



MULE DEER
MORTALITY
MONITORING
PROJECT

ABOUT THE PRESENTATION

Information in this presentation is a collaborative effort and includes contributions from:

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AND

Hunters for BC



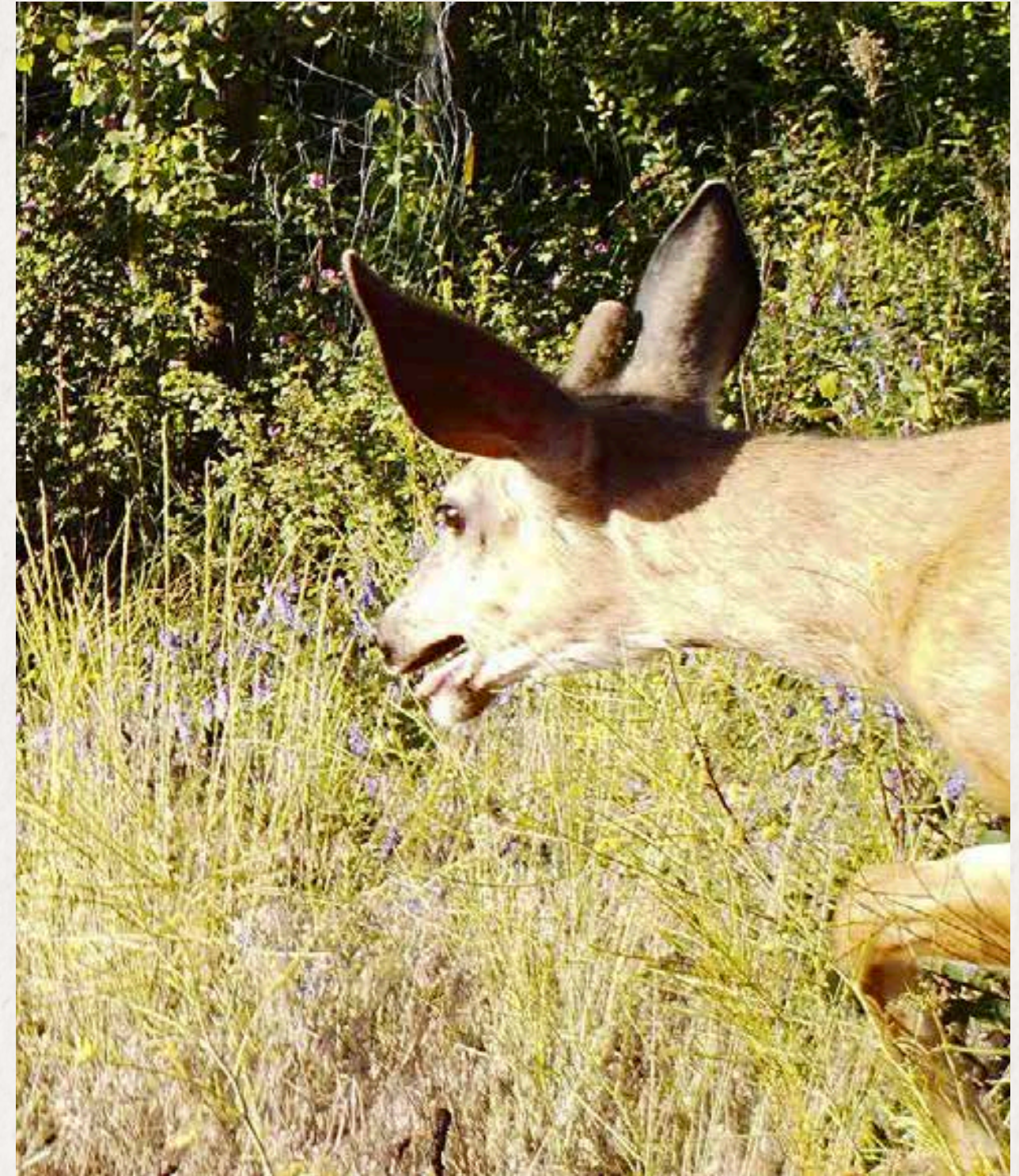


PROJECT OVERVIEW

- The Highway 97 pwalxkn (mule deer) Monitoring Project is a joint effort between Hunters for BC and the Okanagan Nation Alliance. pwalxkn are crucial for Syilx Okanagan food security, culture, and ecosystem health.
- The project monitors pwalxkn mortalities along Hwy 97 between Westbank and Penticton, near the wildlife fence. While the fence has reduced collisions, deaths still occur in adjacent areas. The aim is to quantify mortality and assess causes through field assessments.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Initiated in February 2023, preliminary results show pwalxkn deaths near the fence. Ongoing assessments will consider seasonal influences. Additional data from MOTI and ICBC will compare pre- and post-fence mortality rates.
- The long-term goal is to accurately measure pwalxkn mortality, determine causes, and collaboratively develop mitigation measures for the Highway 97 corridor.
- Additionally, predator success is influenced by forest encroachment on grassland ecosystems, with additional concerns noted including unauthorized ATV access during road closures and the spread of invasive weeds.



