

'Toad blocks' shut down B.C. roads for migration

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Two rural roads in Chilliwack, B.C., will be closed for a few hours each day for the next two weeks to accommodate an annual wildlife migration — of baby Western Toads.

Ryder Lake and Elk View roads will be shut closed to traffic — in what locals call "toad blocks" — to make way for the newly hatched amphibians that are about the size of a fingernail.

The pavement on the roads looks like it's covered by hundreds of bumblebees.



The newly hatched Western Toad is not much bigger than a human fingernail. CBC The toadlets are making their way from area lakes where they were born to wooded areas where they will live.

About one million of the toads will make the trek in the weeks ahead.

The Fraser Valley Conservancy arranged the road closures with the City of Chilliwack to avoid the virtual slaughter of the toads every year due to vehicle traffic.

"[Residents] were using snow shovels to move the carcasses off the road," said Conservancy Executive Director Lisa Fox.

Fox said new technology is being tested that could end the annual road closures.

Netting would funnel the toads to a grate-covered ditch dug under the road, which would allow the creatures to cross without threat.

The Western Toad is not listed as an endangered species.

With files from the CBC's Renee Filippone

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