



Wyoming Statewide Survey

Methodology

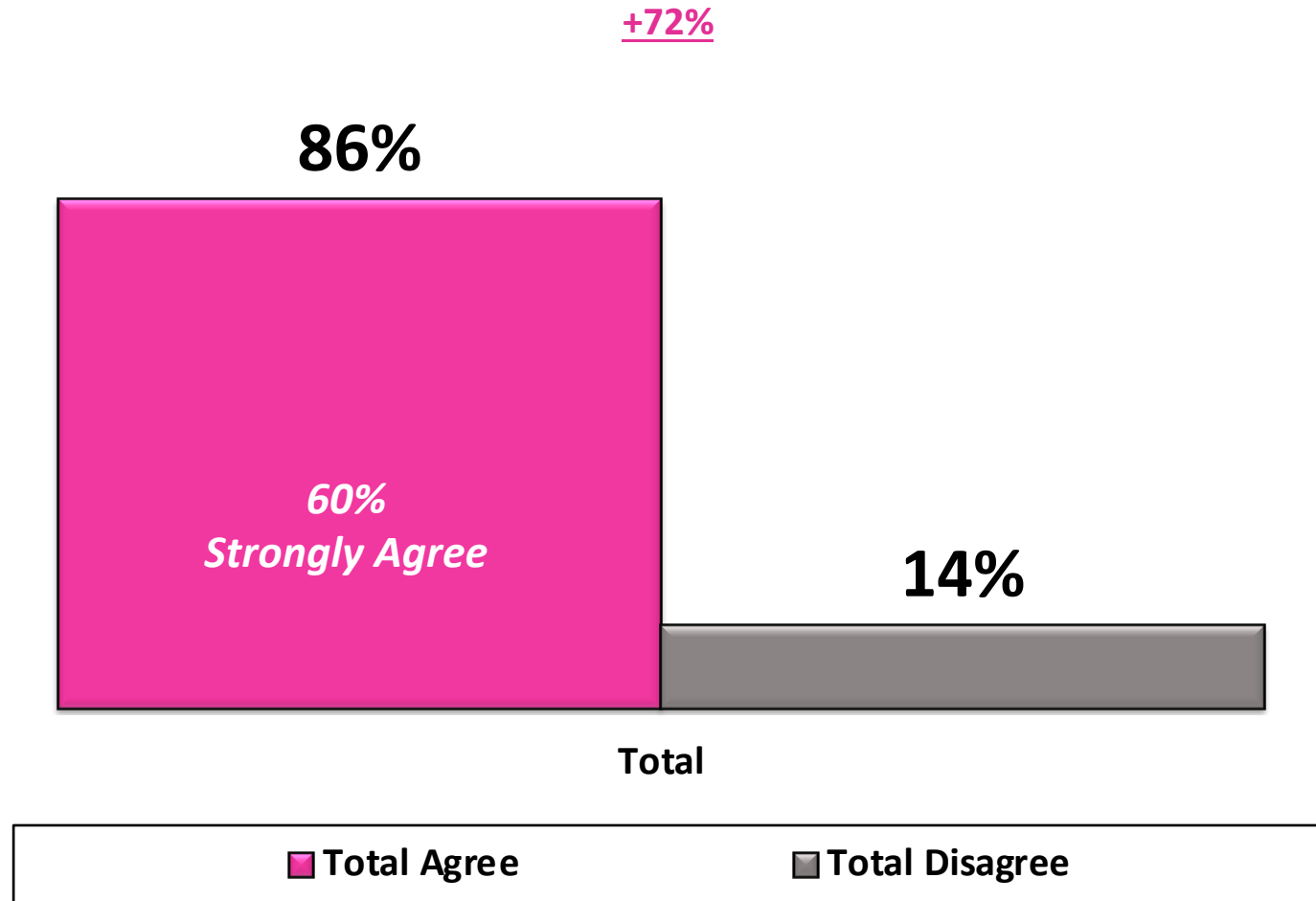
New Bridge Strategy conducted a statewide survey among N=400 registered voters in Wyoming.

Interviews were conducted May 6-9, 2019 and were distributed proportionally throughout the state.

The overall margin of error is +4.9% for the overall sample and will vary for sub-groups.

The survey was preceded by an online focus group of Wyoming residents who describe themselves as living in small towns or rural areas to discuss these issues in greater depth and detail.

Wyoming voters overwhelmingly say that wildlife are an important part of their daily lives.

