



Fish and Wildlife Connectivity on the California State Highway System





Reminders

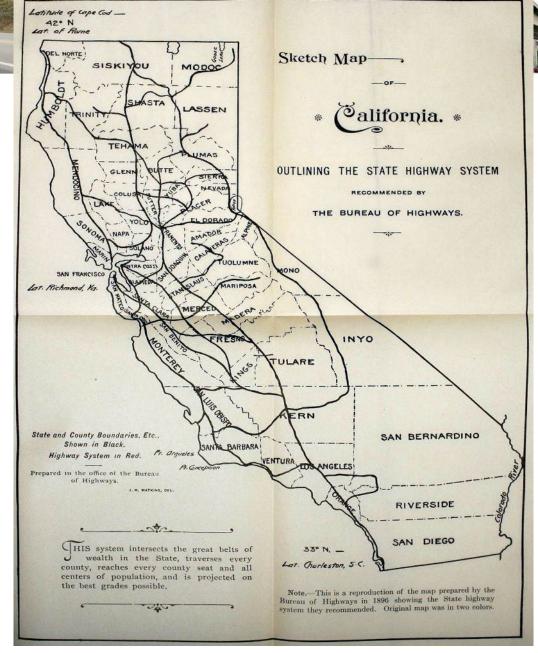
- Webinar is being recorded
- All attendees automatically muted upon entry
- Chat box deactivated for duration of meeting
- Opportunity to comment/ask questions during facilitated Q&A session
 - Participation inactive until Q&A session begins. Instructions will be displayed onscreen
 - Type questions/comments into Q&A box





Bureau of Highways

- In 1895 CA Legislature created the Bureau of Highways, in part due to pressure from the League of American Wheelman (bicyclists).
- Bureau of Highways recommended a system of 28 state routes, which closely correspond to our current system.







- Roads built for horses, carriages and footpaths.



- San Francisco held an auto show and transportation in CA was forever changed.

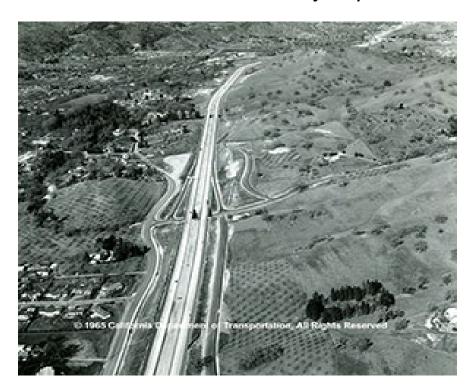






Legacy Fish and Wildlife Barriers

1970 - NEPA signed into law and CEQA was enacted. Majority of SHS was constructed **pre – 1966**.







1970 - First High Occupancy Vehicle lanes opened



State Highway System

- ~ **15,181 miles** of State Highway
 - Longest Route Hwy 101, El Camino Real/Redwood Highway – 807 miles
 - Highest Summit Route 20 Tioga Pass 9,945 ft
- ~9% of roads in CA State Highway System
 - 78% County and City roads
 - 13% Private

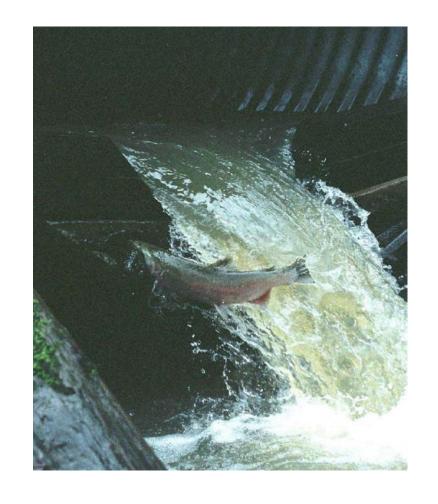






Streets & Highways Code, Section 156 (SB 857, 2006)

- Prohibits actions that extend the service life of a road/stream barrier to salmon or steelhead.
- Projects may not create new barriers.
- Report annual progress to Legislature;
 - Assessment of road/stream crossings,
 - Prioritize barriers to species for recovery,
 - Active projects in delivery,
 - Funding for current/planned projects, and
 - Completed remediations.







Streets & Highways Code, Section 158 Barriers to Wildlife Movement (AB 2344, 2022)

- Projects may not create new barriers.
- Requires partnerships with California Department of Fish and Wildlife, other state, federal, local partners, and the public.
- Report biennial progress to Legislature:
 - Assessments of barriers to wildlife.
 - Prioritize barriers for species recovery and animal/vehicle hot spots,
 - Funding for current and planned projects, and
 - Completed remediation locations.







Wildlife Connectivity Program Report – July 2024

- SHC 158.1 (c), required Caltrans to publish a list of funded transportation projects that are being developed to remediate barriers to wildlife connectivity.
- The inventory of Active (funded), Planned (prefunding), and Priority barrier locations (unfunded) are identified in the report.



Caltrans Wildlife Connectivity Program Report



Photo: Highway 17, Laurel Curve (District 5)

California Department of Transportation

Headquarters Division of Environmental Analysis

Office of Fish and Wildlife Connectivity

July 1, 2024





Streets & Highways Code, Section 158 (cont.)

- **July 1, 2025** Update wildlife connectivity design guidance (Highway Design Manual).
- July 1, 2028 The department shall submit a report to the relevant policy committees and the budget committees of the Legislature, in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code, on the implementation of this article.
- Develop Wildlife Passage Advisory Committee (WildPAC) Partnerships with CDFW and other state, federal, and local partners to share science and data, prioritize barriers, funding and delivery support.







Fish Passage Advisory Committees

Over **200** FishPAC members, to include **18** state, federal, and local partner agencies:

- D1 North Coast (2003)
- D2 Klamath-Cascades (2007)
- D4 Bay Area (2016)
- D5 Central Coast (2017)
- D7, D11, D12 Southern Steelhead (2017)
- D3, D6, D10 Central Valley (2018)
- Interagency Engineering Working Group (2015)
- Leadership Action Team (Jan 2020)
- Science and Innovation Team (Oct 2020)









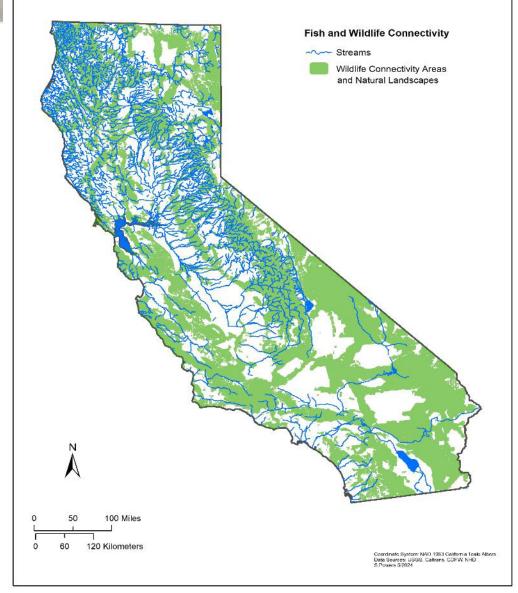






Landscape Analysis for Fish and Wildlife Movement

- Natural landscape features include mountain draws, creeks, desert washes and other features that provide wildlife movement opportunities across suitable habitat areas.
- Watersheds including rivers, streams, and riparian areas are protected corridors between green landscapes, allowing movement pathways for fishes, other aquatic species, and terrestrial wildlife.





