the wind direction on the day that trophy over his or her fireplace fell.

6. Humbling

If you've ever been bowhunting, you come to realize pretty quickly that nothing goes as planned. It can be the perfect morning — you know what I'm talking about — a slight breeze, a little frost covering the ground, you get right to your stand an hour before daylight, and you end up counting squirrels all morning. Nevertheless, bowhunters can find a positive in everything; being able to experience a beautiful morning like that first-hand is truly remarkable. Bowhunters also learn how to swallow down a missed shot, a lost trail or being winded by a monster buck before you take aim; in these circumstances, bowhunters have to learn from their mistakes, reassess their strategy and alter their approach in order to be successful and outsmart that four-legged critter.

7. Decision Making



Every bowhunter knows what it means to learn from your mistakes. Any little decision made in a treestand can be the difference between walking out empty handed or loading a deer on your tailgate. Bowhunters often learn the hard way to make careful decisions, and that even shifting to reach an itch can ruin everything you worked for in a matter of seconds. Sometimes a bowhunter will be faced with a very challenging decision about taking a shot or letting one go — which although extremely difficult, is critical to the sport.

8. Observance of Your Surroundings

Being a bowhunter means that you must be fully aware of everything that is going on around you at all times. It's the key skill that all hunters must possess. Deer are sneaky little creatures; silence is their best defensive mechanism, and no matter how many times you check behind you, they can still startle you at any moment. Bowhunting teaches hunters to expect the unexpected and roll with what is happening in front of you.

9. Focus

When you tie all of these things together into one, you're hunting my friend. It's one thing to read about, it's a whole different scenario when Mr. Buck shows up and decides to test you. Focus in on what you're doing and what has to be done to accomplish your goal, and watch your freezer fill up.

10. Cook



That's right, we know our way around the kitchen. [Hunters take just as much pride in the way their venison tastes](#) as they do in tracking down their own dinner. Give us a nice piece of backstrap and we will throw down with the best of them. Beware: when asking hunting buddies for game recipes, be sure to have a pen ready.

Fee Free Days for Federal Public Lands - 2019

The next item is from Tread Lightly at www.treadlightly.org. This is an opportunity to visit new places and to introduce others to the wonder and diversity of our national public lands.

2019 Fee Free Days on Public Land

by [Jerrica Archibald](#)

Every year, land management agencies announce specific days they will waive park fees to commemorate holidays and special occasions. Check out 2019's fee-free days and start planning your next adventure!

US Forest Service: 5 Fee Free Days

- January 21, 2019: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- February 18, 2019: Presidents Day
- June 8, 2019: National Get Outdoors Day
- September 28, 2019: National Public Lands Day
- November 11, 2019: Veterans Day

Bureau of Land Management: 4 Fee Free Days

- January 21, 2019: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- February 18, 2019: Presidents Day
- September 28, 2019: National Public Lands Day
- November 11, 2019: Veterans Day

National Park Service: 5 Fee Free Days

- January 21, 2019: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- April 20, 2019: First Day of National Park Week
- August 25, 2019: NPS 103rd Anniversary
- September 28, 2019: National Public Lands Day
- November 11, 2019: Veterans Day

US Fish and Wildlife Service: 5 Fee Free Days

- January 21, 2019: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- February 18, 2019: Presidents Day
- September 28, 2019: National Public Lands Day
- October 13, 2019: First Sunday of National Wildlife Refuge Week
- November 11, 2019: Veterans Day

Army Corp of Engineers: 2 Fee Free Days

- September 28, 2019: National Public Lands Day
- November 11, 2019: Veterans Day

Bureau of Reclamation: 4 Fee Free Days

- January 21, 2019: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- February 18, 2019: Presidents Day
- September 28, 2019: National Public Lands Day
- November 11, 2019: Veterans Day

Habitat Connections

The next article is from Smithsonian Magazine at www.smithsonianmag.com. This article is a success story about how people can make it safer for animals to move between islands of habitat in an era of freeways, trains and a continuous push for more housing for people. This is not cheap, but if priorities value animal health, safety and genetic diversification, it is an effective alternative. If the animals use the overpass and there are fewer painful or fatal animal-vehicle encounters, then it could be considered a success.

