



Region 5 Barrier ID: W061 (Top Priority Barrier).

Barrier Name: I-8 Imperial County.

Linear Infrastructure: I-8.

Geographic Area: I-8 in the transverse/Peninsular Ranges Imperial, San Diego County, Caltrans District 11. Shared barrier with Region 6.

Length: 33.23 km (20.70 miles).

Target Species: Peninsular bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*).

Connectivity Concerns: I-8 is a heavily trafficked freeway that connects San Diego, CA with Phoenix, AZ. The project area cuts through critical habitat for Federally Endangered Peninsular bighorn sheep and encompasses a key dispersal pathway for sheep. Extensive GPS data of In-Ko-Pah sheep along with roadkill will help inform potential locations for a wildlife crossing. The project area includes a 5-mile stretch of critical habitat between the east and west bound lanes of the Interstate where the In Ko Pah ewe group of sheep returns every year to have their lambs. The existing and increasing traffic on I-8 threatens the survival of these ewes and their new lambs and impedes seasonal migration for other Peninsular bighorn sheep.

Remediation Goals: Construct an overcrossing in priority area where sheep are known to cross the highway, and roadkill has been an issue. Wildlife exclusion fencing on east and west bound lanes to help guide animals to newly constructed overcrossing and existing under crossings. The development of a wildlife crossing and directional fencing along this busy interstate will be a critical step towards increasing permeability for bighorn sheep and other wildlife in the region.



Figure: I-8 east of the Imperial-San Diego County line is a Region 5 top priority wildlife connectivity barrier.