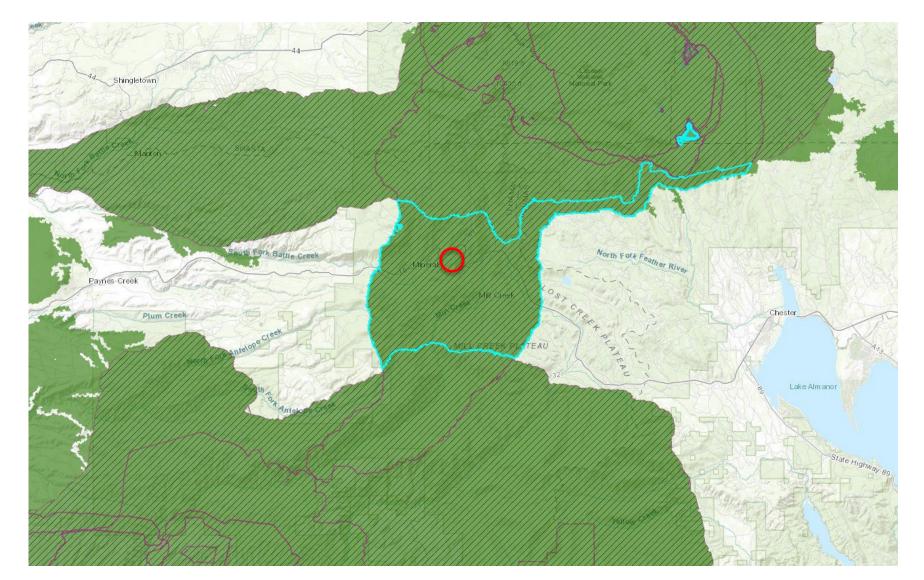


Using remote sensing to identify habitat connectivity opportunities

























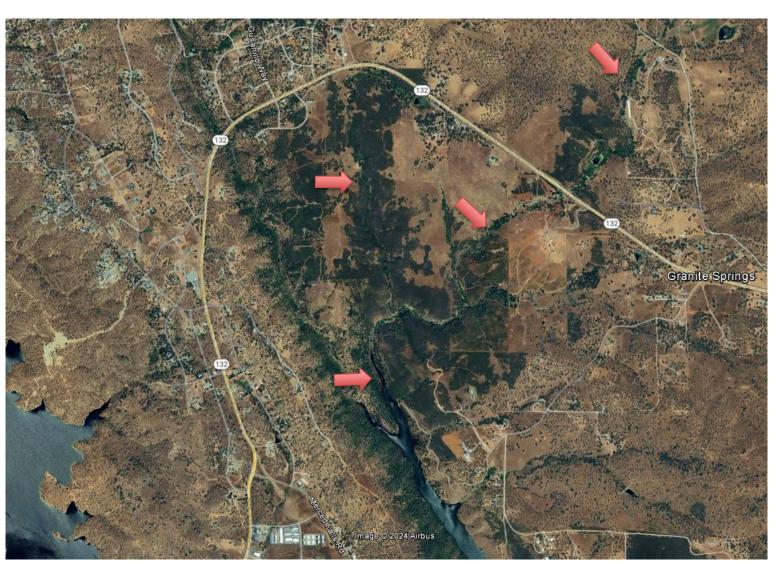




Location: Mariposa 132, Piney Creek

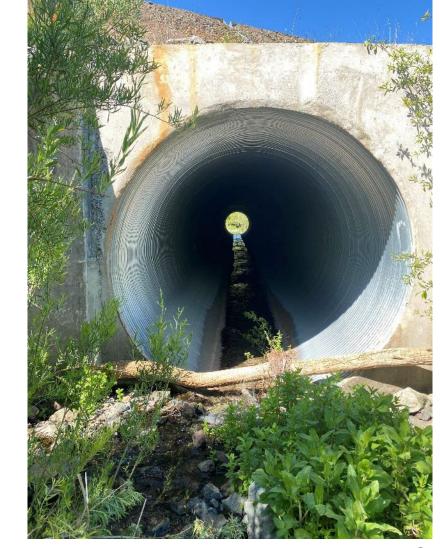
Species: Foothill yellow-legged frog, western pond turtle, American badger, black bear, bobcat, coyote, mule deer, mountain lion