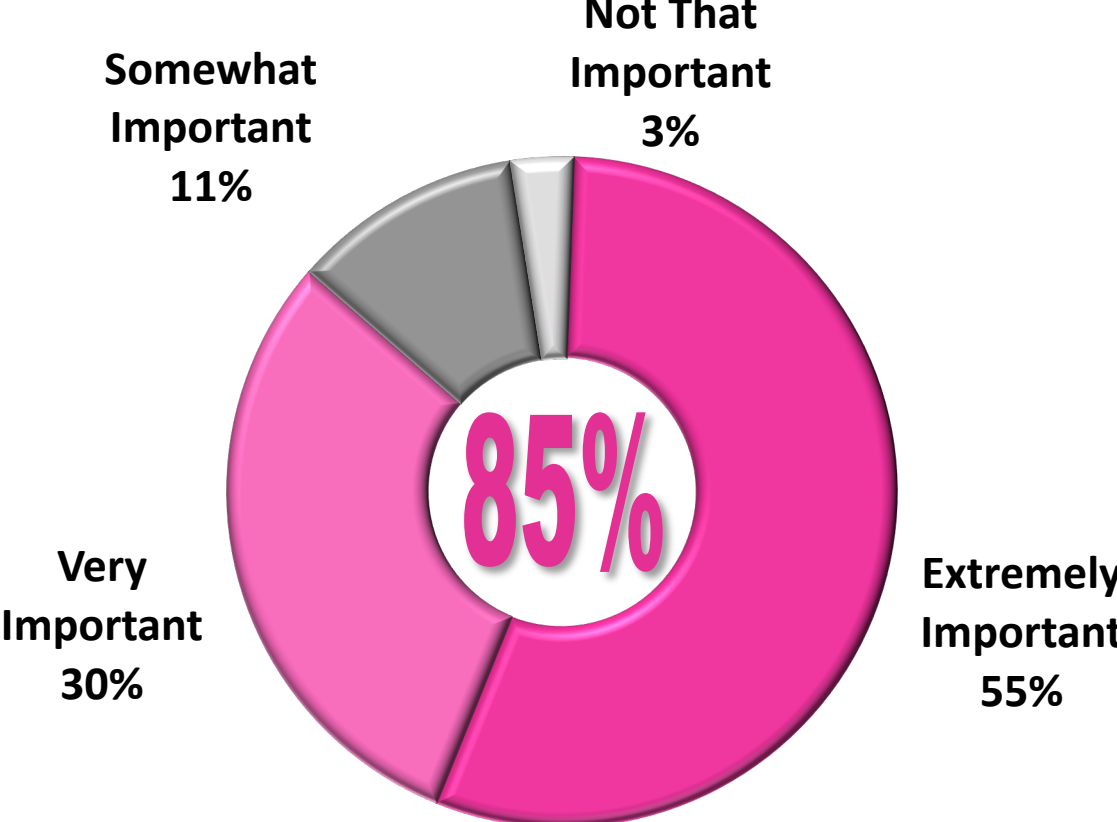
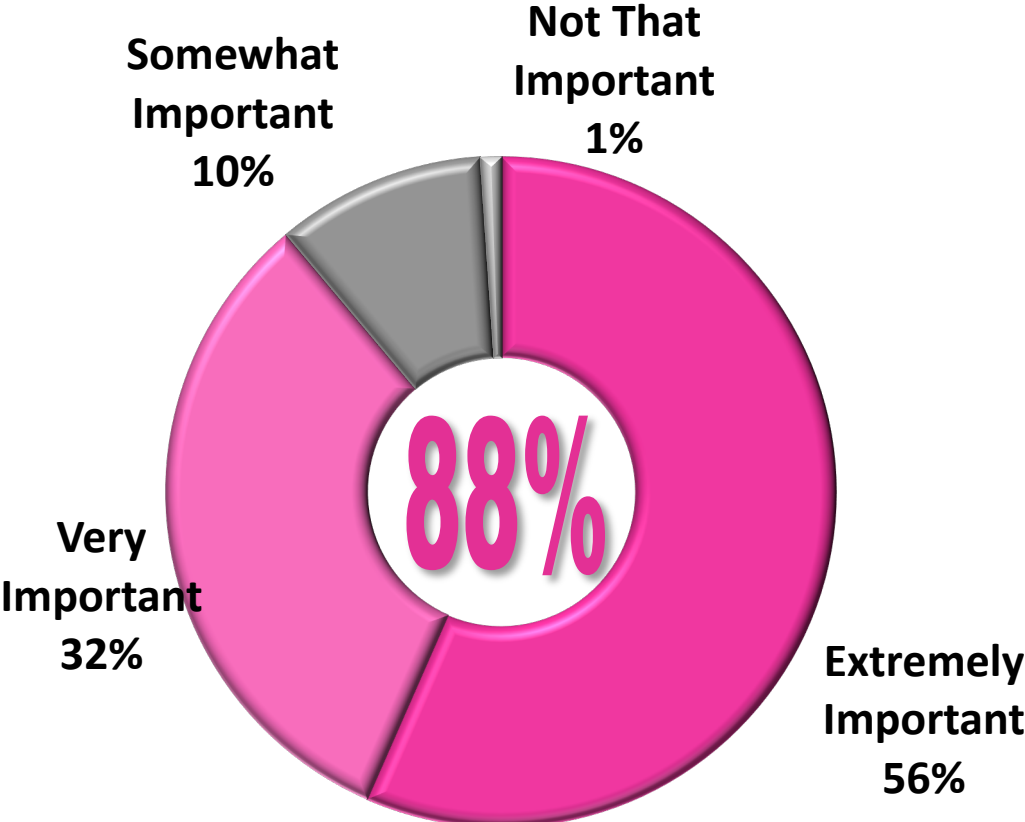


