

# BE AWARE – GIVE WILDLIFE A BRAKE!



Photo: Courtesy of USFS, Steve Hillebrand

Elk and deer are abundant species in the City of Golden (City), particularly along US Highway 6 (US 6). Their presence along US 6 poses a threat to motorist safety and to the well-being of the animals.

Due to frequent vehicle/animal collisions, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) installed an at-grade wildlife crossing on US 6, between Heritage Road and 19th Street, in late 2010.

CDOT has been collecting wildlife crossing and use data to record wildlife use patterns (species, frequency, and timing of use).

***Last year CDOT recorded over 1,200 westbound crossings of elk in the at-grade crossing during the months of November and December.***

Based on collision data collected by the City between 2007 and 2014, vehicle/wildlife collisions significantly decreased in 2011, the year after the at-grade wildlife crossing was installed. In recent years, the number of collisions has begun to steadily increase.

## Why are there still collisions?

- Warning signs must be reliable to be effective.
- Motorists have become “immune” to the flashing lights, which can be triggered by other movements such as vegetation blowing in the wind.
- Even when triggered by wildlife, motorists may not see the animals, which reinforces the perception that the signs are ineffective.

## Why is this important?

- Vehicle collisions with wildlife have become a major safety concern.
- Effective warning signs can reduce the rate and severity of collisions.





## When do they typically cross?

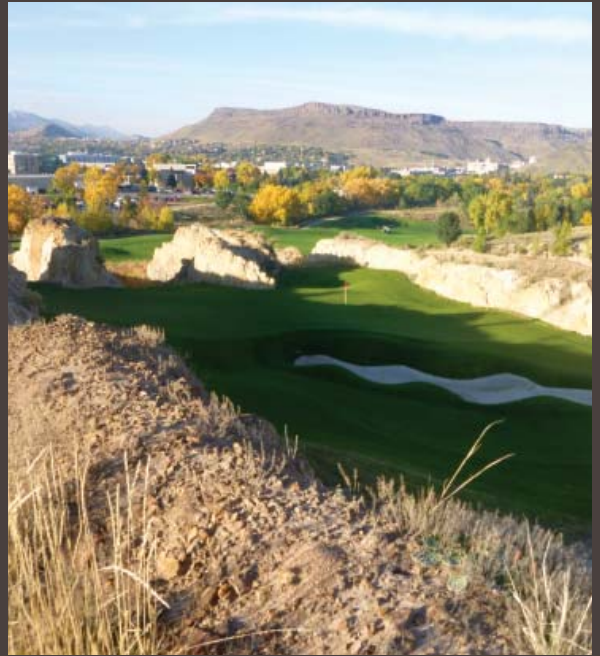
- September to January is the high season for elk and deer crossing the road.
- More than 75 percent of vehicle/wildlife collisions occur between 9 pm and 2 am.

## Why are they crossing here?

Wildlife cross from the west side of US 6 to the east side to access the Fossil Trace Golf Course. Studies have shown that elk are attracted to golf course grasses, which are high in nitrogen content.

## What measures currently exist at the wildlife crossing?

- Wildlife one-way ramps and 8-foot-high fences exist along both sides of US 6 for about 2.5 miles between 19th Street and Heritage Road.
- Infrared sensors are in place, which detect when an animal enters the right-of-way, activating flashing lights on yellow warning signs.
- Subtle lighting has been installed so drivers can see wildlife in the crossing, while not preventing wildlife from using the area.



## What are future improvements at the wildlife crossing?

- Rumble strips will be installed on the wildlife crossing approach as a reminder to slow down.
- Vegetation will be mowed and maintained at the crossing to prevent false positive readings from the infrared detector.

## What can we do as motorists?

- Be aware of the flashing signs – if they're flashing, SLOW DOWN because it means wildlife are in the right-of-way.
- BE AWARE of wildlife along US 6, especially at dawn, dusk, and nighttime hours, when visibility is lower.
- Adhere to posted speed limits.