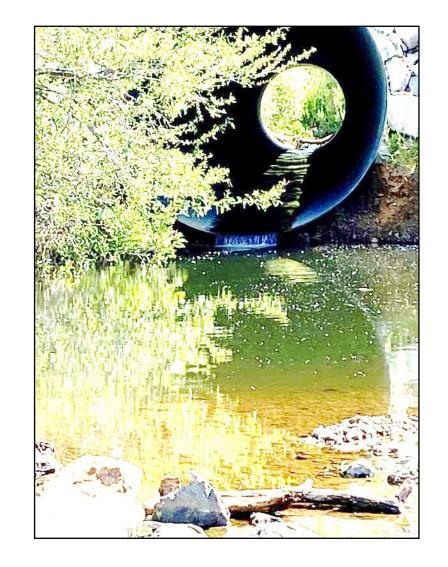




















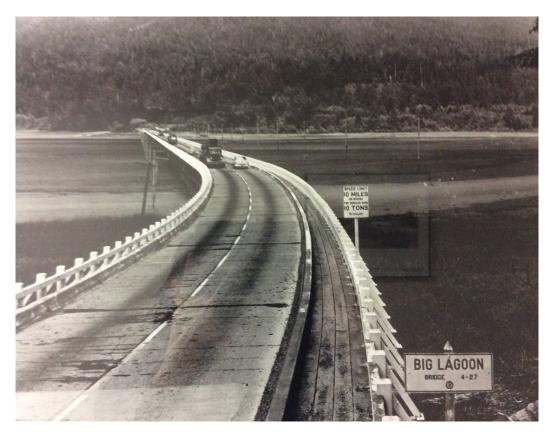


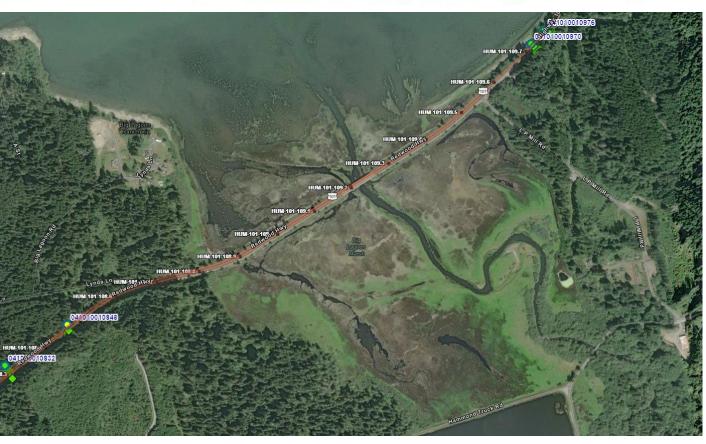












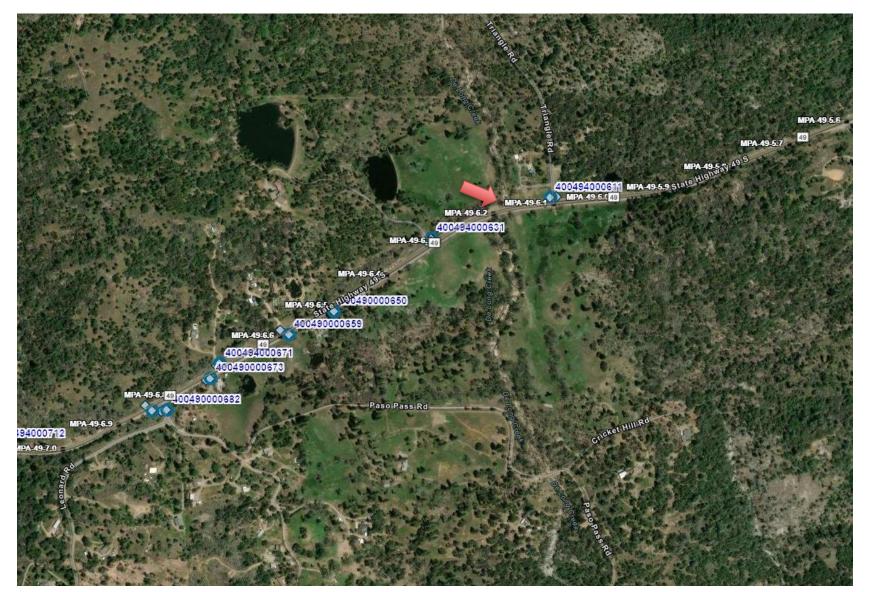


















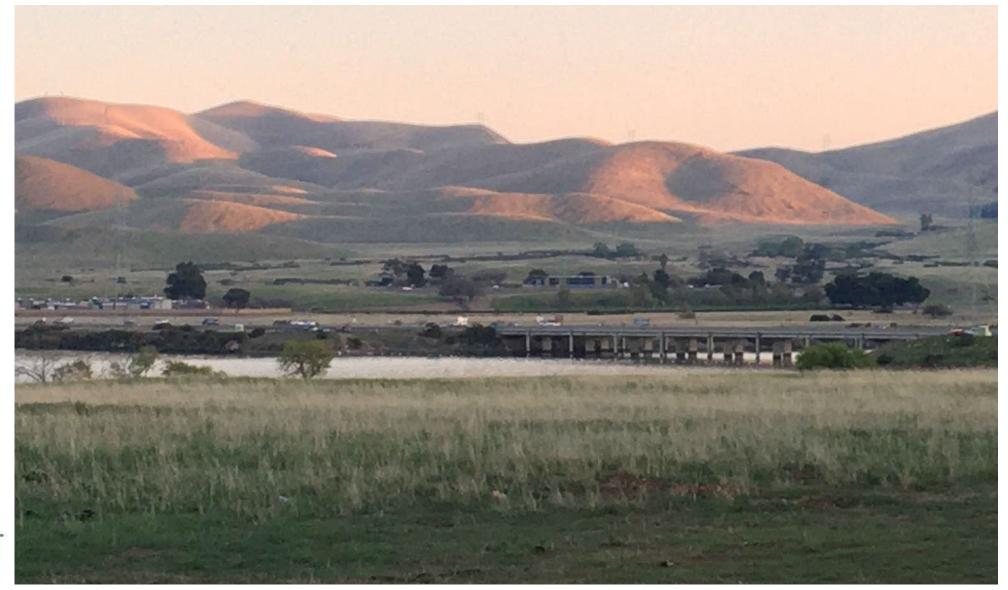


Location: Mariposa 49, De Long Creek



Species: Fisher - S. Sierra Nevada, Foothill yellow-legged frog, Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, CA tiger salamander, Yosemite toad, Northwestern pond turtle, Badger, Black Bear, Bobcat, Coyote, Deer, Mountain lion









Wildlife Connectivity Barrier Science and Data

- Remote sensing
- Camera studies
- Collar tracking data
- Threatened and endangered species occurrence
- Animal vehicle hot spots
- Corridor studies
- Identified facility deficiencies







Small Bodied Wildlife





California has over **180 Threatened and Endangered** species (state and federal). The majority are small bodied terrestrial species and amphibians.



