

Conclusions of IENE Open Day Évora, April 24th, 2009

201 persons from 18 countries attended the IENE Open Day whose main theme was “Transport infrastructure of the 21st century: connecting people and wildlife”. Participants included people from road and railway Administrations; people from environmental Administration; researchers from Universities; NGO’s; technicians from Environmental Impact Assessment firms and a large number of students.

The program included 14 invited presentations, with speakers from 7 countries. Presentation main subjects were (see also program in attachment):

- IENE history and main goals
- Suggestions do reduce the effects of landscape fragmentation due to transport infrastructures and improve their sustainability
- Examples of defragmentation and monitoring programs in different European countries
- Results from research and monitoring projects aiming to evaluate effects of transport infrastructure on wildlife
- Proposal of measures to reduce vehicle collisions with wildlife
- Guidelines for the implementation of monitoring programs
- Strategies from road and environmental administration, and trail and road concessionaires to mitigate and monitor the impacts of transportation infrastructures on Biodiversity.

Some participants presented their work in a poster format. The poster session included 17 posters.

From the presentations and discussion that followed, the main general conclusions were:

1. The increasing number, length and changing characteristics of transportation infrastructures demands for rapid and effective responses aiming to reduce their main impacts on wildlife, particularly the barrier effect and mortality;
2. Wildlife vehicle collisions, particularly with larger species (e.g. ungulates) are a serious safety problem in many roads in different regions. Specific mitigation measures adapted to different local realities should be tested and putted in place;

3. There is an urgent need to have clear and quantifiable data on the impacts of transport infrastructures on wildlife populations viability, and individual movements and fitness. The use of new tools (genetic analysis; satellite telemetry, etc.) to get this information in a faster and more accurate way should be encouraged;
4. More accurate and detailed data and new methodologies are needed in order to evaluate properly the effectiveness of some wildlife mitigation measures, including fauna passages efficiency, by different individuals and species;
5. Monitoring is an essential tool but we need to have pre-infrastructure construction data on populations and individual movements in order to be able to derive conclusions about the real impacts on populations.
6. For, monitoring, the use of suitable study designs adapted to local realities and, when possible, of standard methodologies and protocols, in order to get comparable data, should be encouraged;
7. The impacts of transportation infrastructure on wildlife are a major concern of road, rail and environmental administrations and these issues have been integrated in their internal policies. Specific actions for mitigation, compensation and monitoring have been considered and are being put in place by all these entities. However, the integration of impact evaluation and implementation of mitigation actions of new transport infrastructures with the existing ones, is still a poorly developed practice in some European countries;
8. The implementation of large scale defragmentation programs integrating new and existing transport infrastructures, at a national or European level should be a key target of both, environmental and transport policies;
9. Although Natura 2000 areas are particularly important for Biodiversity conservation, mitigation and monitoring the impacts of transportation infrastructure must be equally prioritized outside these areas in order to assure landscape connectivity and ecosystem integrity;
10. Most important outcomes of this type of seminars are: i) the opportunity to know what is going on in different countries concerning the impacts, mitigation and monitoring the effects of transport infrastructure on wildlife; ii) increase public awareness about these issues; and iii) change



and disseminate information and experiences among different people and entities. The organization of other similar events should be considered on a regular basis.

