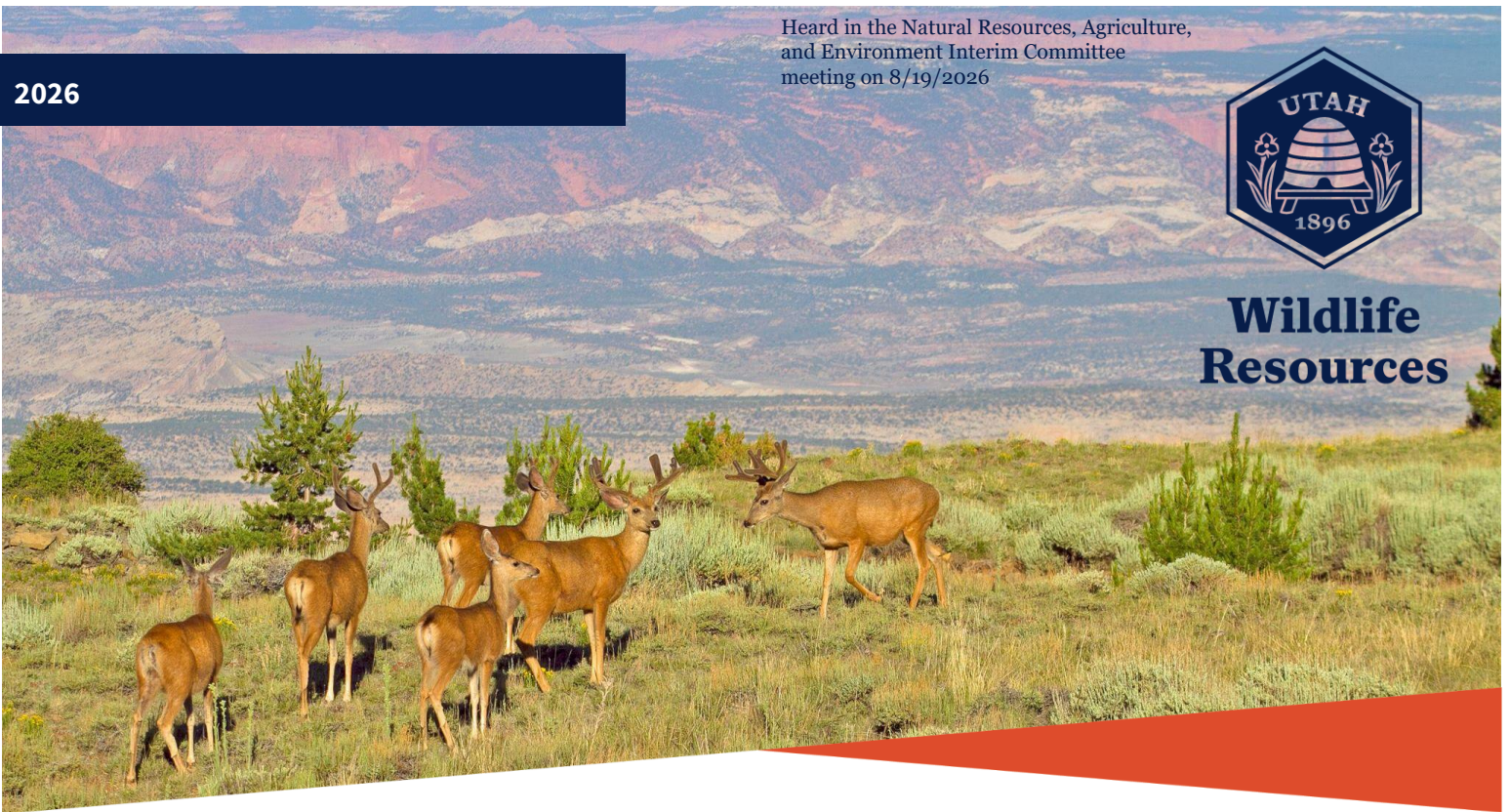




Wildlife Resources



Impacts of data centers on wildlife

As the state of Utah grows, its residents are increasingly concerned about the effects of development — including data centers — on wildlife, prompting questions about the role of the Division of Wildlife Resources. This fact sheet explains the DWR's regulatory authority, examines the potential effects of development on wildlife and highlights the available tools and programs designed to help reduce impacts.

What is the DWR's regulatory authority?

The DWR serves the people of Utah as trustee and guardian of the state's protected wildlife, but the agency does **not** oversee or regulate development. Nonetheless, the DWR actively works with regulatory entities and developers, offering recommendations to help those organizations voluntarily reduce the effects of development on wildlife. As of May 2026, utility-scale solar and wind projects are also required to consult with the DWR.



What impacts can data centers have on wildlife?

The effects of data centers and other large-scale projects on wildlife can vary, depending on the project's size and location. Potential impacts can include:

- **Wildlife mortality:** Project construction can, unfortunately, lead to wildlife injuries and fatalities. Smaller, less-mobile animals and nesting birds face the highest risks from construction machinery. Additionally, traffic from construction and the facility's day-to-day operations may increase the frequency of wildlife-vehicle collisions.
- **Habitat loss:** During construction, wildlife habitat may be altered or removed for buildings, roads, transmission lines and other infrastructure. When habitat is converted to infrastructure, animals are sometimes displaced from areas crucial to their survival, such as winter ranges. Security fencing may prevent larger animals from accessing any remaining habitat within a facility.
- **Habitat fragmentation:** Habitat can be fragmented by development, which can block wildlife movement and migration corridors, cutting off animals' access to forage, water, shelter and mating opportunities. Additionally, data centers may be placed near energy infrastructure, resulting in cumulative effects on the surrounding environment.
- **Habitat degradation:** Habitats adjacent to development may be degraded by sound pollution, light pollution, increased temperatures, disturbance and invasive species, reducing the ability of these areas to support existing wildlife populations. For example, data centers produce a constant 80 decibel sound that could impact an animal's ability to communicate or detect predators.

The DWR's Impact Analysis Program

The DWR has a team of five biologists and one coordinator who are dedicated to evaluating the potential impacts of proposed projects, including data centers. Working with developers and regulatory agencies, this team provides recommendations to help organizations voluntarily avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts on wildlife. The team has shared recommendations for projects across many sectors: renewable energy, oil and gas, mining, inland ports, roads, transmission lines, and commercial and residential construction.

Wildlife Habitat Analysis Tool

Developed by the DWR, the Wildlife Habitat Analysis Tool assists agencies and developers in screening project locations for potential wildlife impacts. Once a project boundary is entered, the tool generates a report that identifies vulnerable or important species and habitats located within and near the project site. To learn more about this useful tool, please scan the QR code.