Wildlife Camera Studies Demonstrate Refusal and Use













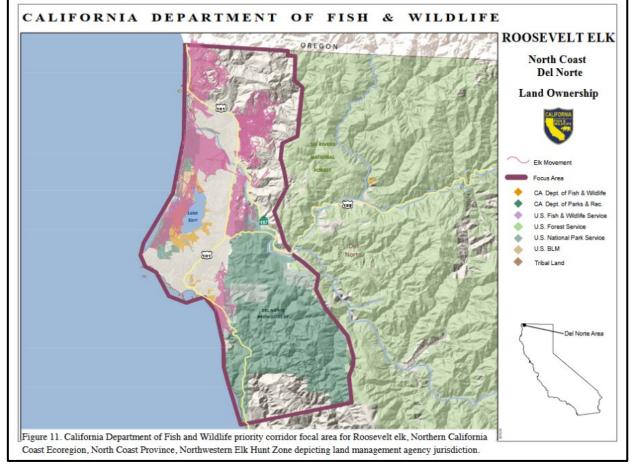
GPS Collar Data – Roosevelt Elk

CDFW and Redwood National Park

Collar data demonstrates Hwy 101 elk barrier











Hot Spot Analysis -Identifying areas with Animal-Vehicle Collisions









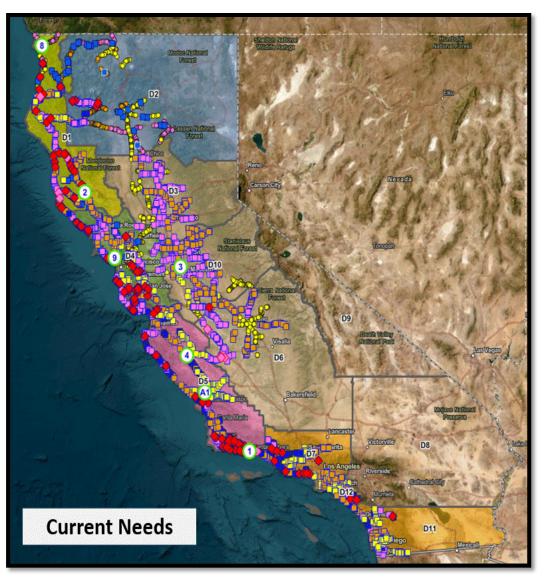


Assessment Partnership

- Caltrans and CA Conservation Corps Fish Passage Assessment Partnership.
- 73% of total preliminary Fish Passage assessment needs completed (2020 to present).
 - ~ 4,000 field assessments completed







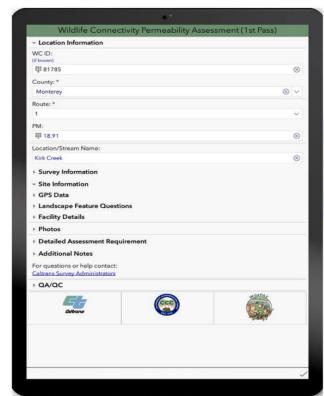


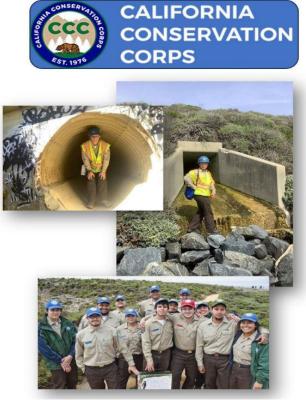


Pilot Wildlife Connectivity Permeability Assessments

Reconnaissance level assessment of facilities within priority connectivity route segments. Collect baseline photos and data to aid in location evaluation.

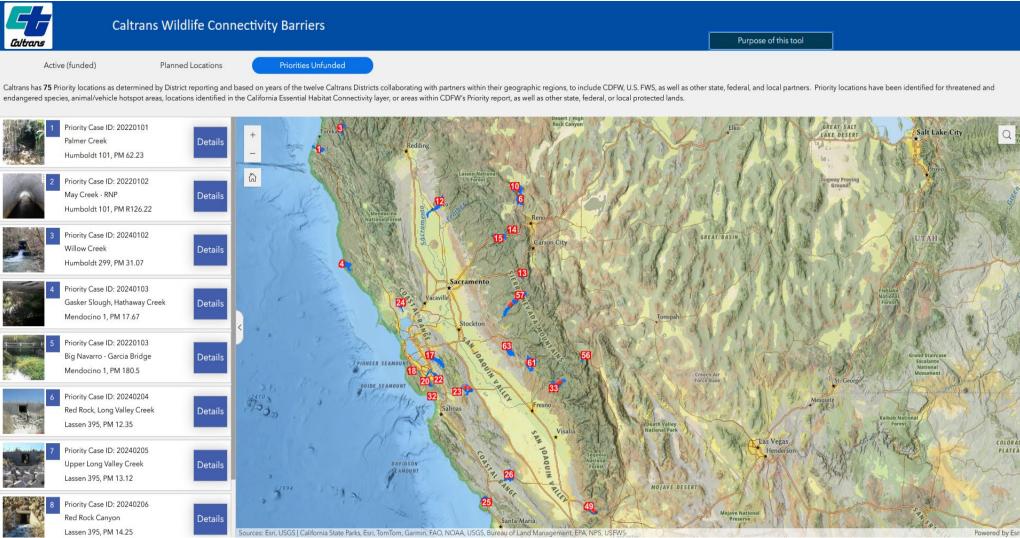
- Photos of SHS facility and landscape feature.
- Basic location and facility information.















Caltrans Wildlife Connectivity Priority







Mono 395, Convict Creek

Species: Deer hotspot



Caltrans Wildlife Connectivity Priority (cont.)





Mono 395, Convict Creek



Species: Owens pupfish, Fisher, Sierra Nevada Red Fox, Greater Sage grouse, Round Valley deer



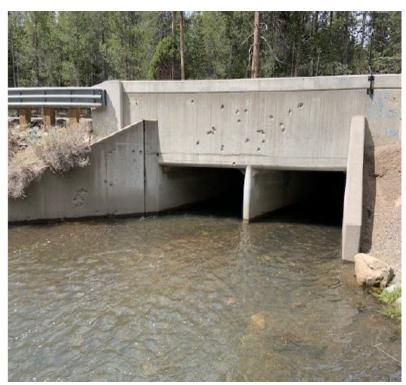
Caltrans Wildlife Connectivity Priority



Placer 80, Rainbow Troy

Species: Gray Wolf, Loyalton Truckee Mule Deer





Nevada 89, Sagehen Creek

Species: Lahontan cutthroat trout, Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, Loyalton Truckee mule deer

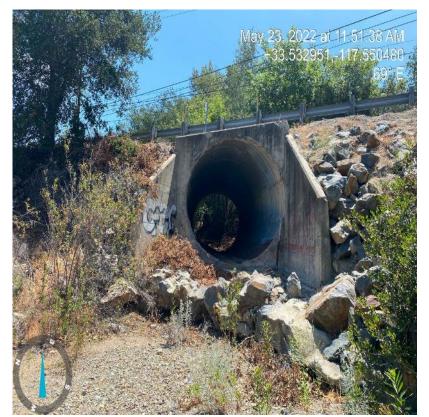


Santa Clara 17, Los Gatos Creek

Species: CA red-legged frog, Mountain lion.



Caltrans Wildlife Connectivity Priority



Orange 74, Ortega

Species: Arroyo toad mountain lion.