New Animal Overpass Is Already Protecting Critters in Washington State

The bridge over Interstate 90 is the first of 20 that will allow animals to cross the busy roadway and connects wildlife in the North and South Cascades

By [Jason Daley](#)

Country musicians may sing about the highway as a symbol of freedom, but for animals it's a borderline where few cross and many never to return. A new overpass on Washington State's Interstate 90 east of Snoqualmie Pass aims to change that. The path is for animals only and is intended to give elk, bear, and other creatures safe passage above the busy highway, which cuts through the North and South Cascades habitats.

Already, the critter bridge, which is slated to be finished in 2019, is doing its job. Jessica Leigh Hester at [Atlas Obscura](#) reports that a video tweeted out this month by Washington State's Department of Transportation (WSDOT) confirmed the overpass' first user, a coyote who pranced across the elevated, vegetation-covered bridge.

Nice! Our camera captured the 1st image of [#wildlife](#) using the new I-90 overcrossing east of [@Snoqualmie Pass](#)! This coyote safely crossed the highway, avoiding traffic, anvils, ACME rockets & roadrunners! Excited to see what other species cross! pic.twitter.com/aQqnG0m9Wa

— Washington State DOT (@wsdot) [December 6, 2018](#)

Still to come is fencing near the corridor that will help guide animals onto the overpass, and buffer car noise coming from below.

The \$6.2 million project is the first in an ambitious plan to make Washington's interstate more critter friendly, reports Eli Francovich at [The Spokesman-Review](#). In total, 20 such overpasses will dot the roadway, in addition to underpasses that are also being added to the interstate. Having both kinds of animal infrastructure is important, since some species are more likely to go over bridges, while some prefer tunnels, explains Hester for *Atlas Obscura*. One study even found that male bears tended to use underpasses, while females and cubs stayed on top.

Researchers pinpointed this crossing on I-90 as an important one for animals, especially herds of elk, who move out of the mountains to lower elevation when winter hits.

The idea is to reduce the number of animal and car collisions and encourage animal populations arbitrarily sequestered by the interstate to intermingle again. "Everything from an elk down to a small salamander, they need to move to find food, to find mates, to find new places to live as their populations expand or just when conditions change, like a fire breaks out," Jen Watkins Conservation Northwest I-90 Wildlife Bridges Coalition coordinator tells Manuel Valdes at the [AP](#). The conservation group began working on the project in 2004, and

ultimately established a partnership with WSDOT, the Forest Service, and other organizations to build the animal infrastructure project.

The Washington project isn't the first. Just a couple of weeks ago, [Utah's DOT opened its own overpass](#) near the summit of Parley's Canyon crossing a six-lane stretch of I-80. In Colorado, where 30 wildlife underpasses and two overpasses have been constructed in recent years, recent data shows the pathways have reduced wildlife-related crashes by up to 90 percent in some areas.

In the United States and abroad, adding wildlife infrastructure has broad support. Researchers up north have also found that six wildlife overpasses and 38 underpasses constructed in Canada's Banff National Park over the Trans-Canada Highway 20 years [ago have been incredibly effective at protecting wildlife](#).

Back when the U.S. highway system was first conceptualized, animal migration and crossings weren't taken into consideration. Now, cars kill at least 1 million animals per year by a conservative estimate, Jason Marks at [Sierra](#) reports.

Retrofitting existing highway systems for wildlife corridors is a solution, but an expensive one, since each overpass can cost millions of dollars. But keeping animal populations healthy and connected—and out of the passing lane—might be an investment worth making.

