



## Volunteer as a Desert Roadie!

The Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection and The Wildlands Network need volunteers to search for evidence of wildlife crossings on Interstate 10, between Tucson and Benson. By collecting information about where and when wildlife attempt to cross I-10, we will be able to work toward solutions to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and improve wildlife safe passage across I-10. The data Desert Roadies collect will help make the case to 1) modify existing culverts to be better wildlife crossing structures, 2) install wildlife fencing to funnel animals to safe crossing points, and 3) provide pre-solution data to track and compare future success.

### **What do Desert Roadies do?**

Desert Roadies work in teams of 2-4 people conducting a driving survey to record evidence of wildlife crossings. You might witness an animal crossing the road, but more likely you'll find roadkill. For safety reasons, volunteers will not be stopping the vehicle to take photographs or ID animals. Desert Roadies drive together in one vehicle along both westbound and eastbound lanes between Exits 83 (Sonoita/Patagonia exit) and Exit 90 (Sierra Vista/Kartchner Caverns exit). The survey route is approximately 40 miles roundtrip. Volunteer roles include driving the carpool vehicle, recording locations on a GPS unit (provided), notetaking, and observing/searching for evidence. Drivers need a valid driver's license but no other prior experience is necessary. Basic knowledge of local wildlife species is helpful. We invite people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to participate!

### **Survey methods:**

Desert Roadie drivers should try to maintain a safe speed between 55-75 miles per hour, following all traffic laws. The note taker is in charge of the datasheet and the GPS unit, and marks and saves locations as they are called out by observers. Observers should look to the right and left ahead of the vehicle for roadkill or live animals and keep track of passing milepost markers. For each observation, record the waypoint number and nearest milepost number. Identify the animal to species if possible, or generally such as small/medium/large mammal, reptile, snake, raptor, etc. Be as specific as you can. If you observe more than one individual of the same species in the same location, note how many were observed. If you feel you missed something, it is fine to turn around at the next exit and survey a section again as your time allows. Only record a roadkill observation once: if you see the same one during the next survey do not record it again. At the end of the survey, be sure to review the data sheet for completeness and add your survey time and mileage. *Remember:* Recording surveys with no observations is important data too. Your datasheet should still be submitted even if you found no evidence of wildlife.

### **Survey schedule and timing:**

Surveys should be conducted in the morning, starting 30 minutes before sunrise (6:00am). Surveys are conducted once per week during our spring and monsoon survey periods (see survey dates below), except when conditions are bad for surveying or driving such as rain, fog, dust storm, or other low visibility weather. There are two target days offered per week (Wednesday or Saturday) to give teams the flexibility to choose survey dates according to their schedules or to accommodate weather.

*2019 Monsoon survey days:*

July 3 or 6

July 10 or 13

July 17 or 20

July 24 or 27

July 31 or August 3

August 7 or 10

August 14 or 17

August 21 or 24

August 28 or 31

September 4 or 7

September 11 or 14

September 18 or 21

September 25 or 28

**How do I sign up?**

Contact Sarah Whelan at (520) 388-9925 or email [sarah.whelan@sonorandesert.org](mailto:sarah.whelan@sonorandesert.org). We ask that all volunteers attend one mandatory training session before conducting surveys to assure the highest safety for our volunteers and the highest quality data collection.