Merced 152, Pacheco Pass

Species: CA Red-legged frog, San Luis Reservoir Tule Elk



Mariposa 49, Bootjack

Species: Fisher, CA red-legged frog, Mule deer, Mountain lion



Caltrans Wildlife Connectivity Priority



Los Angeles 118, Santa Susana Pass

Species: Mountain lion



Ventura 101, Conejo Grade

Species: Mountain lion



Fresno 169, Shaver Lake

Species: Sierra Nevada Fisher, Foothill yellow-legged frog, wolverine, San Joaquin mule deer





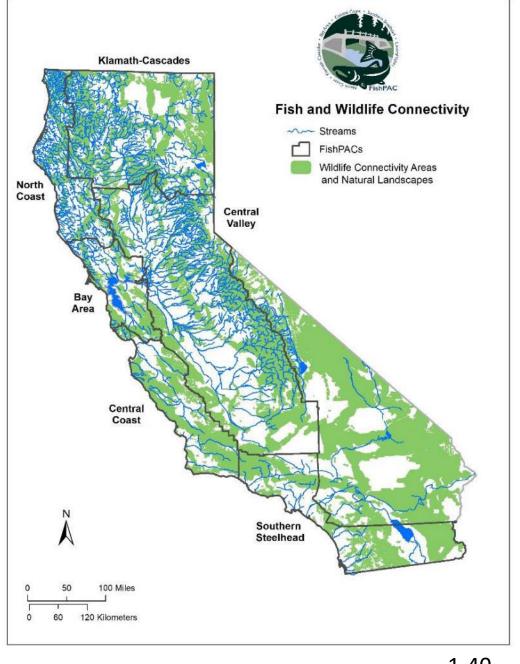
Priority FWC SHOPP Inventory

222 – Total fish and wildlife priority locations

- **90** Wildlife Connectivity Priorities
 - **9** Active (funded) and planned priority locations
 - (3) Cave, Soda, Clark Mountain ~\$99M
 - Meeks Creek ~\$25.1M
 - SR 97 Elk OC- **~\$18.1M**
 - **81** Unfunded Priorities
- **132** Fish Passage Priorities
 - **45** Active (funded) and planned priority locations
 - **87** Unfunded Priorities

Current Program investment - ~\$790M









Little Lost Man Creek, Humboldt 101









Post Project Wildlife Camera Study (Little Lost Man)













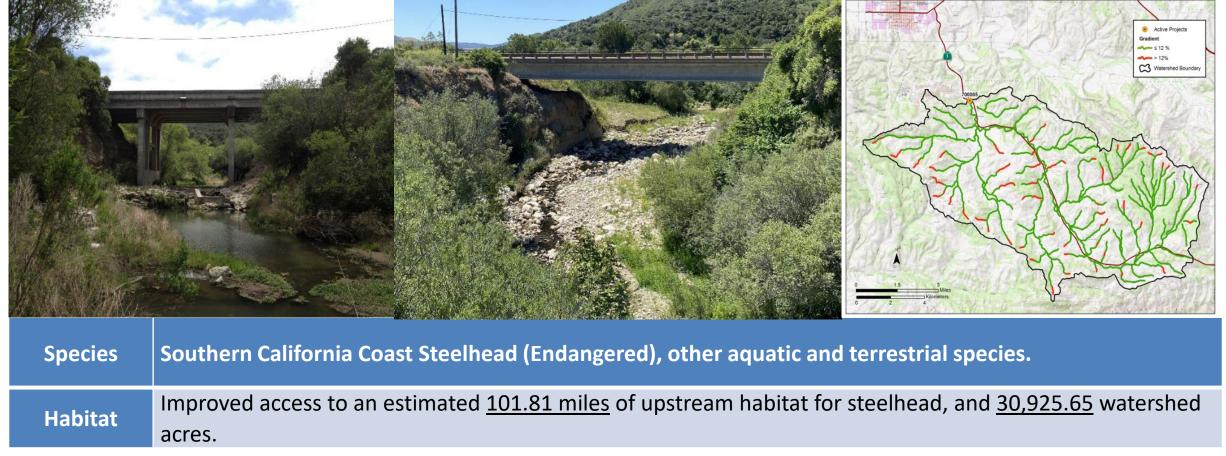
Post Project Wildlife Camera Study (Little Lost Man)