Poachers Are NOT Hunters

The next article is from the Washington Post at www.washingtonpost.com. This is an interesting article on some of the techniques wardens have to resort to keep poachers from the illegal killing of wildlife. Poachers are NOT hunters, and are not hunting, when they kill wildlife or anything or anyone else. Poachers steal resources from everyone for their own personal greed. Hunters value conservation and actively put their labor and their resources forward to protect and defend wildlife and their ecosystems. People who do not respect wildlife and the wilderness cannot be hunters. They may be killers, but without integrity and an intrinsic understanding of conservation and the role that hunting plays in the management of wilderness and wildlife and an appreciation for the rules of the hunt, they will never be hunters.

The careless attributions of the actions of poachers to hunters is the battle for the public perceptions that hunters are forced to contend with from the media and those who profit from preying on the sympathies of the kind-hearted who do not understand that death is a part of conservation. We live in a closed system where everything eventually dies and may serve as a source of energy for something else. All any of us get is a chance. There are no guarantees - of quality or quantity. Always do your best.

Below are some photos of animals. Are they alive or are they robots? You will have to go to the Washington Post website and their animalia blog to find out the answers. Have fun.

These undercover robot animals are helping in the hunt for poachers

By [Karin Brulliard](#)

Watch how law enforcement uses robotic decoys to catch poachers (Humane Society of the United States)

Two men in Maryland recently achieved [Internet infamy](#) when they were temporarily banned from hunting after they'd used crossbows to shoot a deer on state land.

Or so they thought.

The men had actually fallen prey to the ruse of a state-owned robotic deer, one of a growing number of remote-controlled decoys being used by [American wildlife law enforcement](#) to stop poachers. Across the nation, a small



army of deer, elk, bear, turkey, fox and wolf dummies has been deployed to catch people who hunt in the wrong place, in the wrong season or otherwise illegally.

Here's how it works: Officers truck a robo-animal out into the wild and stage it in an area where they've been tipped off about illegal hunting. Then the officers sit out of sight – in a truck, or maybe crouching in bushes – and use a remote to move the animal's head, tail or legs.

Demand for the decoys is huge, said Jim Reed of the Humane Society

{Brian Wolslegel with two of his creations. (Custom Robotic Wildlife)}

Wildlife Land Trust, which donates them to anti-poaching agencies. Game wardens are chronically underfunded, he said, and robo-wildlife is pricey: A deer costs about \$2,000; a black bear, up to \$5,000. Wardens also are busy – the Humane Society says hunters kill at least as many animals [illegally](#) as legally.

The decoys look so alive because, well, they once were, said Brian Wolslegel, owner of the Wisconsin-based Custom Robotic Wildlife. Wolslegel — who does not hunt but instead raises deer in his backyard – makes the dummies out of hides acquired legally from hunters, game wardens or online. (You, too, can purchase a [bear hide](#) at [taxidermy.net](#).)

Each year he sells as many as 100 whitetail deer, by far his most popular item. Officers, he said, tell him they make as much as \$30,000 in fines off each fake animal.

“To have a poacher, a wild animal and a law enforcement officer at the same scene, it's like winning the lottery,” he said. And then if the poacher is caught, “the animal already died in the process.”

Robo-wildlife, it turns out, are pretty hard to kill. If a bullet busts the motor, it's replaceable, Wolslegel said. And most have a Styrofoam core, so a high-powered rifle shot passes through “with minimal damage,” Reed said. In fact, he said, some of the most realistic-looking decoys have been shot 100 times or more.

“The typical deer in the forest is not going to appear well-groomed. It may have a little mud stuck on its back, some hairs ruffled from the wind,” Reed said. The best decoys, he said, “get well-seasoned.”

Think you're more observant than a poacher? Take this quiz to find out if you can tell a robo-animal from a live animal.

Real deer or robo-deer?



Real bear or robo-bear?



Real fox or robo-fox?



Real wolf or robo-wolf?



Real deer or robo-deer?



Real deer or robo-deer?



Real fox or robo-fox

Real fox or robo-fox?



Real sheep or robo-sheep?



Real elk or robo-elk?



