



Bringing the Adventure and Science Communities Together

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PCT Hikers Collect Data for Wildlife Researchers

Bozeman, MT November 26th, 2012 - This fall more than 40 individuals hiking from Mexico to Canada on the 2,650 mile Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) became citizen scientists as they searched for the American Pika (*Ochotona princeps*) along their route. Hikers were assisting researchers who seek to better understand how the smallest members of the rabbit family are affected by a changing climate. Participants took photos and GPS locations when they saw or heard pika, which provided important information to researchers who otherwise would be unable to gather this important information. “Funds for wildlife surveys are limited,” explains pika researcher Joseph Stewart Ph.D. from the University of Nevada- Reno, “Citizen science exponentially increases the data we can collect while reducing the costs.” This project was facilitated by [Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation](#) (ASC), a nonprofit dedicated to improving the accessibility of scientific information through partnerships between outdoor adventurers and scientists.

ASC developed the project to give hikers who want to do more with their time outdoors the chance to help wildlife researchers by surveying the PCT on an unprecedented scale. “These hikers pass through important study areas all summer. Not only has being involved in this program added to their experiences by giving them a chance to do more with their hikes, but it also provided our scientists with a more complete and useable set of data that will inform management decisions,” says ASC Executive Director Gregg Treinish. The hikers upload photos and GPS points of pikas and the signs they leave behind to a free online database powered by ASC partner [iNaturalist.com](#). To date, there are over 155 pika observations made by hikers across the western US.

In addition to collecting important scientific data, looking for pikas adds a deeper purpose to PCT expeditions. Peter Gil-Montllor, a recent PCT thru-hiker who looked for pikas along the way, explains that “scouting for pikas provided an extra goal to accomplish each day, while

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contributing to something more than my own self-improvement and enjoyment.” The data collected this year will be used by researchers to help understand how pika populations are responding to climate change. ASC asks athletes traveling around the world to collect scientific data. For more information on the pika monitoring project or to get involved with ASC visit www.adventureandscience.org.

About Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation

Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation was founded in January of 2011 with the understanding that many people traveling in the outdoors genuinely want to do more for the places they visit but often struggle with how to help. ASC exists to bridge this gap by pairing adventure athletes already traveling to some of the earth's most difficult-to-reach places with the scientists who need information from these areas. ASC also has the goal of creating unique and innovative learning experiences about science while also saving the scientific and conservation communities millions of dollars in data collection costs. For more information visit www.adventureandscience.org

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