

Recommendations for improving infrastructure to ensure preserve-wide connectivity

Carlton Rochester, U.S. Geological Survey

In support of the MSCP Connectivity Strategic Plan, the U.S. Geological Survey performed a preliminary assessment of the potential linkages between the core conserved wildlife areas within San Diego County. In coordination with the San Diego Management and Monitoring Program (SDMMP), nine of the possible linkages were identified as priority areas and evaluated for the likelihood that focal wildlife species would be able to move from one core area to the next. Five of the nine were estimated to be non-functional in their ability to allow wildlife to move successfully from one core habitat area to the next. In several cases, the limitations of the linkage fell on a single point or barrier along the route, making the entire route unlikely to function. Where possible, recommendations were made for changes that may improve the ability of wildlife to move through the county. The majority of recommendations included adding fencing to the roadways along the linkage to exclude wildlife from the road surface and to guide them towards appropriate crossing sites. For one corridor that was judged to be non-functional, an alternate path was suggested and land parcels were identified for purchase or management that should help to secure the continued ability of wildlife to cross the landscape. The recommendations presented here are not a guarantee to solve all of the connectivity issues for all of the focal species, but are possible considerations to improve the reserve network or protect wildlife and people from dangerous situations on roadways.