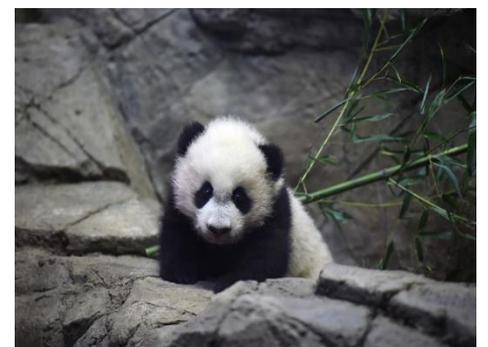
Real deer or robo-deer?



Real wolf or robo-wolf?



Real panda or robo-panda?



Waste Not.....

This item is from the Washington Post at www.washingtonpost.com. Some areas of the country and some states appreciate the value of free-range protein - both for hungry people and from captive or zoo carnivores. Roadkill is generally free of drugs that may cause unwelcome side effects. That is what may make it safe to eat.

California has a lot of hungry people who may enjoy the health benefits of game, or roadkill, meat. Wonder how that would work? Oregon and Washington are doing it.

Roadkill: In a growing number of states, it's what's for dinner



{A wounded deer lies in the road after being hit by a car on the northbound lane of Interstate 295 near Freeport, Maine. (Pat Wellenbach/AP)}

By [Karin Brulliard](#)

Oregon state Sen. Bill Hansell's rural district is the size of Maryland, and it is crisscrossed with hundreds of miles of road splayed with all manner of roadkill. While driving one of those routes a couple of years ago, Hansell spotted a dead deer and had what he called an "aha

moment": Could the carcass feed someone?

"It just struck me, you know: This is such a waste," he said.

Chowing down on roadkill was not legal in Oregon then. But as of Tuesday, it is. With the enactment of a bill sponsored by Hansell and unanimously passed by the legislature, Oregon became the latest of about 20 states that allow people to scoop dead animals off the road and serve them for dinner.

Among them are Washington, which [issued 1,600 roadkill salvaging permits](#) within one year of legalizing the practice in 2016; Pennsylvania, where [more than 5,600 vehicle-deer crashes](#) were reported in 2017; and Georgia, where motorists may take home struck bears. The rules vary by state, though most require timely reporting of the collection to authorities, and most absolve the state of responsibility if the meat turns out to be stomach-turning.

Oregon allows the salvaging of deer and elk and for human consumption only (sorry, Fido). People who pick up a carcass must apply online for a free permit within 24 hours, and they must turn over the animal's head and antlers to the state wildlife agency within five business days. That is for two reasons, Hansell said: Antlers can be sold to collectors, and no one wanted to create a financial incentive for crashing into wild critters; wildlife authorities also want to test head tissue for [chronic wasting disease](#).

Importantly, the roadkill must have been produced by accident. That is, drivers are not allowed to "hunt with their automobiles," Hansell said. Drivers who inadvertently strike a deer or elk but only wound it may "humanely dispatch" the animal with a firearm, then salvage the meat, according to regulations published by [the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife](#).

Oregonians are already taking advantage of this new right. Hansell, citing figures from the fish and wildlife department, said a dozen salvaging permits had been issued by Friday morning. “That’s 12 carcasses that are not strewn alongside of the road, that are being harvested and consumed,” he said. “It’s exciting.”

It also might sound a little, well, gross. But it should not, said Thomas Elpel, a Montana author and wilderness survival instructor whose [how-to video](#) on the practice is posted on YouTube.

“It’s meat. Whether you buy it in a store or pick it up on the side of the road, it’s the same thing. In the stores, it’s packaged with Styrofoam and plastic, which maybe looks pretty but is harmful to the environment,” Elpel said. “It’s a more authentic way to connect with your food supply.”



Oregonians are now allowed to collect only deer or elk struck by vehicles. Montanans can collect dead moose. Georgians can scoop up roadkilled bear. (Jim Cole/AP)

Elpel said he grew up eating roadkill harvested by his grandmother, though it was not explicitly legal when he was a kid. The state [began issuing permits in 2013](#), and Elpel said he salvages carcasses several times a year — often enough that his freezer is full. Students at the wilderness survival school he runs, [Green University](#), are served roadkill in their included meals.

