



THE EWT LAUNCHES CITIZEN SCIENCE ROADWATCH DATA APP

11th December 2013

Start

The Endangered Wildlife Trust's Wildlife and Transport Programme (EWT-WTP) needs your help recording roadkill data this festive season and has launched the Roadwatch South Africa app to make your participation in their Roadkill Research and Mitigation Project easier. To take part simply type this link into the Safari browser on your Android platform phone: <http://www.prismsw.com/roadwatch/android/RoadWatchSouthAfrica.apk>

The app will be available on the Apple platform shortly. If, during your travels, you spot any roadkill on our roads please record your sighting via the app and the EWT-WTP will use the data you share in their work to reduce the impacts of transport infrastructure on our wildlife.

Thousands of collisions occur annually between vehicles and wildlife or domestic livestock. If animals are hit they can cause extensive damage to vehicles and / or serious or fatal injury. This has negative consequences for both people as well as South Africa's wildlife. Species most at risk are nocturnal species such as Civet and Bat-eared Foxes as they are less visible to drivers; owls which hunt mice feeding on or next the road; slow moving species such as tortoises and chameleons; snakes sunning themselves on the roads; and those that are blinded by headlights such as hares and many antelope.

In addition to the many thousands of animals killed on our roads every year, many South African road users are injured or killed as a result of collisions with wildlife each year and almost R1.4 billion worth of damage to vehicles is reported from these incidents.

Data submitted by volunteers has already enabled us to identify some areas of concern and initiate projects aimed at reducing the incidence of roadkill in those areas. Citizen science data enables us to cover a much wider geographical range and work towards ensuring the environmental sustainability of the country's transport infrastructure.

Dawn, dusk and early evening, are the times you are most likely to encounter animals on the road. An alert driver can do much to prevent collisions with wildlife by following these simple guidelines:

- Take special care near animal crossing warning signs or signs warning of the absence of fences. The signs are there for a reason.
- Minimize your distractions from passengers, food, music, 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.

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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.

NPO Number: 015-502, **PBO number:** 930 001 777, **Member of IUCN** - The International Union for Conservation of Nature
The Endangered Wildlife Trust is US 501(c)(3) compliant under **US IRS Registration number:** EMP98-0586801.



- Get into the habit of scanning the roadside as you drive and be especially watchful in areas near woods, tall grass and water.
- If you see one animal, expect that there may be 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 can 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 all accidents to the police and your insurance company.
- If you hit and injure a wild animal, call the nearest wildlife rehabilitation centre, SPCA or veterinarian. 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.

If you do encounter a dead animal on the road, please assist us by recording the data. Citizen volunteers have already been active through several forums such as social media, like the EWT's Facebook, our roadkill research LinkedIn site and the EWT's blog. Please continue participating via these media as any and all data is important.

We wish you a restful and safe festive season as you travel our roads this holiday.

The WTP is supported by Bridgestone SA, N3 Toll Concession and Arrow Bulk Logistics. For further information about the Wildlife & Transport Programme, or if you would like to become involved, please contact Claire Patterson-Abrolat clairep@ewt.org.za or Wendy Collinson wendyc@ewt.org.za.

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