

Rethinking The Culture Of Corridors

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While the importance of landscape connectivity is well established in conservation biology and the value of habitat corridors has considerable support, much less is known about the role of the motivations and behaviour of people living within these corridors and the adjacent matrix in human-dominated landscapes. I argue that corridor research that focuses solely on habitat ultimately fails to characterize the important drivers of success or failure; the attitudes and actions of humans. In this study I examine the combined influences of habitat and human attitudes and actions on ungulate and wolf use of corridors and the matrix and assess the relative contribution of these social and biological aspects. Farmer observations of wildlife were documented within the agriculture-dominated matrix around two large protected areas, Riding Mountain National Park and Duck Mountain Provincial Forest in southwestern Manitoba using 786 responses to a mail-back questionnaire and mortality data on each species. For elk, deer, moose, and wolves, >45% of all human-caused mortalities on farmland occurred within 2km of a protected area. The probability of occurrence of each species within the matrix and corridors connecting the two protected areas was directly influenced by a unique combination of habitat and farm management variables.