“There’s a tremendous amount of meat out there,” Elpel said. “It’s kind of crazy, when there’s so many families that are struggling to make ends meet and kids that are not getting enough nutrition, and there it is, free on the side of the road.”

Free, yes, but not without labor. In one of his books, Elpel walks readers through his roadkill salvaging method. Among his tips: If it is green and “the smell makes you want to barf,” then pass, he writes. The choicest carcasses have been hit in the head, leaving the body intact, but broken bones and bloodied flesh can be trimmed off. Gutting and butchering are otherwise similar to the process hunters use. Roadkill jerky, he notes, is easy to make.

Elpel said young deer have been the centerpiece of some of his favorite roadkill dinners.

“We have enjoyed fawn on a number of occasions,” he said. “That’s exceptionally tender venison. Can’t go wrong with that.”

Support for the Oregon roadkill bill was strong and came from an unlikely array of groups, Hansell said. Hunters liked it, but so did animal welfare types. Road crews tasked with scraping up rotting animals were pleased by the prospect of a little less work, and nutritionists got behind the idea of free organic protein, Hansell said.

As for Hansell, he has no plan to salvage dead deer. A squeamish stomach prevented him from ever learning to hunt or dress deer, he said, and he is not a big fan of venison. But he said he would not turn down an invitation to a roadkill meal.

“To me, it’s no different from wild with regard to how it ends up on your plate,” Hansell said. “I would have no problem eating it.”

A Long Winter's Nap

The next article is from the International Exotic Animal Sanctuary (IEAS) at

From <http://www.bigcat.org/news/the-truth-about-bears-and-hibernation>. Apparently, many non-polar bears usually don't hibernate during their long winter's nap. They may doze into torpor, but they can be roused if they perceive a need or want a midnight snack. Seems like the bears still have it made.

The Truth About Bears and Hibernation

By Jason Daley

It is a common misconception that bears hibernate during the winter. While bears tend to slow down during the winter, they are not true hibernators. Black bears, Grizzly bears and Brown bears do go into a deep sleep during the winter months, known as torpor.

Hibernation is when animals "sleep" through the winter. During this sleep, the animals will not wake up when they hear a loud noise or even if they are moved or touched. While in torpor, the animal can wake up quickly and easily. During true hibernation, the animal's body temperature drops to match the outside temperature, and their heart rate and rate



of breathing slows down. During the bear's dormant state or torpor, their heart rate is extremely low, but their body temperature is relatively high, and they won't eat or release bodily waste. Animals hibernate as a way to adapt to their surroundings. They have to be able to survive the cold weather. They hibernate to escape the cold and because food is scarce. To get ready for hibernation, animals will eat more than usual during the fall to store up body fat. During hibernation and torpor, they will use up this extra body fat to live off of while not losing any muscle. This allows the animal to come out of hibernation thinner and still as strong as it was before winter. They will get their dens ready for hibernation during the late

fall. The bears of IEAS get ready usually late November depending on when the cold weather hits. The black bears in Bear Orphanage have taken full advantage of the caves we offer, but there are those who still dig a den.

For the bears of IEAS, they react differently during the winter months. All of the bears, grizzlies and blacks, store up during the fall increasing their body fat. The four Grizzly bears will store up during the fall like normal, and once it really cools down (usually late November to mid-December depending on the year) they will den up only to come out during the warmer days. When they do come out, it's only for a short bit, and they are not very active during that time. They are quick to retreat back to their cave.

The black bears slow down and spend most of the time in their dens or caves; however they still snack a little throughout the winter. Dakar and Meyote did become dormant and actually dug their own den during their first winter in Bear Orphanage but have been a little more active during the winter seasons since then. We believe it's due to the other bears residing in BO. Their first year, it was just the two of them. Now there are 8 bears residing with Dakar and Meyote.

After the fires of 2018 have erased what was, and tender green shoots are starting to cover the black lands that burnt, now is the time to plan and prepare for the coming year. Celebrate the new year with optimism, good friends, family and critters. A new world awaits.

~May Your Arrows Always Find Their Mark~

Teri