

Marin Wildlife Picture Index FAQ

Q: What is the Wildlife Picture Index?

The Wildlife Picture Index Project (WPI) is an innovative method combining photos from wildlife cameras and other environmental data that enables land managers to learn about the presence of wildlife and, ultimately, assess the success of efforts to protect wildlife species diversity and populations. The WPI, used internationally and locally, is now being utilized in Marin as a One Tam initiative to collect wildlife data on a large scale.

Q: What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of this project is to acquire statistically viable wildlife data on the landscape scale. While we are aware of many of the species that occupy our lands (mountain lions, coyotes, badgers, etc.), most of the information we have is anecdotal, and we do not understand abundance or extent of use by these species or how these animals move about and utilize our lands at different times of the year.

Q: What is a wildlife camera?

A wildlife camera is a stationary, weatherproof, motion-activated camera that can be left outside for long periods of time. Wildlife cameras do not emit light or use a flash, and therefore are able to gather images without disturbing wildlife. Cameras operate on rechargeable batteries and record photographs onto memory cards..

Q: How will data from this project be used?

Understanding trends and patterns in wildlife use and behavior is essential to taking better care of our lands. The more we understand wildlife needs, the better we will be able to direct our resources toward enhancing and stabilizing wildlife habitats for the long-term. This project will enhance our understanding of wildlife occupancy and tie off of past wildlife studies that have been done in the region. This information is essential as Parks acquires new preserves, and continues to steward Marin's Open Spaces.

Q: Will the photographs taken by these cameras be used for enforcement purposes?

No. Images caught on camera will NOT be used for enforcement purposes. The purpose of this project is strictly to learn more about wildlife activity on Open Space.

Q: How is the project arranged?

The cameras in this project are arranged on a grid, which provides a non-biased sampling method that allows us to determine the occupancy and frequency of wildlife in different areas.

Q: Where are the cameras located?

Cameras are placed at regular intervals across our preserves in Western Marin. Camera locations will also extend into adjacent land, including parcels maintained by Marin Municipal Water District, state parks, and national parks. The exact location of cameras will remain undisclosed for the duration of the project. Marin County Parks Preserves that will have cameras include Gary Giacomini, Cascade Canyon, White Hill, French Ranch and Roy's Redwoods.

Q: Is Marin County Parks the only agency doing this?

No. The Wildlife Picture Index project protocol is being used internationally with great success. Here in California, the protocol was first used in Sonoma County, and is now being used as part of a regional wildlife data collection process being conducted through a partnership between several different agencies (Marin County Parks, MMWD, GGNRA).

Q: How can I learn about the results?

We will be posting updates from this project on our website (marincountyparks.org), as they become available.

Q: Can I be involved?

Yes! This is a community science project. We rely on volunteers to help process the many photos captured by these cameras. We hold training sessions where volunteers learn about the project, how to identify mammals in the photos, and how to catalog the photos. Volunteer field assistants also help service cameras at regular intervals. This involves working with staff to locate cameras, change out batteries, and recover memory cards. Visit <http://onetam.org/programs-and-projects/wildlife-camera-project> to learn more.

Finally, it is extremely important that these cameras remain intact and in place for the duration of the project so that we can collect good data. Please ask your friends and neighbors to help us take care of these cameras!.

For more information, or if you have any questions, contact Marin Count Parks Wildlife Biologist Lisa Michl at: LMichl@marincounty.org