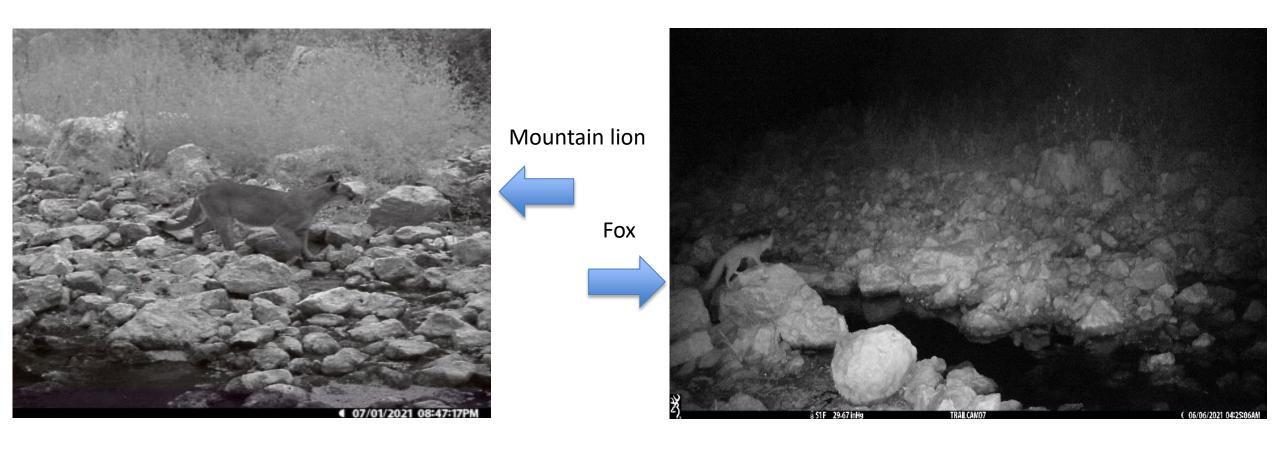
Salsipuedes Creek – Santa Barbara 1







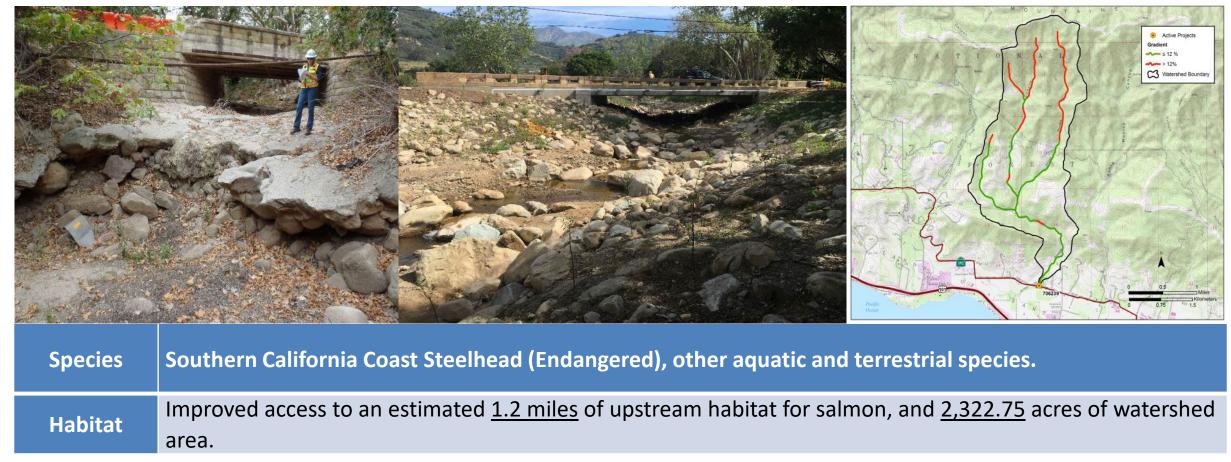
Salsipuedes Creek Multi-Species Camera Study







Arroyo Paredon Creek – Santa Barbara 192



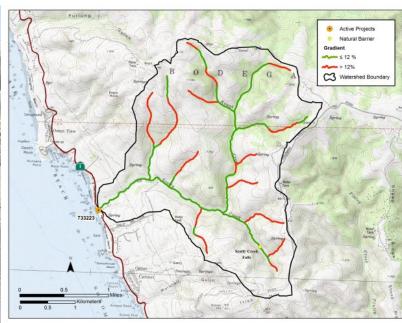




Scotty Creek – Sonoma 1







Species

Central California Coast Steelhead Trout (Threatened), Central California Coast Coho (Endangered).

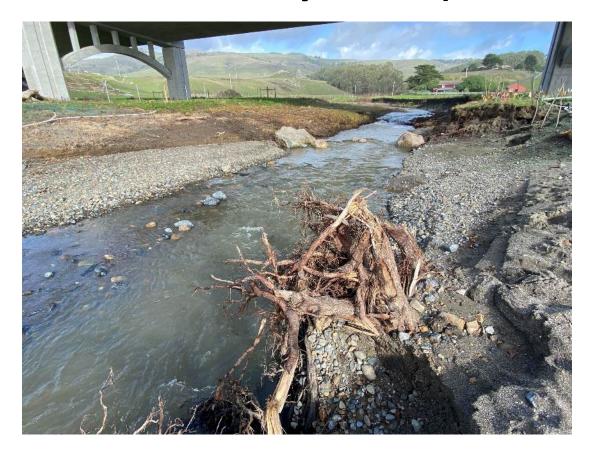
Habitat

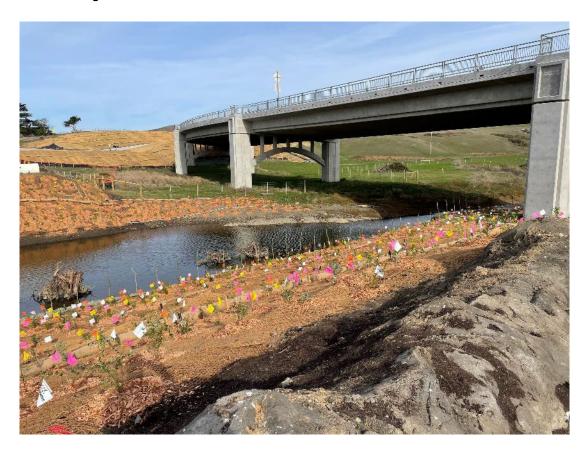
Improved access to an estimated <u>3.87 miles</u> of upstream habitat.





Scotty Creek (Gleason Beach) – Sonoma 1 (cont.)







Scotty Creek (Gleason Beach) – Sonoma 1 (cont.)









Fish Creek, Humboldt 254







Species: Steelhead Trout, Coho Salmon, Chinook Salmon, Foothill yellow-legged frog, Fisher, Pacific marten, Black bear, Bobcat, Coyote, Deer, Grey fox, Mountain lion



Fish Creek – Humboldt 254, PM 4.18 (cont.)

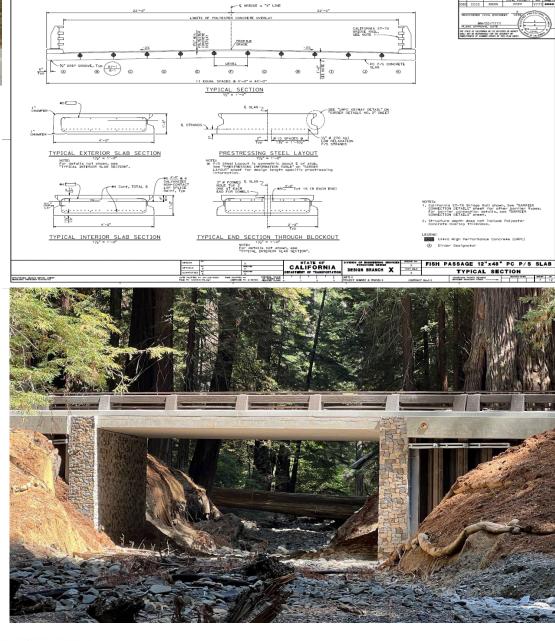






Fish and Wildlife Engineering

- ABC Bridges pre-designed (65%), long-term, full-span fish and wildlife designs.
 - Long-term fish and wildlife solutions (75 100 years),
 - 20 to 120-ft bridges/viaducts,
 - Abutments can skew up to 45 degrees to match stream or landscape feature alignment,
 - Reduce long-term maintenance
- Caltrans funds CDFW and NMFS Senior Fish and Wildlife Engineers.













In 2024 the USDOT Federal **Highways Administration** recognized Caltrans' Fish Passage Program and FishPAC with an Environmental Excellence award.



Caltrans Fish Passage Program

In cooperation with multiple agencies and external partners, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) worked to develop statewide Fish Passage Advisory Committees, the multi-agency Fish Passage Engineering Working Group, and the Fish Passage State Highway Operation and Protection Program, which collaborate to identify priority transportation barriers to threatened and endangered fish and develop remediation project efficiencies.

