



# NEWS RELEASE

**Date:** September 12, 2013  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **CALTRANS AND PARTNERS HIGHLIGHT SAFETY FOR PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE DURING “WATCH OUT FOR WILDLIFE WEEK”**

SACRAMENTO – Caltrans and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) remind motorists to remain alert while driving to improve safety for travelers and wildlife alike during “Watch Out for Wildlife (WOW) Week,” September 16-22.

“It’s important that motorists, when driving through areas frequented by deer, elk and other animals, do all they can to protect themselves as well as some of California’s greatest natural resources – our wildlife,” said Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty.

The California Highway Patrol reported more than 1,800 wildlife-vehicle collisions in 2010. Approximately \$1 billion in property damage is also caused by these incidents. The Defenders of Wildlife (DOW), a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting native animals and plants, reports more than 200 people are killed in collisions with deer, elk, and other wildlife each year with an estimated 1.5 million animals hit annually.

The WOW campaign is supported by Caltrans, CDFW, and the Road Ecology Center at the University of California, Davis. Caltrans and its partners work together to protect natural resources while providing safe and effective transportation.

"It’s a shame so many animals are injured and killed on our roads every year," said Craig Stowers, CDFW's Deer Program Coordinator. "And it’s not a pleasant experience for the drivers who hit them, either. Many deaths, injuries, and costly vehicle repairs could be avoided if drivers would just pay more attention, be aware of when animals are most active and be prepared to react safely if an animal moves onto the road."

Caltrans and CDFW offer a few tips for motorists:

- Be particularly alert when driving in wildlife areas.
- If you see an animal cross the road, know that another may be following.
- Don’t litter. It could entice animals to venture onto the road.

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Examples of what Caltrans, in cooperation with our partners, is doing to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions:

## **U.S. Highway 101, San Luis Obispo County**

U.S. Highway 101 near San Luis Obispo bisects a major wildlife corridor in the Los Padres National Forest. Caltrans installed electric mats at unfenced intersections to prevent animals from entering the roadway and ramps to allow wildlife to escape from the highway, if necessary. In recognition of this effort, the California Transportation Foundation gave Caltrans its 2013 Safety Project of the Year Award.

## **State Route 76, San Diego County**

State Route 76 serves the North County inland areas of San Diego County. Five wildlife crossings and fencing were installed as part of the SR-76 Melrose to Mission Highway Improvement Project in 2012. A wildlife movement study is now underway to determine the effectiveness of the crossings and fencing. Data gathered from the survey will help improve wildlife fencing and crossing effectiveness.

## **State Route 89, Sierra County**

This month, Caltrans will begin Phase II of the Kyburz Wildlife Crossing Project on State Route 89 in Sierra County. Fencing and other barriers will be erected to prevent wildlife from accessing the highway and encourage use of the undercrossing. In addition, monitoring cameras will be installed to evaluate the effectiveness of the fencing and barriers.

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