



ROAD ECOLOGY IN AFRICA – ENSURING OUR ROADS ARE WILDLIFE FRIENDLY

Start

The mortality of wildlife due to collision with vehicles in Africa is the fifth greatest threat to carnivores. However, little attention has been given to this threat, and this is of significant concern in South Africa as we are the third most biologically diverse country on Earth. As a result the Endangered Wildlife Trust's Wildlife and Transport Programme (EWT-WTP) hosted two extremely successful and innovative road ecology workshops.

Linear infrastructure, such as roads, railways and utility easements, dissects all continents and influences biodiversity and ecosystem processes for many hundreds and even thousands of kilometers. Combined with vehicles, their effects on wildlife are often negative and profound. In the past two decades, research on the effects of roads and traffic and the use and effectiveness of mitigation works, for example fencing and wildlife crossing structures, has increased dramatically in Europe, North America and Australia. However, the uptake of road ecology in Africa has been slower and it is not a routine part of road construction or management.

“The first workshop was hosted by the EWT at the International Wildlife Management Congress in Durban, and the second at their headquarters in Modderfontein, Johannesburg. The purpose of the two workshops was to explore the impacts of roads and traffic on wildlife and showcase innovative and practical solutions,” commented Claire Patterson-Abrolat, Manager of the EWT-WTP. “We were extremely lucky to have two world-renowned road ecologists providing expertise at both of our workshops: Dr Rodney van der Ree from the Australian Research Centre for Urban Ecology from the University of Melbourne, and Dr Daniel J. Smith, from the University of Central Florida. Both workshops were extremely well attended with wildlife representatives from across the world as well as delegates from our national roads agencies.”

These workshops took participants through the concept of Road Ecology and some excellent case study presentations were made which outlined some of the findings of various research projects, and the mitigation measures available for use. Wendy Collinson of the EWT's Roadkill Research and Mitigation Project shared her findings of roadkill surveys conducted over the last year in the Greater Mapungubwe Area in the northern Limpopo. Driving 100km daily across 120 days, she detected more than 1100 roadkills comprising 166 different species. As a result of the two workshops, the EWT-WTP will be collaborating with road agencies as well as other interested parties to develop an Action Plan that guides efforts to address the concerns.

For further information about the Wildlife and Transport Programme please contact Claire Patterson-Abrolat on clairep@ewt.org.za. The Roadkill Research and Mitigation Project is a project initiated by the EWT, Rhodes University and Tshwane University of Technology with funding from

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The Endangered Wildlife Trust is a non-profit, public benefit organisation dedicated to conserving species and ecosystems in southern Africa to the benefit of all people.

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The Endangered Wildlife Trust is US 501(c)(3) compliant under **US IRS Registration number:** EMP98-0586801.



Bridgestone SA. E O & Son, De Beers Consolidated Mines, Rhodes University and Mopane Bush Lodge.

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