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Companion and Wild Animals

Wild Animals Hit by Vehicles on Roads in the Agreste Region of Pernambuco – Partial Data.

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Roads have currently become a part of everyday life in most human societies, being fundamental for socioeconomic development. On the other hand, they cause an immeasurable negative environmental impact on biodiversity. Thus, human development activities greatly influence the impact of roads on wildlife. Species, in general, are unaware of the danger posed by vehicles on roads, making them easily hit. Therefore, understanding the ecological consequences of highways for conservation is one of the main objectives of Road Ecology, in order to reduce their negative impacts. The lack of adequate mitigation measures on roads contributes to these accidents, posing a danger both to the animals and to the drivers. The research is being conducted on highways in the Agreste region of Pernambuco, specifically on the BR-423 highway, in the section that connects Garanhuns to Jupi and the same highway from Garanhuns to Iati, with a total length of 40 kilometers each. The monitoring is being carried out using an institution's vehicle at an average speed of 50 km/h, with at least two observers for better detection on both sides of the highway. Each animal found is identified, photographed, and, if necessary, sent to the Laboratory of Zoological Studies – LABEZoo-UFAPE. Depending on the state of decomposition of the animal, if advanced, it is removed from the road to prevent scavengers and further accidents. Data collection occurs monthly, with one day dedicated to each highway, during the daytime and early morning hours, to prevent carcasses from being dragged away by scavengers. Data collection began in October and is still ongoing, so the data contained in this summary are preliminary. By the month of May, it was found that on the BR-423 highway, in the section that connects Garanhuns to Jupi, there were 67 instances of wild animals being hit, 32 of which were cane toads (*Rhinella jimi*). In the section between Garanhuns and Iati, 15 animals were recorded, with the highest number of incidents involving the crab-eating fox (*Cerdocyon thous*), with six occurrences. However, on the first highway, there was an increase in cane toad hits in January, likely due to the rain that occurred on the day of data collection. Nevertheless, the second most hit species was *Cerdocyon thous*, with a total of 13 animals struck. Thus, it is notable that the first section, which connects the municipality of Garanhuns to the city of Jupi, has a higher number of accidents. This is due to the higher traffic volume and greater speed in this section. Therefore, the present research demonstrated that wild animals are significant victims of vehicle collisions, and that the lack of preventive measures can result in serious accidents, causing drastic losses to biodiversity.

Keywords: Collisions, *Cerdocyon thous*, wildlife, environmental impact, *Rhinella jimi*, highways.

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