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# Jackson Hole News & Guide

Jackson, Wyoming

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One dollar

## ► WEE KAHUNA



With the recent spell of hot, sunny weather, Brett Cole finds a fun way to beat the heat Sunday. On Flat Creek, he and Andrew Rousset approach some mild whitewater known locally as "the Punisher." The small rapid is one of several that are the perfect size for a wet and mostly lazy adventure through town.

PRICE CHAMBERS / NEWS&GUIDE

## Traffic toll on wildlife tallied

Roadkill database shows how many and where wild creatures are killed by motor vehicles.

By Mike Koshmrl

The millions of vehicles that pass through Jackson Hole each year take a breathtaking and now quantifiable toll on wildlife.

The raw numbers are staggering. On average 114 mule deer, 35 elk and 15 moose are struck and killed by motorists each year on Teton County roads.

The numbers come from a database completed in recent weeks by the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation. The survey combines roadkill information from four sources: the organization itself, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Wyoming Department of Transportation and Nature Mapping Jackson Hole. As a result, planners considering overpasses and underpasses in Teton County will soon have a better grasp on where that wildlife-friendly infrastructure ought to go.

"It is the most comprehensive database that exists and has ever existed in this county," said Paul Hood, the wildlife foundation's nature mapping data and GIS coordinator. "We can use it to analyze and find potential hotspots."

The database shows that ungulate species — deer, elk and moose — are hardest hit. Factoring in 23 years of data, from 1990 to 2012, a minimum

See ROADKILL on 22A

## Stopping illegal rentals

Town and county officials say practice cuts into property tax revenues and degrades neighborhoods.

By Ben Graham

Town and county leaders are considering calling on the state to help crack down on homeowners and property management companies who illegally rent to short-term vacationers.

After debating how to control a longtime practice that they say degrades Jackson neighborhoods and cuts into the pool of affordable worker housing at a meeting Monday, Jackson and Teton County officials seemed to find a carrot that might persuade state lawmakers to step in: lost sales taxes.

Mayor Mark Barron suggested getting the Wyoming Department of Revenue involved.

"The state has a bigger stake than the town and the county, it seems," Barron said.

That's because Wyoming's Department of Revenue collects all sales tax generated in the state, takes a large portion of the revenue and then redistributes the rest to the towns and counties where it was collected.

Any lease less than 30 days is against the law for most Jackson Hole residential properties. There are a few exceptions, including condos in the Aspens and Teton Village.

Still, Vacation Rentals by Owner are a widespread practice in restricted areas throughout the county.

For the most part, homeowners are not paying taxes on the transactions.

Jackson's mayor acknowledged that enforcement can be tricky and that state resources could help. But Barron also said stopping illegal short-term rentals should be a higher priority for local government.

See RENTALS on 23A

## Residents give input on new shape of downtown

Sunlight, parking and 4-story buildings are discussed at meetings.

By Ben Graham

In the Jackson of the future, hip new wine bar Bin 22 will be a thing of the past, replaced by a massive mixed-use neighborhood that butts up against Pearl Avenue.

Three-story buildings will line the street along North Cache, leading the way to Town Square.

And a massive new version of the Kudar Motel will be constructed as several different buildings — all attached by walkways.

Well, not exactly.

Those are just a small sample of the ideas suggested by dozens of Jackson Hole residents who took part in seven public meetings over the past three weeks, giving their

takes on the future of downtown Jackson.

"The process was a good starting point," said Mark Obringer, a former town councilor who has been involved with the new land-use plan for years. "It's just the beginning, not the end."

Participants sat in groups to examine "opportunity sites," specific lots that could be redeveloped in the next decade, and discussed what they would like to see there. Design

professionals from the community were on hand to turn public comment into illustrations. Discussion was supposed to focus on outward appearance, but at times the conversation touched on use.

Some people wanted more commercial buildings along South Cache Street. Others scribbled specific plans for the redevelopment of lodging sites.

They specified setbacks, step

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29A Road draws Gov. to town  
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## ROADKILL

Continued from cover

of 2,634 mule deer, 748 elk and 353 moose were stuck by drivers on county roads.

In all, there are 3,838 records that detail the death of everything from pine martens to porcupines to great horned owls smacked by vehicles.

The figures do not include wildlife-vehicle collisions in Grand Teton National Park — officials there elected not to share data with the wildlife foundation.

Hood was still in the process of summarizing and analyzing the vast data on Tuesday and was consequently not ready to share details. Entries, he said, are precise to a tenth of a mile and usually include details such as species, age, sex, road, year, month, day and the source of the information.

In coming months the data will be studied and turned over to county and town officials, said Aly Courtemanch, a Game and Fish biologist and member of the wildlife foundation's board of directors.

