

News Release  
Wildlife Corridors Prove Their Worth

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GAINESVILLE, Florida, September 17, 2002 (ENS) - An extensive, University of Florida led study shows that wildlife that corridors encourage the movement of plants and animals across fragmented landscapes.

Fragmented habitats can isolate species, reducing their chances to reproduce and survive. Many communities are beginning to set aside small strips of open space linking larger natural areas in hopes of helping wildlife to survive and thrive.

But ecologists have long debated whether these so called wildlife corridors actually help species, and few studies have provided enough data to help answer the question one way or the other.

A new, multiyear study, covering hundreds of acres, examines two indicators of healthy ecosystems - plant pollination by insects and the dispersal of seeds by birds - and concludes that corridors can encourage species to migrate between islands of intact habitat.

"This is by far the largest experimental look at the effects of corridors that has ever been done," said Josh Tewksbury, a UF postdoctoral associate and lead author of a report on the study scheduled to appear next week in the journal "Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.