

Brazil Biologist Learns about B.C. Wildlife Crossings

Submitted by Len Sielecki, Wildlife and Environmental Specialist

▼ A wildlife tunnel being constructed in Brazil.
Courtesy Road Projects Assessment Department of the Companhia Ambiental do Estado de São Paulo.



◀ Len Sielecki and Brazilian Biologist Juliana Moreno Pina shared knowledge about preventing wildlife collisions.

Paulo's Environmental Agency. I gave her a PowerPoint presentation on our ministry's wildlife protection initiatives, and we spoke for about four hours. She was very interested in what we have been doing to protect wildlife.

The State of São Paulo, in southeastern Brazil, is an economic and industrial hub, and the largest business centre in Latin America. It has more than 20,000 kilometres of highways, which are operated by public agencies and private toll road agencies.

Brazil's Environmental National Law, enacted in 1981, requires environmental impact assessments for transportation projects, like highway construction and expansion. The State of São Paulo also requires highways authorities to adopt measures to protect wildlife from becoming roadkill. (This is not a nation-wide regulation.)

Juliana told me that the species most commonly hit on São Paulo's highways is capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), the world's largest rodent, which is closely related to the guinea pig. Next up are rabbit (*Sylvilagus brasiliensis*) also known as Brazilian cottontail, which live in parts of South America, Central America and



Mexico. Skunks (*Didelphis aurita*) and racoon (*Nasua nasua*) are other smaller creatures which sometimes become roadkill. Endangered species at risk on São Paulo highways include giant anteaters (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*) and puma (*Puma concolor*).

Crossing structures are the most common form of wildlife protection on São Paulo highways, and there are 103 underpasses along 17 different roads. The majority convey water, but there are also dry underpasses built for wildlife. Other wildlife protection measures are warning signs, speed reducers, fencing, overpasses for tree-dwelling animals, monitoring of crossing

structures, education programs, gathering of roadkill statistics, temporary road closures and animal rescue during construction.

I presented Juliana with one of our ministry's wildlife stakeholder engagement T-shirts. She was ecstatic with it, and put it on right away. She was awed by the big size of B.C.'s wildlife, which the T-shirt illustrates. ♦

▼ The giant anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*) like this one in the Pantanal region of Brazil, is an endangered species.

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A biologist from Brazil, who was interested in our ministry's wildlife protection initiatives, visited me on Nov. 24.

Biologist Juliana Moreno Pina is with the Road Projects Assessment unit of the State of São



Photo Credit: Karoly Lorentey from ZME Science website.

Capybaras crossing a stream, in the state of São Paulo, Brazil.

Courtesy Road Projects Assessment Department of the Companhia Ambiental do Estado de São Paulo.

