



MONITORING AND MEASURING INFRASTRUCTURE'S IMPACTS ON BIODIVERSITY THIS NATIONAL TRANSPORT MONTH

1st October 2014

Start

October is Transport Month in South Africa, with an emphasis on the safety of all road users – this includes the safety of family, friends, and our wildlife. As part of this campaign, the Endangered Wildlife Trust's Wildlife and Roads Project (EWT-WRP) will be conducting a roadkill survey in Pilanesberg National Park, in North West Province, to monitor the impact of roads and traffic on wildlife and biodiversity.

Roadkill data collected during these surveys will assist the park with identifying roadkill 'hotspots' within the park. Once we have identified these, then we will be able to decide on possible solutions to reduce wildlife road mortalities.

The EWT encourages motorists to become citizen scientists by contributing to roadkill research. The project's home page is <http://www.ewt.org.za/WTP/wtp.html> and a smartphone app can be downloaded from the page which assists motorists to submit geo- tagged photographs of any roadkill they encounter.

"Roadkill research is not only important from an ecological standpoint, but also contributes to road safety, because crashes with large wild animals can be fatal to vehicle occupants too." said Wendy Collinson, EWT's Wildlife and Roads Project Executant.

Various forms of transport have all been reported to impact negatively on wildlife and continue to be a threat to biodiversity. Direct collision is the most evident impact due to its visual nature, but the disruption of ecological processes is equally important. Vehicle emissions contribute to air pollution, and rainwater run-off tends to pick up petrol, motor oil, and other pollutants resulting in water pollution. Unfortunately these pollutants all impact wildlife populations indirectly.

Local and international evidence suggests that roadkill is a real threat to the survival of a variety of species. "In our preliminary survey in May in Pilanesberg National Park, I found 23 dead animals on the road, over a nine-day period, including terrapins, snakes and rodents" added Collinson.

The EWT's Wildlife and Roads Project is a recent recipient of a major international award. The Infra Eco Network Europe's 2014 Personal Award was presented to Wendy Collinson in recognition of her achievements for promoting awareness of wildlife road mortalities in South Africa.

For the third year running, the EWT's Wildlife and Roads Project was also a finalist in South Africa's annual Eco-Logic Awards, and awarded a Certificate of Merit in the 'Transport Category Award', for its efforts to reduce the environmental impact of transport.

The EWT's Wildlife and Roads Project is supported by Bridgestone SA and Arrow Bulk Logistics, with logistical support from Mopane Bush Lodge. For further information please contact Wendy Collinson on wendyc@ewt.org.za

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