



24 November 2017

The Endangered Wildlife Trust launches Brake for Wildlife campaign

Start

As South Africans prepare to take to the roads over the holiday period, the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) is asking road users to join in a campaign to address the impact of transport infrastructure on wildlife.

December sees the start of Brake for Wildlife, the EWT's nationwide survey of roadkill sightings on South African roads. The EWT is inviting road users to add their sightings to help find out crucial information about the status of our wildlife. The EWT wants to know about travellers' routes, and what they see along the way. Road users can take part as many times as they like during the month, and a passenger should preferably record the sightings to ensure safety at all times.

Wendy Collinson, EWT Wildlife and Roads Project Executant says: "While roadkill may not be the most pleasant subject matter, your support will help us to protect our wildlife. If we know more about where particular species are being killed on our roads, we can put plans in place to lessen this impact. While we invite you to join us in our Brake for Wildlife campaign, we would also ask that you don't put your own lives at risk in an attempt to provide information; always consider your safety and please do not use your phone while driving. Of course, the best option would be for everyone to drive responsibly, and we encourage all road users to be vigilant, thus helping to keep wildlife and people safe on the roads."

To ensure your safety over the holiday period as well as the safety of our wildlife, here are some tips to help you stay safe on the roads:

- Take special care near animal crossing warning signs or signs warning of the absence of fences. The signs are there for a reason.
- Minimise your distractions from passengers, food, and accessories like cell phones. If your full attention is on the road, you'll be more likely to spot approaching animals with your peripheral vision.
- Get in the habit of scanning the roadside as you drive and be especially watchful in areas near thick bush and water.

- If you see one animal, expect that there are others nearby.
- Nocturnal species are the most vulnerable to being hit on roads. Drive a little slower at night and if you see an animal in the road ahead, dim your lights and hoot. Car headlights blind animals so that they don't always move away.
- Drive within the speed limit to increase your own and the animal's reaction times. Slow down if you know there's a possibility of wildlife coming onto the road.
- Always wear safety belts.
- Slowing down a little gives you and the animal more time to react – be especially cautious at night.
- If the animal is in your path, brake firmly but do not swerve to avoid it. Sound your horn in a series of short bursts to frighten it away. Provided you can slow down with control, steer around the animal but stay on the road if possible. Watch out for oncoming traffic.
- If a collision seems inevitable, don't swerve to avoid the animal; your risk of injury may be greater if you do. Maintain control of the vehicle. Report the accident to the police and your insurance company.
- If you hit and injure a wild animal, call the nearest wildlife rehabilitation centre or vet. Be careful of handling potentially dangerous animals yourself.
- Don't throw food scraps or other rubbish out of your car since it attracts wildlife and increases the risk of roadkill.
- The following numbers are also useful to have on hand in case of an emergency while on the road:
 - Bakwena N1N4 toll helpdesk: 0800 225 9362
 - N3TC helpdesk: 0800 63 4357
 - TRAC N4 helpdesk: 0800 87 2264 or 082 881 4444

Roadkill data can be emailed to roads@ewt.org.za or submitted via EWT's Road Watch app. Visit the iTunes or Play store to download this app. Further details can be found on the EWT website: www.ewt.org.za

When reporting roadkill, the following information should be provided:

- Location of roadkill (GPS coordinates);
- Identification of species (as best as possible);
- Date and time it was seen; and,
- Notes on the habitat type at the particular section of the route where the roadkill was located (e.g. riverine, grassland, rocky, wetland, etc.) would also be useful.

Good identification photos (particularly if the carcass is very squashed) require a little bit of attention. Only stop and take a photo if it is safe to do so, then try and record the following:

- Birds: Tail and wing feathers; beak and feet (if the whole bird is no longer there); and eye.
- Reptiles: Scales; head shape; foot shape (if applicable).
- Amphibians: foot shape (webbed); presence of warts; colouration around head and eye.
- Mammals: fur/hair colour; body size; teeth type (carnivore or herbivore).

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Contacts

Wendy Collinson
Wildlife and Roads Project Executant
Endangered Wildlife Trust
wendyc@ewt.org.za

Belinda Glenn
Marketing and Communications Manager
Endangered Wildlife Trust
Tel: +27 87 021 0398
belindag@ewt.org.za