Storia TT. Stephend

U.S. Department of Transportation **Federal Highway Administration**

Gloria M. Shepherd, FHWA Executive Director

May 28, 2024

In cooperation with

Caltrans

Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, California Conservation Corps, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Coastal Commission, California State Water Board, California Coastal Conservancy, County of Marin, County of Santa Cruz, Santa Monica Resource Conservation District, South Coast Habitat Restoration, CalTrout, Trout Unlimited, Hoopa Tribal Fisheries, Karuk Tribe

California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA)







Juan Torres, Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor)
Wildlife Connectivity Program

Mission Statement Wildlife Connectivity Program





Objective: Improve wildlife connectivity and roadway safety across California using the best available science



Wildlife as defined by FGC § 89.5: "'Wildlife' means and includes all wild animals, birds, plants, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and related ecological communities, including the habitat upon which the wildlife depends for its continued viability"







Photo Credits: Jason Bill and Sara Holm

Source: Wildlife Crossing Project to Close U.S. 395 through Sonora Junction for Two Weeks | Caltrans

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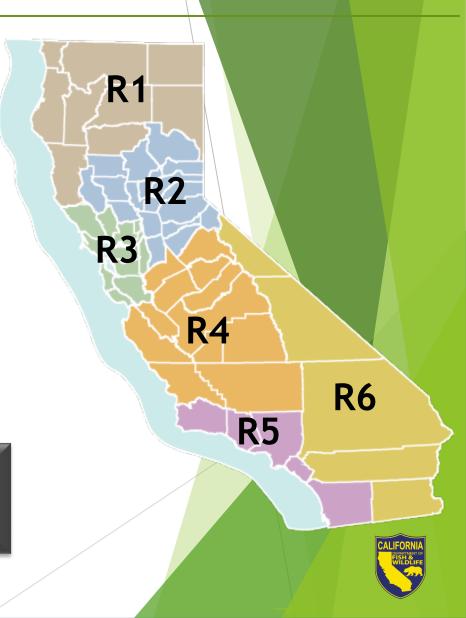
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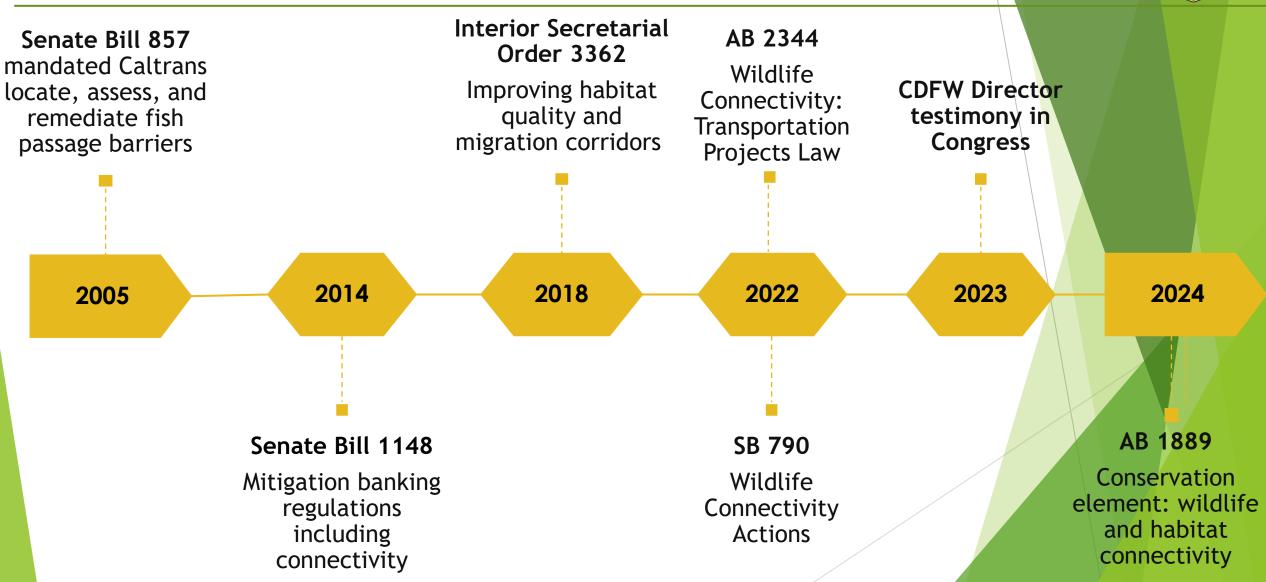
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Wildlife Connectivity Relevant Timeline





Prior to Wildlife Connectivity: Transportation Projects Law (AB 2344)

No dedicated resources or single connectivity contact

No regional staff dedicated to connectivity

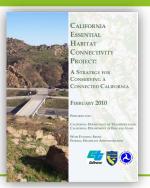
Fragmented across CDFW branches and programs

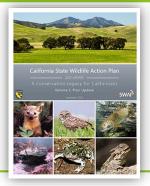
CDFW connectivity outputs and collaborations





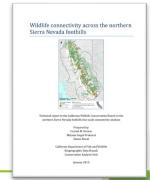
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
2022 Wildlife 2022 Hiority Wildlife Connectivity Project Locations by Region.













Planning

- Work with Caltrans in the implementation of AB 2344
- Identify connectivity areas
- Barriers document
- Identify/conserve lands (CE, fee title, etc.)
- Provide engineering advice (as needed)
- Develop best management practices/mitigation
- Assist with CEQA reviews
- Assist other entities as needed

Construction

- Collaborate to ensure that projects are constructed as shown in the plans
- Assist with project modifications during construction (as needed)

Monitoring

- Monitor connectivity project effectiveness
- Provide scientific data to improve the planning and construction phases

Funding

- Caltrans mitigation/project funding
- Grant Funding: various sources

Outreach





Stakeholders - Wildlife Connectivity Ecosystem



Wildlife Connectivity CDFW/WCB Funded Projects



Since 2022 CDFW has provided approx. \$85 million of wildlife connectivity projects. Including \$20 million award to the I-15 Mojave wildlife overcrossings project construction



Wildlife conservation board has provided approx. \$95 million since 2020



Funds used for:

Land acquisitions

Planning

Construction

Monitoring







2024 State Action Plan Update (SO3362)

- ► Enhance and improve the quality of elk, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope winter range and migration corridor habitat
- Designated 5 State Priority Areas
- ▶ 2024 update combined two Priority Areas, expanded another along US-395 Corridor, and added one in Modoc County
- Current request for proposal is open now for habitat and connectivity restoration projects due on February 13, 2025
- > \$912,678 in previously funded projects

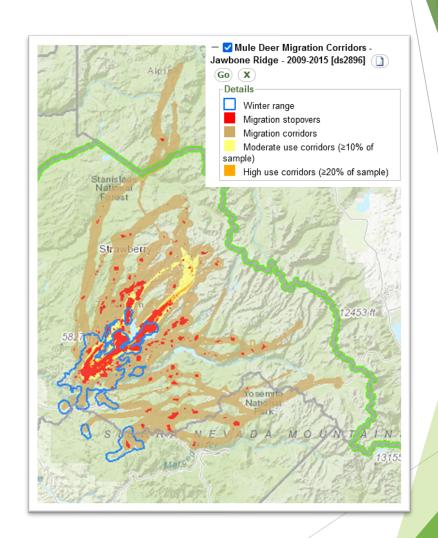




Ungulate Migration Corridor Mapping (SO3362)

