



Final segment of SR-76 widening project to begin

Media Contacts

Mark Dinger

Caltrans Public Affairs, 916-657-5060

Dana Michaels

CDFW Communications, 916-322-2420

Caltrans and the Department of Fish and Wildlife Urge Motorists to Be Alert During Watch Out for Wildlife Week

Caltrans and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) remind motorists to remain alert for wildlife near roadways during Watch Out for Wildlife Week (WOW), which runs September 15-21.

“It’s important that motorists, when driving through areas frequented by deer, elk and other animals, be alert to protect themselves as well as California’s wildlife,” said Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty.

Defenders of Wildlife (Defenders), a national nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting native species and their natural communities, reports more than 200 people are killed nationally in collisions with deer, elk and other large mammals each year with an estimated 1.5 million animals hit annually.

The Watch Out for Wildlife campaign is supported by Caltrans, CDFW, Defenders and the Road Ecology Center at the University of California, Davis.

“It’s a shame that many animals and people are injured and killed on our roads every year,” said Craig Stowers, CDFW’s Game Program Manager. “Many injuries, deaths and costly vehicle repairs can be avoided if drivers would pay more attention when animals are most active, and be prepared to react safely if an animal moves onto the road.”

Caltrans, CDFW and Defenders offer a few tips for motorists:

- Be particularly alert when driving



A bobcat that just crossed safely under State Route 76 in San Diego County.

Image courtesy of Caltrans

in areas frequented by wildlife and give yourself more time to react safely by reducing your speed.

- Pay particular attention when driving during morning and evening, as wildlife are most active during these times.
- If you see an animal cross the road, know that another may be following.
- Don’t litter. The odors may entice animals to venture near roadways.

Here are a few examples of what Caltrans, CDFW and their partners are doing to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions:

Liberty Canyon Wildlife Crossing, Los Angeles County

Caltrans has applied for \$2 million in federal funding for the environmental and engineering design phases of a future

wildlife crossing over U.S. Highway 101 at Liberty Canyon Road in Agoura Hills. In the interim, Caltrans is providing wildlife fencing in Liberty Canyon to prevent wildlife mortalities along the freeway until a permanent structure can be built. The highway presents an impassible barrier for wildlife migrating into or out of the Santa Monica Mountains. A new wildlife crossing promises to provide an improved habitat connection that will sustain and improve the genetic diversity of wildlife in the area.

State Route 76, San Diego County

Five wildlife crossings and directional fencing were installed as part of the SR-76 Melrose to Mission Highway Improvement Project in 2012. A wildlife movement study, including road kill surveys, camera station surveys and tracking transect

**Coyotes safely cross under SR 76 in San Diego County.**

Image courtesy of Caltrans

surveys, is underway to determine the effectiveness of the crossings and fencing. A review of the data collected to date suggests the combination of directional fencing and wildlife crossings may be limiting vehicle-wildlife collisions and allowing for wildlife movement across SR-76. Medium-to-large species using the wildlife crossings include the badger, bobcat, coyote, raccoon, striped skunk, desert cottontail and opossum.

State Route 17, Santa Cruz

Caltrans has built wildlife undercrossings to accommodate wildlife on several highways in the Bay Area and is currently working with the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County to build a new wildlife undercrossing at the Laurel Curve on State Route 17. Since 2007, motorists have hit 14 mountain lions along this section of the highway in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The Land Trust is working to raise \$5 million to purchase land on either side of the Laurel Curve, which would make it possible for Caltrans to proceed with building the undercrossing.

Central Coast

Caltrans is seeking \$1.8 million in federal funding to finance wildlife corridor projects in Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties where local wildlife exists in close proximity to state highways. If the request is approved, Caltrans will obtain an additional \$2.5 million in state funding to finance all aspects of the projects. Caltrans assembled an extensive list of stakeholders and partners for this proposal, including the California State Coastal Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy, UC Davis, the Elkhorn Slough Foundation, the Pinnacles National Monument and the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County.

Caltrans has installed new wildlife fencing and electric mats at unfenced intersections along U.S. Highway 101 near San Luis Obispo, which bisects a major wildlife corridor in the Los Padres National Forest.