

CSMON-LIFE: data from the people, data for the people

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Citizen Science approaches are well developed in Northern Europe, Northern America and Australia, and are becoming more and more common all over the world. In Europe especially, the Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) project in the British Isles demonstrated the strength of Citizen Science approaches in collecting reliable biodiversity data, and led to the formation of the European Citizen Science Association (ECSA). In Italy there exist several Citizen Science initiatives, especially funded by the European commission in the framework of the LIFE+ programme, among which is the CSMON-LIFE project (LIFE13 ENV/IT/842).

Citizen Science is an extremely effective mean for collecting roadkill data. There exist projects focusing on the collection of roadkill data all over the world, from the California Roadkill Observation System (<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/citscitoolkit/projects/california-roadkill-observation-system/>), the Austrian Project Roadkill (<http://roadkill.at/en/>), the Roadkill Survey for Road Bikers (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/citizen-science/roadkill-survey-for-road-bikers/>), etc. However, while extremely effective for collecting data, the Citizen Science approach has several issues, especially when dealing with the observation of road kills. A first issue is related to the correct identification of the animal which is observed. Often, even an expert can't identify properly a dead animal, without carrying it in a lab for dissection, because of the damages caused by the impact with a vehicle. Hence, the identification performed by a citizen has a certain degree of uncertainty, even if the observation is transmitted together a digital image. Furthermore, since sending an observation of a roadkill, especially if a digital image is required, forces the citizen to stop his own vehicle, it can be the source of crashes and other accidents.

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