PRELIMINARY DATA AND OBSERVATIONS

Deer Mortalities

Including an inventory of mortalities prior to the start of the project in 2023, there are 236 recorded deer mortalities along the fence line. 135 of these mortalities of unknown age were recorded at the start of the project. 1 Mountain Goat mortality has been recorded. Coyotes have been identified as the primary predator / scavenger - causation has yet to be determined including how or if the fence line is helping the predators.

54 Fence Repairs Identified

Initial data collection from February 2023 to May 2023 involved a fence line walk every 3 weeks. Starting December 2024, volunteers monitored the fence line every 2 weeks thru the winter months, then monthly thru the summer.

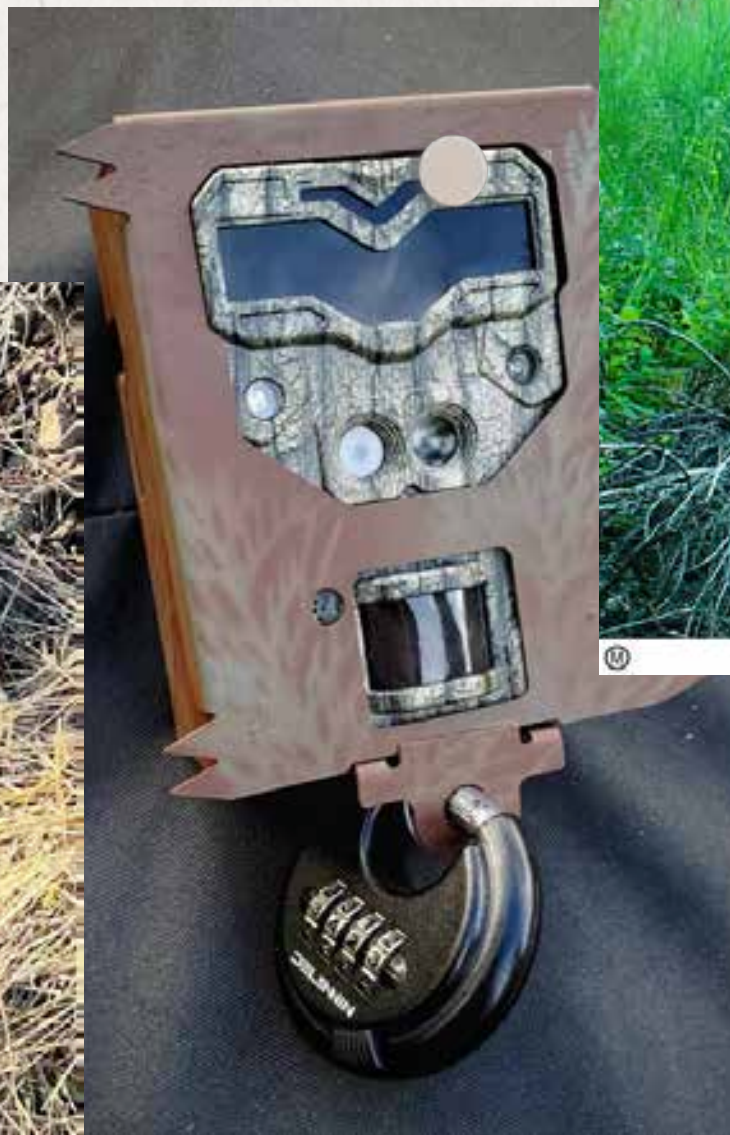
Gates

Trail cameras along the fence line show active use by coyotes and raccoons however several images show deer on the highway side of the gates but not actually moving through the gates. Hunters for BC is researching alternative wildlife gate options for this area.

