

Wildlife crossings, from bridges to tunnels to overpasses

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Image 1. Capuchin monkeys cross a "monkey bridge" above a road in Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica. Many different kinds of wildlife crossings, including bridges, tunnels and overpasses, help keep wildlife from getting hit by cars. Photo by: Katra Laidlaw/Kids Saving the Rainforest

Roadkill is a serious problem. In the United States, wildlife causes more than one million automobile accidents every year. They cost \$8 billion. That includes money spent on medical care and fixing the vehicles. More than a million animals are killed every day by cars. For many species, it is the main cause of death.

Another problem is that major roads separate animal populations. They also destroy their habitats. It becomes hard for animals to find food.

Keeping Animals Safe

Highway crossings for animals are becoming more common. There are different kinds of crossings. It depends on the species that need to cross. It also depends on geography. Bridges,



overpasses and tunnels are the most common. They reduce the number of crashes. They also give animals a safe way to cross a road.

Wildlife bridges are usually covered in plants. It makes them look natural. Animals are more likely to use them. Often fences are placed on the side of the road. They direct wildlife toward the crossing.

Wildlife crossings began in France in the 1950s. It took off in the Netherlands. More than 600 crossings have been built there. The Dutch built the world's longest animal crossing. It is more than a half mile long. In the United States, the idea took longer to catch on. Wildlife crossings began here less than 20 years ago.



A Tunnel For Frogs

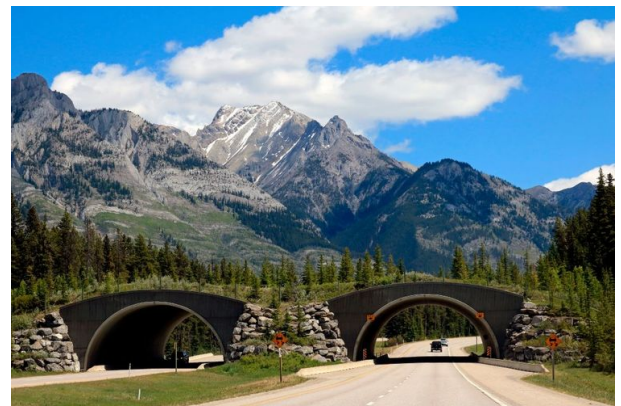
In 1995, Davis, California, built a tunnel to let frogs pass under a road. One end was decorated to look like a frog village. It was named Toad Hollow. The frogs never used it.

Banff National Park is in Canada. The crossings there are more successful. Between 1996 and 2016, 42 crossings were built. In that time, 150,000 animals have used them. The number of accidents involving wildlife went down 80 percent.

Bridges For Koalas And Deer

In Queensland, Australia, koalas have been disappearing. Auto accidents were one of the main causes, the government said. Queensland built about six crossings. The koalas began using the tunnels very quickly.

Western U.S. states are building animal crossings. In 2018, Washington started building bridges across Interstate 90. They will allow animals to pass between the northern and southern Cascade Mountains. Deer already began using one, and it wasn't even finished yet.



Wildlife crossings can be expensive to build. They save money in the long run, though.

Quiz

- 1 Which question is answered in the introduction [paragraphs 1-2]?
- (A) When were most highways in the United States built?
 - (B) What kinds of animals are most often hit by cars?
 - (C) How many animals are killed each year while crossing roads?
 - (D) Why is it important to give animals a safe way to cross roads?

- 2 Read the section "A Tunnel For Frogs."

Select the sentence from the section that explains that wildlife crossings help protect animals.

- (A) In 1995, Davis, California, built a tunnel to let frogs pass under a road.
- (B) One end was decorated to look like a frog village.
- (C) Between 1996 and 2016, 42 crossings were built.
- (D) The number of accidents involving wildlife went down 80 percent.

- 3 Read the selection from the section "Keeping Animals Safe."

Wildlife crossings began in France in the 1950s. It took off in the Netherlands. More than 600 crossings have been built there.

What is the definition of "took off" based on the context clues?

- (A) became popular
- (B) flew using wings
- (C) left very quickly
- (D) was removed

- 4 Read the paragraph from the section "Bridges For Koala And Deer."

Wildlife crossings can be expensive to build. They save money in the long run, though.

What does the word "expensive" mean?

- (A) difficult
- (B) costly
- (C) beautiful
- (D) needed