**Does Wildfire Kill Wildlife?**

*Prepared by NIFC External Affairs*

The short answer is “yes, at times.”

The more nuanced answer is, “But not as often as most people think.”

Researcher Pat Kennedy, working with NIFC’s Joint Fire Science Program, conducted a synthesis of existing studies on the question. The entire document can be found at <http://www.firescience.gov/projects/07-S-10/project/07-S-10_07_s_10_fire_effects_wildlife_dry_forests.pdf>

Some conclusions from Kennedy’s work:

* “While some animals invariably are killed by the flaming front, observations made in the vicinity of advancing fire fronts across many ecosystems and continents present a different picture. **Large, mobile mammals such as ungulates and adult birds are capable of moving quickly to unburned (refuges) through fire breaks to relatively safe, unburned ground …”**
* “There are also reports of many smaller, less mobile organisms (e.g., small reptiles and frogs) seeking out and surviving in burrows and crevices.”
* “In addition, demographic estimates associated with fire rarely separate direct mortality from indirect mortality (i.e., mortality due to habitat modification …); so it is not clear whether wildfire per se is a serious cause of mortality in wildlife. **But current information suggests fire in general has little direct effect on most wildlife species.”**