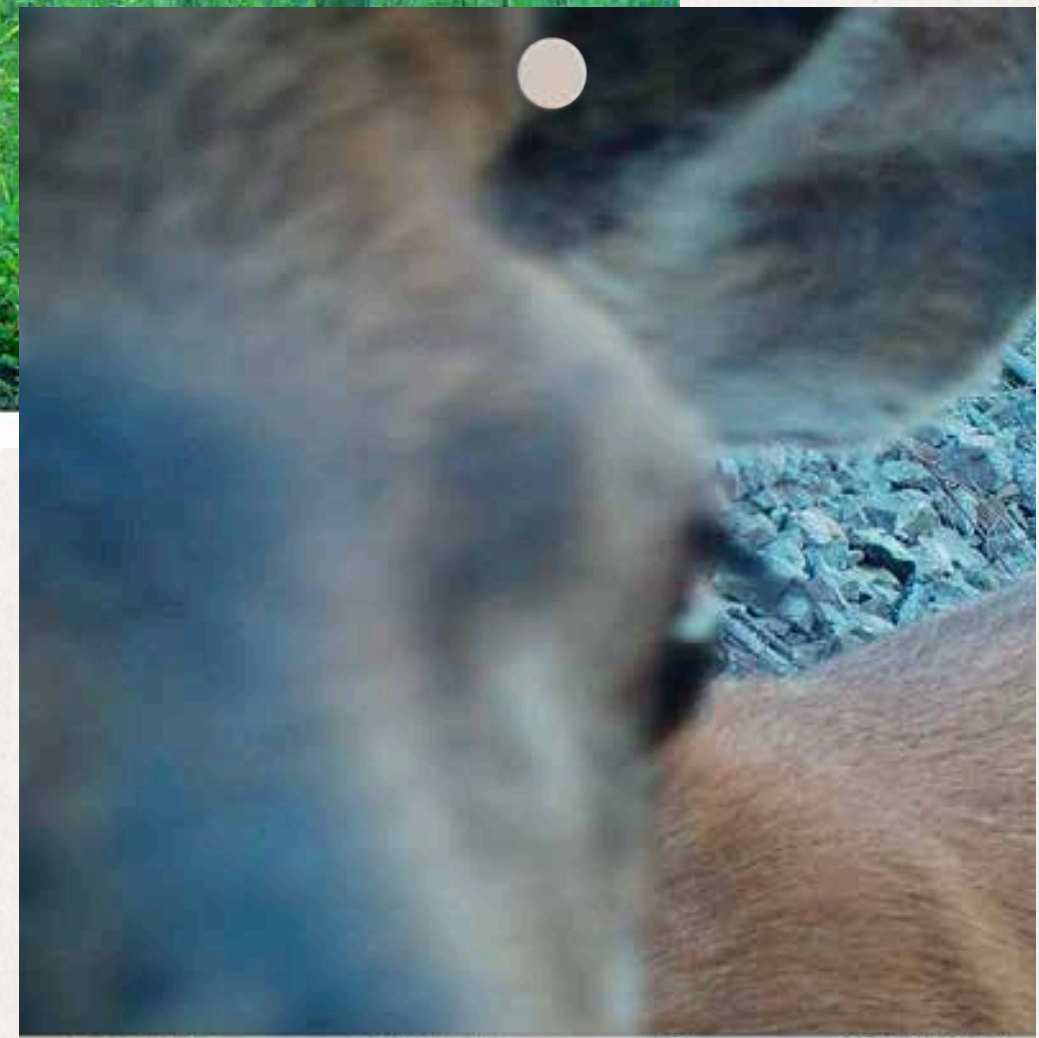
Volunteers

Initial data collection from February 2023 to May 2023 involved a fence line walk every 3 weeks. Starting December 2024, volunteers monitored the fence line every 2 weeks thru the winter months, then monthly thru the summer.

PROJECT PHOTOS



3220256 55°F 13°C



2220430 61°F 16°C 06/27/2024

PROJECT PHOTOS



3220298 62°F 16°C 03/20/2024 15:48:02





PRELIMINARY DATA ONLY

Coyotes are the primary predator / scavenger we record along the fence line in the project area.

Additional trail camera or other signs show bears (1), racoons (many) and cougar kills.

31 Mortalities in Adult (>1.5 years)

29 Neonates (Fawn to December 1st of birth year)

30 Yearling (1 to 1.5 years)

47 Unknown

99 Deer - Bones too old to identify



WHAT'S NEXT

Project Growth:

- Fence line monitoring and data collection will continue through the 2024/25 winter season.
- H4BC has initiated collaboration with local biologists to discuss enhanced protection of this crucial Mule Deer winter range. The area is intersected by roads and trails at various elevations, necessitating attention to mitigate human-related impacts.
- Key concerns include forest encroachment on grassland ecosystems, unauthorized ATV use during road closures, and the spread of invasive plant species. These issues have been prioritized for action.

OUR PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS



Financial Contributions

To date, Hunters for BC has invested over \$10,000 in this project.

For the 2024/25 season, funds raised will be allocated to engage a biologist on a new contract. This expert will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the entire winter range, broadening the scope of our research and conservation efforts.

OUR PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS



Volunteer Contributions

To date, volunteers have contributed nearly 1,000 hours to this monitoring program, demonstrating significant community engagement.

In May 2024, we hosted a successful appreciation BBQ for our dedicated volunteers, presenting them with small tokens of gratitude for their invaluable efforts. Given its positive reception, we plan to make this an annual event, with the next gathering scheduled for 2025.

PROJECT SUPPORT

- We couldn't do this without the support of our sponsors, members and fundraising committee!

SPECIAL THANKS



SUPPORT THE PROJECT

SPONSOR A CAMERA

<https://huntersforbc.ca/capture-the-wild-pwalxkn/>



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you reside between Kelowna & Penticton, are comfortable hiking, we need you! Please contact our Project Leaders: Robin Unrau and TJ Burns

VOLUNTEERS CONTACT
president@huntersforbc.ca