### Spurred by people planning

"The original initiative for this was the Jackson/Teton County Comprehensive Plan, which lists reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions as an evaluation criteria for planning in the future," Courtemanch said. "We'll be handing over this data to the county planners."

The database confirms some of the roadkill trends residents have observed informally over the years.

"You'd presume that more wildlife is hit in the winter, and that is the case," Hood said.

By month, December topped the list, with 583 critters left crippled or killed by humans traveling Teton County roads. November was next, followed by January. September was the least deadly month, with just 172 collisions tallied.

The database's origins trace back to 2011, when the wildlife foundation was awarded a \$5,000 grant by the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole. GIS work was contracted last fall to the Teton Science Schools Conservation Research Center.

One of the toughest challenges in creating the database was eliminating duplicate entries, Hood said.

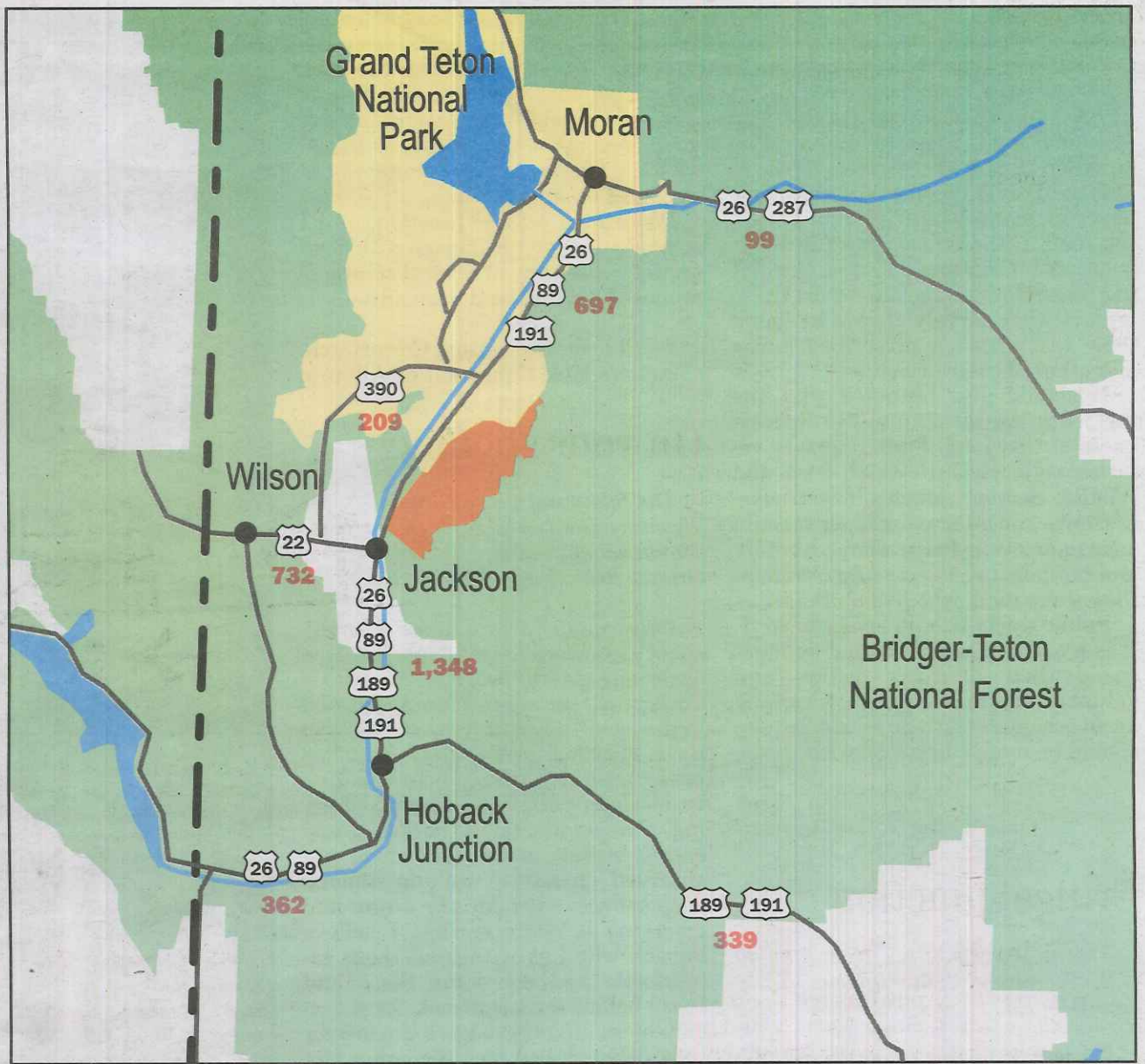
### The small are less noticed

The wildlife foundation, he said, went with WYDOT data in the instance of duplicates, because it tended to be the most reliable source.

