

Linking Landscapes for Massachusetts Wildlife
<http://linkinglandscapes.info>



Help DFW, NHESP, MassDOT and UMass Study Wildlife!

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW), and its Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), have teamed up with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and UMass Amherst to study how roadways affect wildlife in Massachusetts to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and improve public safety.

Our Mission: To minimize the impact of the existing road network on wildlife, while improving highway safety, through cost-effective research, planning, and implementation of partnerships with citizens and communities of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Transportation infrastructure affects wildlife through direct mortality due to vehicle collisions, fragmenting and isolating habitats, and by altering natural habitats. Roadways can threaten the viability of local turtle populations, especially those which are state-listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. In addition, roadway usage by wildlife causes accidents, which can result in property damage and personal injury. To address these issues, the DFW, MassDOT and UMass have created the program *Linking Landscapes for Massachusetts Wildlife*, a long-term and multifaceted effort to minimize the impact of the existing road network on wildlife, while improving highway safety.

The Linking Landscapes research approach is simple: team up with citizen scientists and conservation organizations to gather information on wildlife roadway mortality hotspots. The information gathered will be used to inform long term planning decisions in the context of transportation infrastructure upgrades.



MassWildlife

How can you get involved?

Three Massachusetts citizen science research efforts are underway, each of which allows online reporting of site specific wildlife roadway mortality through a Google Maps interface (<http://linkinglandscapes.info>):

- 1) The Wildlife Roadway Mortality Database: To help inform our wildlife mitigation and transportation safety decision making, document your observations of wildlife which have deceased due to wildlife vehicle collisions on Massachusetts roadways.
- 2) The Vernal Pool Salamander Migration Study: Linking Landscapes is collaborating with the Vernal Pool Association (<http://www.vernalpool.org/>) to document “over the road” amphibian migrations in Massachusetts. Document the migration of vernal pool breeding amphibians across roadways to help further our knowledge of important salamander and frog migration routes.
- 3) The Turtle Roadway Mortality Study: Report locations where multiple turtles experience roadway mortality on a yearly basis. To identify these locations, look for causeways and other roads which bisect wetlands, roads with undersized or improperly placed culverts, and roads bisecting wetland habitat from nesting habitat. If you are interested in monitoring one of these locations, please email Tim Dexter at Timothy.Dexter@state.ma.us for more information.

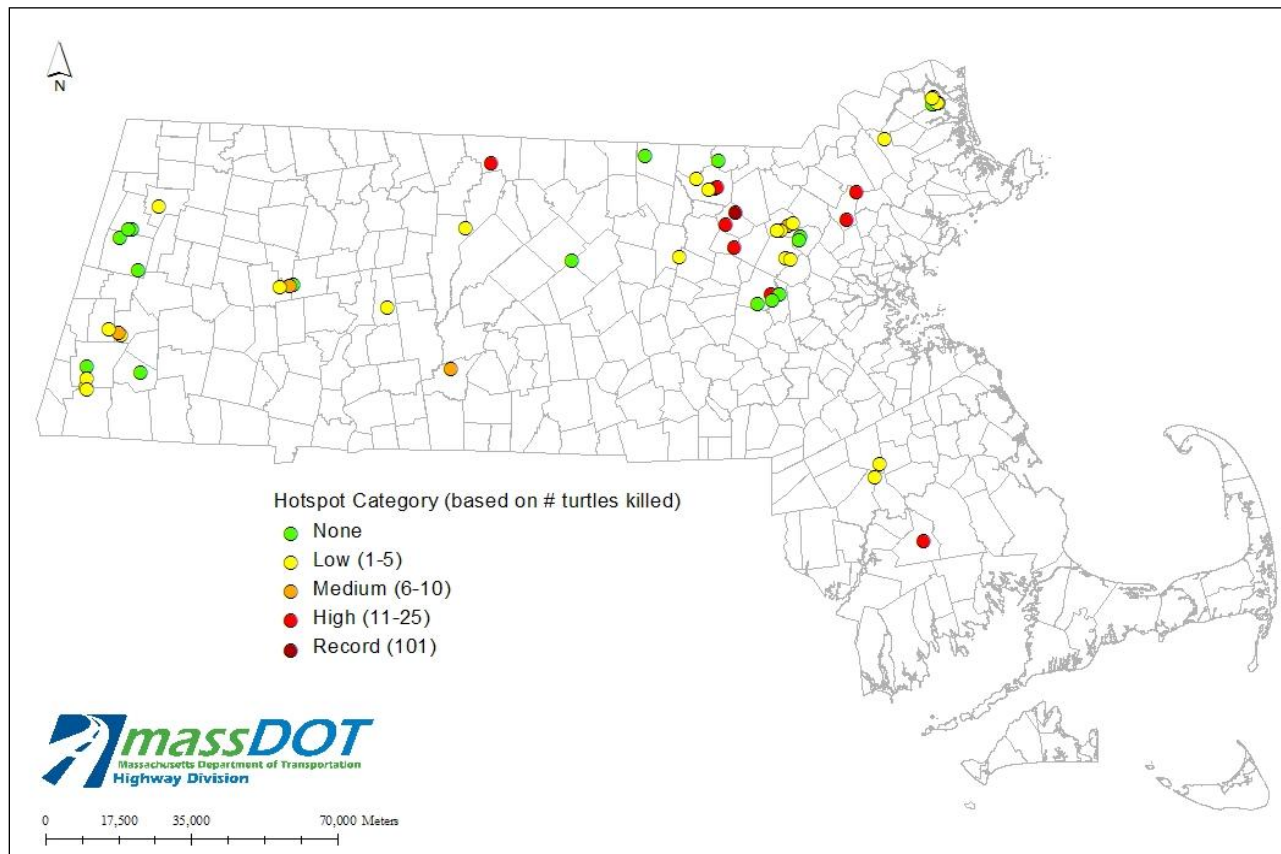


Figure 1: Turtle roadway mortality hotspots categorized by the number of documented turtle roadway mortalities during the 4th week of May, 2nd week of June, and 4th week of June in 2010, by volunteers of the Turtle Roadway Mortality Monitoring Program.

Linking Landscapes for MA Wildlife Spring Meetings

May 6, 2015

Citizen Scientists Needed To Monitor Turtle Crossings

Turtles have existed for millions of years, but roadways are threatening the survival of local populations. Turtles in Massachusetts often cross roadways late spring to early fall and are vulnerable to car collisions. Ambitious citizen scientists, turtle enthusiasts, and conservation organizations are encouraged to join state wildlife and transportation personnel in collecting data for the **Turtle Roadway Mortality Monitoring Program**. Linking Landscapes for Massachusetts Wildlife, a recent partnership between the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW), Department of Transportation (DOT) Highway Division and UMass-Amherst, trained volunteers to collect data and is expanding its volunteer program by offering citizen scientist information and training sessions. These sessions are designed to train new volunteers, acknowledge current volunteer efforts, and share results from the first year of data collection. The information gathered through this volunteer effort will be used to coordinate local turtle conservation efforts.

The information and training session will be held on Wednesday, May 6th, 2015 at the United Methodist Church, 6 Holmes Road in Lenox starting at 6:00 pm. The event will be cosponsored With Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT) and Project Native. The sessions are free, but pre-registration is encouraged. Interested volunteers can register with Dave Paulson at David.Paulson@state.ma.us or call him at (508) 389-6366.

Light refreshments will be provided.

For additional information please contact:

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