Would you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Wildlife are an important part of my daily life."

Almost everyone says that the presence of wildlife is extremely or very important to the economy and quality of life.

Quality of Life[^]

Economy^{^^}

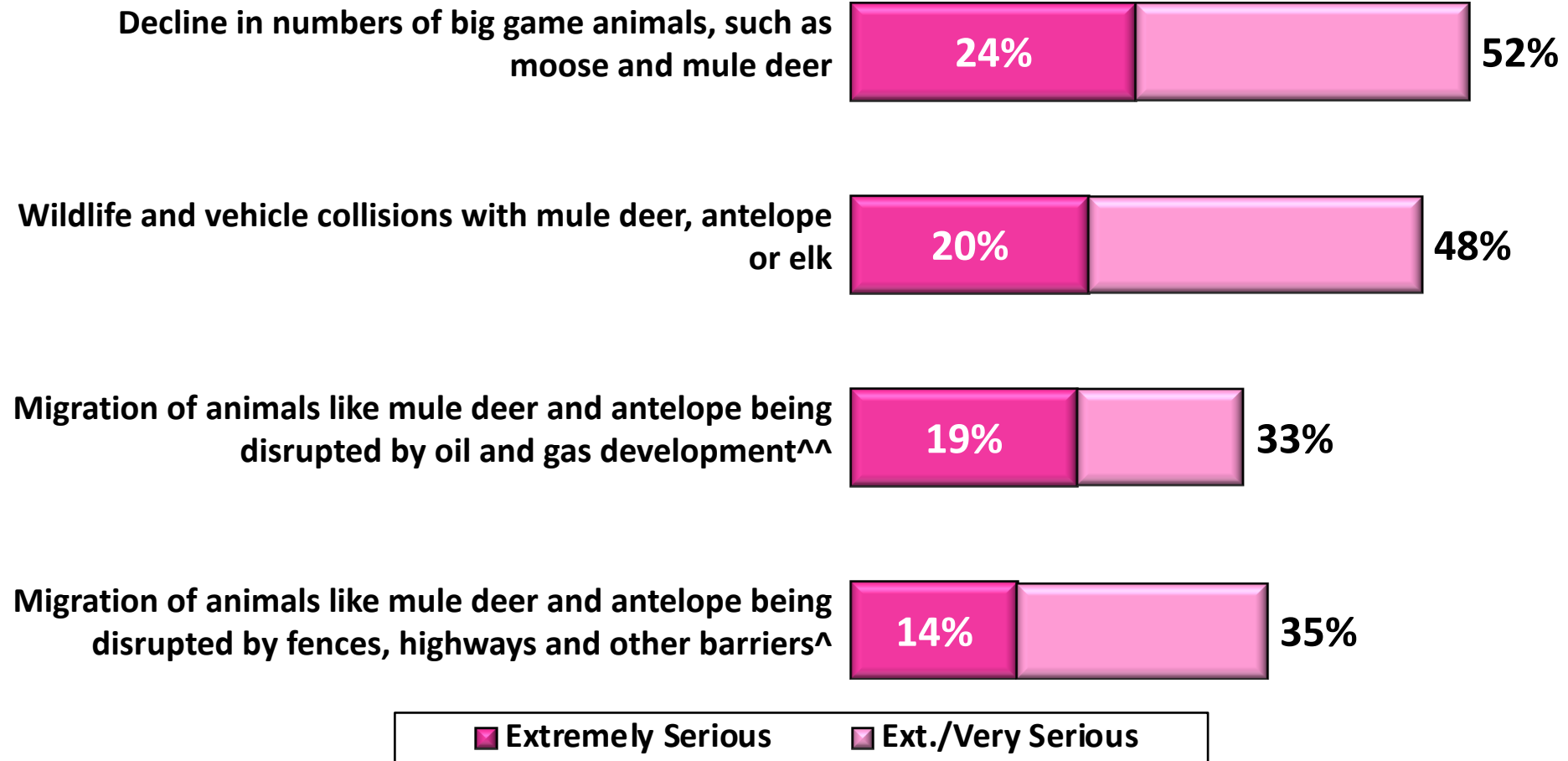


[^]Split Sample A, N=194
^{^^}Split Sample B, N=206

How important would you say the presence of wildlife is to Wyoming's (quality of life)/(economy)?

A majority says the decline in number of big game animals is a very serious problem.

Ranked by Extremely Serious



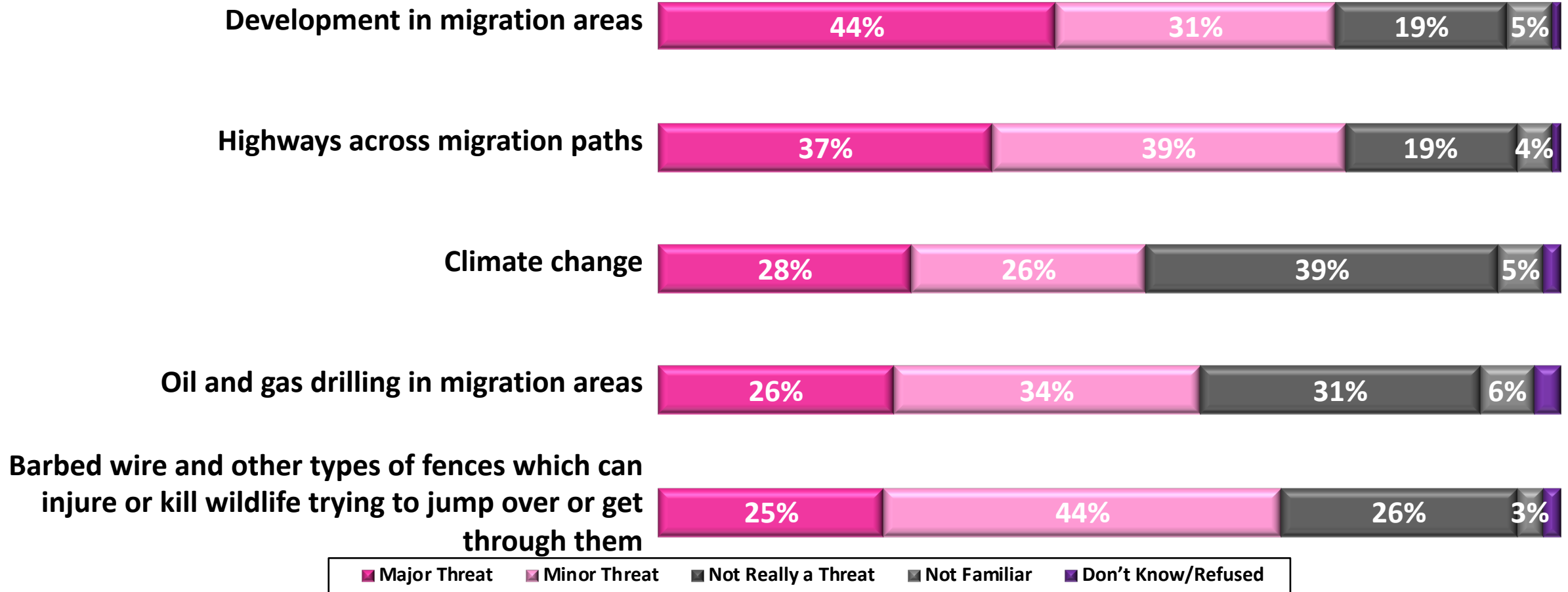
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Next, I'm going to read you a list of potential problems in Wyoming. After I read each one, please tell me if you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a problem in Wyoming.

Large majorities see development as a threat to mule deer migration patterns; Climate change is the most polarizing.

Ranked by % Major Threat



The following items are potential threats to animals like mule deer that migrate each season in Wyoming. For each one, please indicate how serious a threat you believe it is to those animals' ability to migrate. If there is one with which you are not familiar, please just say that and we will move on.

Construction of more over/underpasses is the most popular proposed action. Wildlife friendly fencing is also widely supported.