The usefulness of the data is limited because of species bias in reporting collisions and also changes in tracking methods over the course of the past two decades, Hood and Courtemanch said.

The number of small wildlife species listed, for instance, is noticeably low.

Just two road-killed skunks, one ruffed grouse and a single snowshoe hare were pulled from the four databases that went into the wild-



KATHRYN HOLLOWAY / NEWS&GUIDE

Work by the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation provides a tool that shows where wild animals are killed by motor vehicles. The highway south of Jackson is the deadliest place.

life foundation's project.

"When you think about it, when you hit a deer, that's usually an issue," Hood said of reporting bias.

In the long run, the database will help planners and other officials track roadkill trends, Courtemanch said. Roadkill documentation has probably increased in recent years, she said, with the emergence of Nature Mapping and increased interest in the issue.

"The idea going forward with this is now we have this baseline data set," she said. "Each year from now on we'll be adding to it ... to determine if roadkill is increasing or decreasing or staying the same."

The database will soon help planners select locations for overpasses and underpasses that will go in as part of five-lane expansion project on 6.1 miles of South Highway 26/89/189/191. With 1,348 colli-

sions, that's the deadliest stretch of road in Teton County, according to the database.

"Data like this helps us make the best scientific decisions," Courtemanch said of the animal crossings.

The roadkill map and database will not be posted online but will be available to the public as "a tool that people can use to ask whatever questions they want to ask about roadkill," Courtemanch said.

"Interested people can submit a request," the wildlife foundation board member said. "If it seems like a reasonable request, we can share all or some of the data with them."

### 1990-2012 dead critter roundup, by species

Species	Count	Species	Count	Species	Count
American marten	4	Elk	748	Northern raccoon	8
American mink	1	Fox	3	Pronghorn	4
Barrows goldeneye	1	Gray wolf	1	Red Fox	5
Bighorn sheep	1	Great horned owl	1	Ruffed grouse	1
Black bear	3	Greater sage grouse	1	Short-tailed weasel	1
Black-billed magpie	1	Moose	353	Skunk	2
Common raven	1	Mountain lion	1	Snowshoe hare	1
Coyote	3	Mule deer	2,634	Western tanager	1
Deer	37	North American porcupine	11	White-tailed deer	9
				<b>Total</b>	<b>3,838</b>

### When the animals die

Month	Total
January	568
February	347
March	323
April	301
May	233
June	284
July	233
August	186
September	172
October	285
November	323
December	583

## DOWNTOWN

Continued from 22A

backs, landscaping and site layouts. And, yes, building heights.

But at this point, it's hard to say what exactly the zoning for downtown, and eventually downtown itself, could look like.

For now, that's the job of planners and Code Studio, an Austin, Texas, consultant.

They will take the jottings collected from the public and turn the raw data into concrete guidelines and illustrations.

The report will be dubbed the "summary document" and should be ready for public review by the end of July, said Alex Norton, long-range planner for the town and county.

The drafting process is beginning now, but that hasn't stopped some from weighing in on what they observed at the public studios and how

they think the new code should be crafted.

Many discussed building heights at the studios. Some residents spoke in favor of taller buildings but wanted third floors built farther back than the second- and first-story building fronts. That allows for more sunlight on the street, they said.

"Do you have a three-story wall, or do you have a two-story with a step back?" Norton asked rhetorically, explaining the thought process of some participants.

Those decisions affect character and specifically sidewalk sunlight,

he said.

"Especially on the east-west streets, if you want it to be pedestrian-friendly, you can't create the canyon," Norton said.

*"Especially on the east-west streets, if you want it to be pedestrian-friendly, you can't create the canyon."*

— Alex Norton  
TOWN AND COUNTY'S LONG-RANGE PLANNER

"Those seem to be the conversations I had on a daily basis. Most people who talked about it as something that needed to be addressed."

Save Historic Jackson Hole Executive Director Armond Acri said he heard similar things.

"That is a concern in our cold climate," Acri said. "If we don't get some sun down there, it gets cold and icy."

But the consequences of the added density were his concern.

"You can hide the story from the street, but you can't hide the impacts," Acri said. "You still have to park what's up there."

Parking was a major theme he took away from the public studio sessions.

In general, Acri said, he doesn't want to see development up to lot lines and is concerned that the community won't be able to add density and find a place for vehicles.

"Parking is one of the limiting factors for a lot of this, especially when you look at those 50-by-150 [foot] lots around town," he said. "It's problematic to [create parking for] those."

The tendency of some people at the meetings was to try to get around the parking conundrum, he said.

