Why didn't the animal cross the road?

Have you ever wondered how roads affect the animals in your neighborhood? A group of scientists studied the different widths of roads and how many animals crossed them. You can read all about their research here: https://kids.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/frym.2019.00109.

You can also participate in a similar study with your school, class, or family!

What You'll Need

-Pencil
-Paper

What You'll Do

1. Look outside your window at the road. If you do not have a view of a road and it's safe, go outside on the street while being careful to stay away from others.
2. Determine how big your street is. Does it have 2 lanes? 4 lanes? 6 lanes? Write down how big it is.
3. Choose a time every day to observe your road for 20 minutes. Write down the time and date every day of the experiment. Make sure to stick to the same time every day!
4. For 20 minutes, observe how many animals walk across the road and what kind of animal they are (i.e. bird, squirrel, mouse, cat, etc.).
5. After the 20 minutes are up, if it is safe, go outside (if you are not already there) and walk 100 steps in one direction down the road. As you walk, write down how many animals you see and what kinds, including animals who are not on the road. Now return to your start point and walk 100 steps in the other direction. Continue to write down how many animals you see and what kinds.
6. After 5 days of the experiment, count up how many animals you saw cross the road. Count up how many animals you saw on your walk.
7. Consider the questions in the next section.

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After 5 Days

How many animals crossed the road? What kind of animal crossed the road the most number of times?

How many animals did you see on your walk? What kind of animal did you see the most of?

Which day did you see the most animals?

Compare the number of animals who crossed the road to the number of animals you saw. Is there a big difference between the numbers? Why do you think that is?

Do you think animals are more likely to cross smaller roads (2 lanes) or bigger roads (6 lanes)? Why?

Do you think you would have different results if you picked a different time? Why? Try it out!

Send us your results!

We want to hear from everyone who works on this experiment. We'll collect all the data and then share the results with everyone who participated! Email us your data at naturalareas@randallsisland.org.

Example Datasheet

Name: Sam Jones

Road Size: 4 lanes

Day 1

Date: 3/24/2020

Time: 3:00pm

20-Minute Observations:

Animal Type	Total Count
Squirrel	III
Cat	I

Walking Observations:

Animal Type	Total Count
Squirrel	IIII
Bird	III
Racoon	I

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Your Datasheet

Name:

Road Size:

Date:

Time:

20-Minute Observations:

Animal Type	Total Count

Walking Observations:

Animal Type	Total Count

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