- Detailed data on ungulate movements:
 - Migration corridors
 - Migration stopovers
 - Winter ranges







Terrestrial Wildlife Barriers: 2020-2024

- Each of the 6 CDFW terrestrial regions identified top 10 priority barriers:
 - Landscape linkages
 - Ungulate migration routes
 - Corridors for sensitive species
 - Mortality hotspots
 - Animals approaching roads and turning around
 - Habitat quality/protections
 - Range shifts due to climate change





Terrestrial Wildlife Barriers

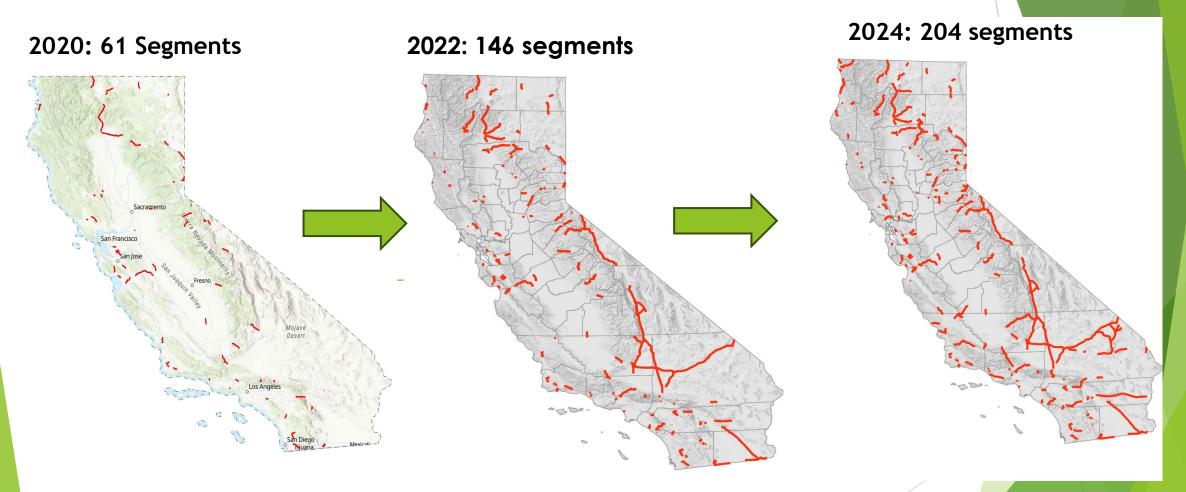
- Tiered ranking system:
- Barriers(204 total)
- Priority Barriers (10/Region)
- ► Top Priority Barriers (2/Region)







Terrestrial Wildlife Barriers: 2024 Update





Areas of Conservation Emphasis

- ► **ACE layer** (ds2734) **IS**:
 - An aggregate/summary of statewide and regional connectivity studies.
 - A broad overview of statewide connectivity based on the most up-todate information.
 - A tool for quickly locating more detailed datasets for use in regional planning, management, etc.
- ► ACE layer (ds2734) IS NOT:
 - A linkage model or analysis
 - A cost or permeability surface study
 - A substitute for the original, more detailed connectivity datasets





Examples of Science Collaborations

- Mountain lion connectivity/UC Davis collaboration
- Data sharing agreements for connectivity projects
- Internal potential grant projects:
 - Highway and crossing monitoring within barriers
 - ► I-15 Mojave wildlife overcrossings monitoring
 - ► Tehachapi Pass Connectivity Study
- Hallelujah Junction Wildlife Area fencing study
- Southern Sierra Nevada foothill linkages study (BDB)
- Pronghorn and elk connectivity and habitat use (NWF)
- Endangered species connectivity Section 6 grants applications open winter 2024-(https://wildlife.ca.gov/Grants/Endangered-Species)







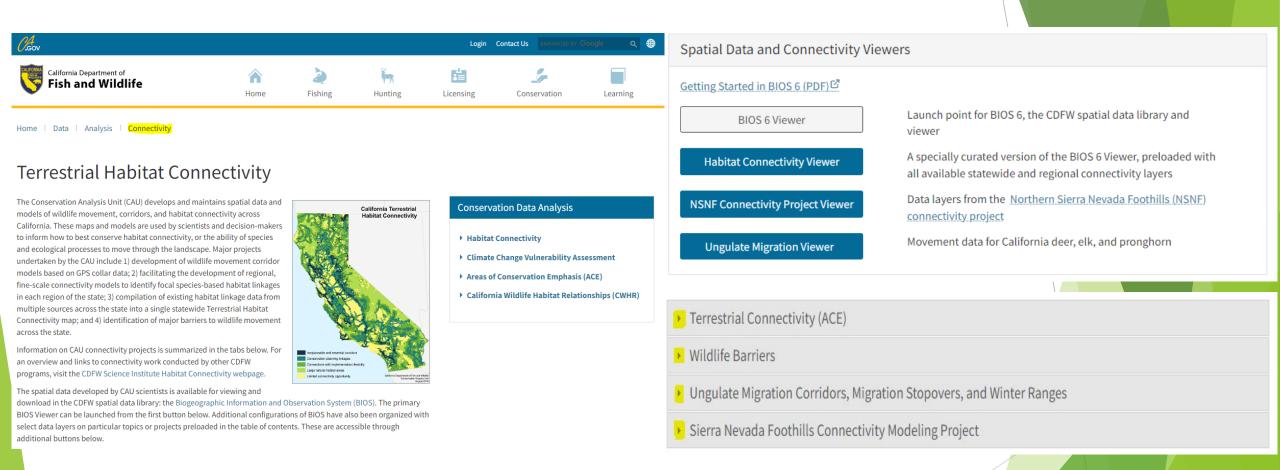
Photo Credit: Glenn Ingles





Photo Credit: Bill Stagnard

CONNECTIVITY RESOURCES



https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/Analysis/Connectivity





Questions?







Q&A Session

Submit Questions

- Select appropriate icon
 - Internet Browser: select ?
 - Webex Software: select "▼ Q&A"
 - Mobile App: select , then ?
- Type question/comment into Q&A box
- Moderator will read question/comment out loud







Thank you!





California Department of Transportation

HQ Division of Environmental Analysis



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Integrity ● Commitment ● Teamwork ● Innovation

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