



Wildlife Conservation Across The Gradient of Urbanization

What are the consequences to all types of wildlife when we build highways, subdivisions, canals and other modern conveniences? Are all species affected similarly, or do some thrive while others languish? And are there ways to minimize or limit negative consequences to both wild animals and humans at the interface between desert and development?

Jesse Lewis, Ph.D. an Assistant Professor at ASU's College of Integrative Sciences and Arts, will discuss his research at the February 12th SALT Speakers Series in the Multigenerational Center in Apache Junction at 6:30PM in Rm B117. Lewis' research studies human influences (e.g., urbanization and roads) and ecological disturbance (wildland fire and invasive species) on the distribution, abundance, and conservation of species and their habitat across multiple places and times. Such research can provide information to inform planning and decisions concerning development and all types of construction projects.

According to Lewis' research website, "Urbanization is a growing anthropogenic factor affecting wildlife populations in the US. To better understand how animals interact with urbanizing landscapes, we are studying diverse groups of species, including small to large-sized mammals, bats, and scorpions. In addition to working in the Phoenix Valley, we also are partnering with a national network of collaborators across cities in North America through the Urban Wildlife Information Network (UWIN)."

Jesse will discuss the work of his lab and colleagues in the greater Phoenix area, and may touch on how such work might expand into - and contribute to planning - in Pinal County. (Already Arizona's 3rd most populous AND fastest growing county at over 430,000, Pinal County is projected to exceed 1 million residents before 2050.)

Lewis' professional life is all in the western US. He has an undergraduate degree from the University of Montana, a master's degree from the University of Idaho, both a Ph.D and postdoctoral experience from Colorado State University - and now he is a professor at ASU. His experience and research interests are impressive. He has studied human influences on black bear habitat selection and movement patterns within a highway corridor; the effects of urbanization on wild and domestic cat populations, interactions, and pathogen dynamics; conducted broad-scale analyses evaluating how population density of wild pigs across their global distribution is related to living and non landscape factors; and he is now studying populations of various organisms - including coyotes, javelina, bats, mule deer, birds, and scorpions - in and around Greater Phoenix

Lewis' talk is part of the SALT Speakers Series, which is co-sponsored by the Superstition Area Land Trust (SALT) and the Apache Junction Parks & Recreation Department. The series occurs on most 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, October-April at this time and location. ALL are free and geared for the public.

SALT is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. You can learn more about us, what we do, and how to join and/or contribute at azsalt.org