Actions to Maintain Healthy Populations: Ranked by Total Support

	Total Support	Strongly Support
Constructing more over-or under-passes to allow migrating animals to move across major highways and reduce accidents	86%	64%
Assisting landowners who voluntarily agree to replace unsafe fences in migration corridors with newer fencing that allows wildlife to safely jump over and go under fences while keeping cattle inside	85%	54%
Providing fair market compensation to private land owners like ranchers who voluntarily agree to conserve some of their land in migration corridors as wildlife habitat	82%	46%
Requiring the Wyoming Depart of Transportation to ensure that only wildlife friendly fencing is used when it replaces fences along state highways in areas where animals migrate.	80%	55%

Research has shown that populations of migrating animals, particularly mule deer, are in decline over the last few decades due in part to disruptions in the corridors of land through which they migrate to find higher quality food or forage, and ensure optimal health. Let me ask you about some specific actions which Wyoming is currently undertaking or may undertake in the future in order to maintain healthy populations of migrating animals in the state.

Majorities also support these proposals, but with less intensity.

Actions to Maintain Healthy Populations: Ranked by Total Support

	Total Support	Strongly Support
Requiring horizontal drilling which allows oil and gas to be extracted from an angle so that well pads are not placed as close to the migration corridors given noise and activity can affect animals passing through	74%	38%
Providing modest compensation to ranchers who agree to set aside some grasslands for food for migrating animals, rather than for cattle which sometimes compete with migrating animals for the same grasses	70%	35%
Designating small portions of public lands like in National Forests where wildlife migrate each year as areas which should NOT be open to oil and gas drilling	69%	51%
Placing a limit on drilling in migration paths during the season when animals typically pass through that area in order to ensure noise, vibrations and lights do not disrupt traditional migration areas	66%	36%

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What we did

Respondents were read the following to evaluate the effectiveness of arguments in favor of maintaining healthy populations of migrating animals.

Thinking about some reasons why someone might say the state of Wyoming should do more to maintain healthy populations of migrating animals in the state. For each one of the following statements, please indicate if that is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing or not at all convincing reason why the state should do more.

Voters find reasons connected to financials (whether accidents or tax revenue) to be the most convincing.

Reasons to Maintain Healthy Populations: Ranked by Very Convincing

	Very Convincing	Total Convincing
Well-placed over- or under-passes with game-proof fencing reduces wildlife-vehicle collisions by about 85 percent. After construction of an overpass near Pinedale, vehicle collisions with big game fell from 85 to 16 per year.	68%	93%
Outdoor recreation like wildlife viewing, hunting and fishing is a wonderful part of the Wyoming way of life, but it also benefits our economy. Wildlife-related activities contribute more than one billion dollars to our state economy, provide more than seventy-two million in tax revenue, and support nearly ten thousand jobs, according to a recent University of Wyoming analysis of the state economy. ^{^^}	65%	95%
We have a responsibility to conserve Wyoming wildlife for our children and grandchildren. Unless we take the proven steps that help protect our migrating animals like elk and antelope, our children will not be able to enjoy the presence of wildlife in their lives. [^]	45%	76%
The longest known land animal migration in North America is in Wyoming, the migration of mule deer from the Red Desert to the Hoback Basin. Conserving migration corridors conserves some of what is so unique and special about Wyoming. ^{^^}	35%	84%

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Respondents do not find it convincing that mule deer avoid energy infrastructure that has been in place for years.

Reasons to Maintain Healthy Populations: Ranked by Very Convincing

	Very Convincing	Total Convincing
Some species like mule deer do not adapt quickly to changes, with little to no flexibility in when and where they migrate. Conserving their traditional migration corridors is vital to their health.^	31%	71%
In deer and similar species, migration is a learned behavior, passed from generation to generation. Once a migration path is blocked, some will stop migrating completely, affecting their health when food is less available.^	30%	66%
Studies show that mule deer populations have declined by forty percent in the past twenty years and is believed to be in large part due to problems they now have reaching the best forage, or feeding, locations during migration. ^	30%	60%
Some species like mule deer tend to avoid energy infrastructure even if it has been in place for years, limiting their habitat and sometimes blocking migration paths.^	15%	45%

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Where Migration Policies Encounter Resistance:

- In the online focus group, we tested the idea that once knowledge from a migration corridor is lost in a herd it can take a century or more to learn again. Respondents were extremely skeptical that scientists would know this. They also assume that animals are adaptive and will do everything they can to survive.
- Respondents were also leery of anything that seemed to involve “new funds” which implies tax increases. Few were very willing to pay a new tax or fee to help fund some of the policy proposals. They were also cognizant of other demands on the state budget at this time.



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