



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Elk Refuge

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REFUGE ROAD WINTER TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS BEGIN DECEMBER 1

In conjunction with Bridger–Teton National Forest winter travel restrictions, a portion of the National Elk Refuge Road will be closed to public travel from Thursday, December 1 through Monday, April 30 to protect wintering wildlife. The closure, which begins approximately 3½ miles northeast of the Refuge’s entrance on Broadway Street in Jackson, includes both Curtis Canyon and Flat Creek roads.

Elk and bison hunters with National Elk Refuge permits will be allowed to drive through the closure to access hunt parking lots during the days their permits are valid. Hunters must drive directly to the designated lots to park and stay within the specified boundaries while hunting. The elk season concludes at dusk on Sunday, December 11, 2010, with the bison season running through Sunday, January 8, 2012. No public travel beyond the closure will be allowed after the hunting seasons conclude.

Refuge Manager Steve Kallin reminds visitors and residents using the open portion of the Refuge Road that travel is confined to the roadway only. All off–road travel is prohibited, including walking, skiing, or other recreational activities. Dogs are also limited to the roadway and must be leashed at all times. This limits disturbance to wintering animals during a time when energy conservation is key to their survival.

The Refuge Road is a popular destination in the winter as elk, bighorn sheep, and other animals can frequently be seen close to the roadway, providing both wildlife viewing and photography opportunities. However, travelers on the roadway frequently stop, park, or leave vehicles unattended while observing wildlife, which obstructs the safe movement and passing of other vehicles. In addition to recreational traffic, the Refuge Road is used by large vehicles including delivery trucks, service vehicles, plows, and refuge equipment. “We encourage people to take advantage of the rich wildlife on the Refuge during the winter months, but it has to be done in a safe manner that won’t result in an accident or injuries,” said Refuge Manager Steve Kallin. “We have growing concerns with the number of people that stop in the road.” Refuge personnel have seen an increase in the number of vehicles driving or sliding off the road and getting stuck in the snow, often as a result of drivers having to unexpectedly brake or maneuver around other vehicles. To allow for safer wildlife viewing experiences, Refuge staff has increased the number of roadside turnouts. Vehicles are encouraged to pull off the roadway and safely park in order to extend photography and wildlife viewing experiences.

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www.fws.gov/nationalelkrefuge