

Taking the “What the heck is it?”

Out of Roadkill Identification

Submitted by Len Sielecki, Environmental Issues Analyst

With books like *Flattened Fauna* and *How to Cook Roadkill* in print, raising the more serious aspects of roadkill identification has been challenging. For more than 30 years, the ministry has been monitoring highway-related wildlife mortality with its Wildlife Accident Reporting System. Each day, the ministry's maintenance contractors collect detailed species and location information on wildlife found on provincial highways.

For this data to be most useful for planning and operational purposes, accurate location and species information is essential. With the ministry's Landmark Kilometre Inventory system, the location of animals killed on provincial highways can be determined, down to the metre. However, identifying the species of a carcass can be more problematic, especially if the person handling it isn't familiar with the local species of wildlife. To assist ministry maintenance contractors to more accurately identify wildlife, I developed the Wildlife Roadkill Identification Guide.

The guide's layout and graphics were designed by Beverly van Druuten-Blais, Graphic Design Specialist and Nancy Dolan, Graphics Technician of the Engineering Branch at Headquarters. By incorporating an overwhelming number of photographs, on a less-than-glamorous subject matter, Beverly and Nancy produced an incredibly attractive and informative publication.

The guide provides information primarily on larger wildlife species found on British Columbia highways. It includes a general description of the physical appearance, life stages, abundance and geographic distribution of each animal. The guide also provides details on identifiable physical characteristics, such as coat colour, physical size and footprint patterns. By cross referencing these details, with typical seasonal periods of activity, to known mapped habitat locations near provincial highways, identifying wildlife remains should be easier.

Improvements in species identification will help support the ministry's species-specific wildlife impact mitigation measures. In addition, accurate species identification will contribute to the decision process for ministry investments in wildlife exclusion systems to protect motorists and wildlife.



The guide appears to be the first of its kind by a transportation agency in North America, and can be found at the Engineering Branch's website: http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/publications/eng_publications/environment/WRIG/ ♦

Giant Spider Takes Over Highway 7



Is this the newest highway hazard? Will DriveBC be adding “Giant Spider” to its listing of road conditions that drivers may wish to avoid?

No, it's just near April Fool's Day, and we thought we'd share this unusual photo with you. Thanks to Simon Walker, of Avalanche and Weather Programs, for forwarding this image of a spider who got up close and personal with a DriveBC webcam. ♦