"But it leads to a second concern

See **PARKING** on 23A



JONATHAN CROSBY / NEWS&GUIDE PHOTOS

Avian Research Technician Lauren Smith puts a metal band with a unique identifying number on the leg of a robin at Teton Science Schools' "Feathered Friday" event in Kelly. Teton Science Schools has been banding birds for research since 1991 and offers the public a chance to watch.

# Feathered Friday

People watch researchers capture, measure and weigh songbirds in Kelly.

By Jennifer Dorsey

The robin was not pleased, and it let everyone know.

Caught in a mist net hung near the Teton Science Schools' Kelly Campus, it kept up a steady stream of squawks as Jenny McCabe carefully untangled it and tucked it in a cloth bag.

"You're a screamer," McCabe said.

The robin eventually was set free, but not before being brought back to a group of tables where, like other birds snagged that morning around the Ditch Creek riparian corridor, it was measured, weighed and checked for age, condition, sex and breeding indicators. Birds that didn't already have an ID band on their legs were fitted with them.

A small group got to watch all this during the season's first "Feathered Friday," a program that brings observers out to the Kelly Campus to watch the bird-banding process. These mornings combine science, education and entertainment, plus breakfast, and six more



Teton Science Schools bird banding team members Sarah Johnson (red jacket) and Keegan Tranquillo (blue vest) examine and catalog a recently caught bird. Sue Rocheleau, visiting from Green Bay, Wis., looks on.

are scheduled this summer (see box).

The Science Schools' Conservation Research Center has been banding and tracking birds since 1991, feeding data to the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship program and the U.S. Geologic Survey. What's happening with birds from year to year is an excellent gauge of ecosystem health and an indicator of when conservation measures are required. The Kelly Campus is one of five monitoring sites in the valley, and at each the research is spaced out over intervals so as not to bother birds too much during breeding season.

For visitors, Feathered Friday starts at 7 a.m. Crew leader McCabe and her team start at about 5:40 a.m., when 10 nets are put up. The nets are checked every half hour to 45 minutes and taken down after six hours.

Science Schools teams have seen 90 species since the monitoring program began. The types seen Friday included black-headed grosbeak, yellow warbler,

flycatchers prefer conifer forests, while willows and dusky like willows and aspens, respectively.

"We have all those habitats here," McCabe said.

McCabe made the determination by measuring two specific primary feathers to see if they were the same length.

"P4 and P109 match up," she said. "That tell us it's a dusky flycatcher."

Throughout the process the bird's well-being is paramount. In texture the nets are comparable to hairnets. Baby birds are taken back to where they were caught to ensure reunion with parents. Bags containing birds are never placed on the ground where they could be stepped on. And the researchers employ a banding grip that involves nestling a bird belly up in the palm of the hand, with the head gently held between the second and third fingers. Holding the bird this way lets the biologists do their job quickly and prevents the bird from hurting or exhausting itself through wild flapping.

"The banding part is pretty easy once you get the hang of handling the birds," field biologist Keegan Tranquillo said.

With each bird a researcher blew on the tummy to check for a brood patch — a bare spot that females and, in some species, males develop to transfer body heat to eggs in the nest — or cloacal protuberance, where males store sperm.

Only the pros do the handling and banding, but after the work is done they will place a bird in a Feathered Friday participant's cupped hands, where it often rests for a second before flying off. Some birds will be caught again, perhaps in a week or maybe years from now. About 30 percent of the birds researchers net are already wearing bands.

McCabe said there's been a yellow warbler with a band from 2007 and a sapsucker with one that was 10 years old. With the project now 20-plus years old, the team is seeing that kind of longevity.

"That's kind of the cool thing about banding," McCabe said.

Oregon junco, McGilvray's warbler, dusky flycatcher, warbling vireo, red-naped sapsucker and northern flicker.

Being able to look at feathers, beaks and wings from just a few inches away takes bird-watching to a new level, one that deepens appreciation of birds. The thousands of miles flown twice a year on migration seem even more impressive when you see how tiny the birds are. One yellow warbler that was weighed — a process that involves gently stuffing the bird headfirst into a tube that's then placed on a scale — was just 10.4 grams, or as someone said, about as heavy as two pencils.

"It's a thrill to be so close to them," said Scott Ferguson, the Science Schools' new executive director, who was part of the Feathered Friday group.

Getting close helps the researchers, too. A flycatcher caught in a net that morning could have been one of three species found in the valley: Hammond's, willow or dusky. Hammond's

## Come watch bird banding

If you're interested in watching bird banding at Teton Science Schools, six more Feathered Fridays are scheduled: this Friday, July 12, 19 and 26 and Aug. 2 and 9.

Each will be held from 7 to about 10:30 a.m. at the Science Schools campus in Kelly.

The cost is \$30 for adults and \$20 for children.

To register, visit [TetonScience.org](http://TetonScience.org) or call 733-1313.