

Did you know?

In May 2010, three Florida panthers were killed in a three-day period.

Florida's panther, the state animal, is one of the most endangered mammals living in the United States. Today its estimated population ranges from 100 to 160.

RADS provides early warning to drivers about the presence of large animals nearing the highway. Motorists can reduce their speed and be more prepared for animals crossing the roadway in this segment of US 41.



For more information
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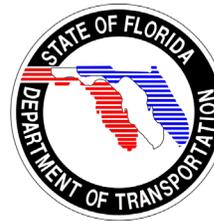
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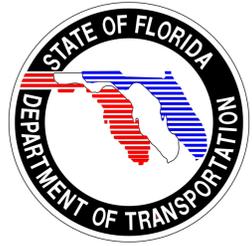
Roadside Animal Detection System (RADS)



PLEASE
REDUCE YOUR
SPEED WHEN
THESE LIGHTS
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Roadside Animal Detection System (RADS)



US 41 Wildlife Crossing
from Bass Road to Turner River Road
Collier County, Florida



RADS is operating now

The first system of its kind to be installed in Florida, the **Roadside Animal Detection System (RADS)**, is an innovative project designed to help protect wildlife traveling near US 41 from just west of the entrance to the Skunk Ape Research Headquarters and Trail Lakes Campground to just east of Turner Road (1.3 miles).

RADS alerts motorists when large animals, like panthers, are close to the road and advises drivers to slow down. The system uses solar powered sensors to detect wildlife approaching the roadway and then communicates that message to drivers by illuminating bright, flashing LED lights on six warning signs placed along the road.

Monitoring RADS

FDOT is using grant money (\$450,000) to monitor RADS' operation. A two-year monitoring period began early in 2013 that involves on-scene review as well as data collection from trail cameras and sensors.

Staff with the University of Central Florida's biology department will record where and when RADS detects animals within the project segment, frequency of the system's activation, and wildlife species detected. Staff will analyze data and information collected and will report findings to FDOT in late 2015.

Benefits

Research has shown RADS to be effective in reducing vehicle collisions with large wildlife in other areas of the United States. This \$450,000 RADS project is intended to assist in the reduction of vehicle-wildlife collisions in this area and also to reduce fatalities and injuries to people and animals.

RADS also will improve habitat connectivity for large wildlife species like the Florida panther, white-tailed deer, Florida black bear and other large wildlife. RADS costs less than construction of other wildlife crossings used in Florida and, with no fencing associated with the system, minimizes effects to the environment.



RADS sensor will identify deer, for example, if it nears the highway

Project partners and history

US Fish and Wildlife Service and Defenders of Wildlife partnered together to obtain enhancement grant funding through FDOT for this project. Other partners who helped develop the project included Big Cypress National Preserve, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, University of Central Florida and Montana State University's Western Transportation Institute.

An information workshop on July 30, 2009, offered the public an opportunity to discuss wildlife crossings along US 41 from Bass Road to Turner River Road with the department.

After reviewing comments received and evaluating different options, FDOT determined two approaches could provide wildlife protection in this area. One project, completed first, installed panther advisory signs with flashers in this segment of US 41. The second project designed and installed RADS. The system became operational in January 2012.

RADS along US 41



RADS recently installed on US 41

