

Our Wildlife Heritage

WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY FENCING

Fences have been an important tool in the settling of the American West. Thousands of types of fences have been invented, and millions of miles of fence crisscross the country. Fences helped mark property boundaries and kept cattle, sheep, and horses from wandering the plains. Today, fences keep children playing happily in backyards and prevent dogs from getting struck by cars on the road. It's hard to imagine our neighborhoods, farms, and ranches without fences.

But some fences can harm Wyoming's wildlife. Antelope trying to go through the fence or deer, moose, and elk trying to jump

over the fence can get tangled in the wire and become injured or even die. Fawns and calves have a difficult time getting past them. Fences can alter the route that migrating wildlife take as they move from summer to winter feeding areas, forcing the animals to add many miles to an already difficult and dangerous journey. And fencing can affect where wildlife crosses the road, possibly increasing the number of wildlife and vehicle collisions.



To help improve wildlife habitat, the Game and Fish, along with other conservation organizations, have worked together to identify areas with fencing that could be dangerous to wildlife. These groups have also worked with private landowners to make modifications to their fences to make them passable for wildlife while still meeting the needs of the landowners. Wildlife and livestock-friendly fences are usually built no more than 42 inches tall. They have a smooth bottom wire at least 16 inches off the ground so antelope can scoot under the fence. The wildlife-friendly fence also has 10-12 inches between the top two wires so deer and other animals can jump the fence without catching their hind legs.

In many cases, the fences are modified or replaced at little or no cost to the landowners. Once the fences are fixed, they are monitored with cameras to make sure deer, antelope, or elk can get through or across them. When we all work together, we keep Wyoming a safe and happy place to live for people, livestock, and wildlife!

