

Can we begin choosing surrogate species for monitoring diversity and rapid assessment protocols? Examples from reptiles and ants

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Since the late 1980's there has been much interest in the impact of urbanization and fragmentation on the biodiversity in southern California. With the initiation of the HCP-NCCP Programs in the early 1990's basic life history, monitoring protocol development, and identification of management concerns, has been a high priority for many sensitive species identified as declining or at risk. To date, 20 years later, we have accumulated a great knowledge about how the ecosystem in southern California functions and about drivers-stressors impacting ecological integrity of the landscape. Although more questions exist than those that we have answered, it is time to start developing monitoring and assessment protocols that can be widely applied across the reserve system to inform managers about the status of their lands and what/when management actions might be appropriate to initiate. We will review some of the relevant ideas and datasets for use in development of the protocols and discuss the overall strategy and goals.