



Environment Institute
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BREAKING THE BARRIERS

INNOVATING TO IMPROVE ECOLOGICAL OUTCOMES
ON TRANSPORT AND OTHER LINEAR INFRASTRUCTURE
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IMAGE CREDIT: ROB APPLEBY, WILDSPY/GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY



KEYNOTE ABSTRACT

The inconvenient truth about mitigating road impacts on wildlife

Roads and traffic are among the largest human-caused impacts on wildlife populations, mainly through habitat destruction and roadkill. Fully mitigating the impacts of a new road on wildlife requires either (i) building the road as a tunnel, or (ii) removing an existing road of the same size as the new road, restoring the habitat there, and designing the new road to keep wildlife off of it. Alternatively, the road could be built as a viaduct, though this would not fully mitigate its impacts on wildlife. Given the huge cost of effective road mitigation, the most practical solution is to introduce policies that reduce traffic on existing roads and remove the need for new roads. Where it is not possible to avoid building new roads or expanding existing ones, we must fully acknowledge the limits of mitigation. Without such honest assessment, 'nature positive' infrastructure will remain a pipe dream.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY

Lenore Fahrig is Chancellor's Professor of Biology and Gray Merriam Chair in Landscape Ecology at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, where she studies the effects of landscape structure on biodiversity and the abundance, distribution and persistence of wildlife populations. Lenore is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (RSC), an international member of the US National Academy of Sciences, and recipient of the Distinguished Landscape Ecologist Award from the North American Association for Landscape Ecology, the BBVA award in Ecology and Conservation Biology, and the Gerhard Herzberg Canada Gold Medal, Canada's top award in Science and Engineering.

LENORE FAHRIG
Chancellor's Professor
of Biology
Gray Merriam Chair
in Landscape Ecology
Carleton University,
Ottawa, Canada