

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks' Strategy for the Conservation of Wildlife Movement and Migration

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Conservation of wildlife habitat is a core function of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) dating back to 1940 when FWP first pursued conservation of high-value habitats. A critically important role of quality habitat is providing space and security for animals to move across the landscape to utilize seasonally important resources. FWP has been working with private landowners, federal agencies, the Montana Department of Transportation, and other partners to facilitate wildlife movements and conserve important habitats. In 2018 the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) issued Secretarial Order (SO) 3362, which charged DOI agencies to work with 11 eleven western states to conserve winter range and migratory pathways for ungulates and allocated millions in funding. Montana has received more than \$1.5 million and used those dollars to continue collaring ungulates, remove fencing, manage weeds, and conserve important parcels of land. FWP released the first SO 3362 Action Plan in 2018 to prioritize work and in 2020 released a strategy formally defining and prioritizing agency efforts related to big game, carnivore and bird movements, commensurate with long-standing efforts by FWP and our partners. FWP is involved with teams of others working on this issue including the Wildlife and Transportation Steering Committee, the WAFWA Wildlife Movement and Migration Working Group and the Migration Coalition. FWP specifically brings to the table a depth of experience working in collaboration with private landowners and state and federal agencies on habitat conservation and now specifically the conservation of wildlife movement and migration.