



MAFES Dawg Tracks

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*Oh Deer!! Beware of
Animals in the Road*



According to the link <http://blog.driversed.com/oh-deer> vehicle – animal collisions kill about 200 people each year and costs about \$1.1 billion per year in property damage. Another interesting statistic from the Information Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS): There is an estimated 1.5 million vehicle-animal collisions also causing about \$1 billion dollars in damage. This study also revealed that approximately 150 people die - with another 10,000 receiving injuries. The National Safety Council has statistics that closely reveal the statistics from the two other studies, additionally stating that these collisions kill as many as 350,000 deer.

Reasons for Deer-Vehicle Collisions Increases-

- The deer population is on the increase in most areas of the USA.
- The number of vehicles and miles driven on the rise.
- A certain percentage of the population is moving from the urban areas to the rural locations where the population of deer is more prevalent.

Highway safety professionals suggest that the best way to avoid a collision is practicing pure vigilance. In daylight hours, the motorists can usually see a deer on the side of the road and can avoid a collision. It is harder to spot a deer in the dark hours on the side of the road. Due to the fact that deer are more active during the evening and early morning hours, 90% of deer-vehicle collisions happen between dusk and dawn.

Highway Agencies are trying several approaches to try to reduce the number of deer-vehicle accidents. Following are explanation of these attempts:

- ✓ **Signs** – Signs serve as a warning to motorists in heavily populated areas of deer, moose, elk and even geese in some areas.
- ✓ **Fences and underpasses** - Underpasses help motorists and also help to preserve the deer population. However, the cost of construction usually makes them unjustifiable. The other fact is that deer can jump fences. When they realize the fence is obstructing their passage, they look for alternate routes of passage.
- ✓ **Diversionary Feeding areas** - Deer tend to move about in the Fall and Spring. Officers have set up feeding sights away from highways; but in other alternatives, these are expensive to build and maintain.
- ✓ **Expanded hunting seasons** - Expanded hunting seasons help to a point, but wildlife agencies have always maintained that if hunters observe the regulations it really doesn't affect the population.

Roadside reflectors – Reflectors, when used, can be positioned on the side of the road so that when the “light” reflects on the deer they tend to “freeze.” Schools out on the real effectiveness of this method. However, I have a friend who is retired from the US Wildlife Agency, who says that they have witnessed bucks getting on their knees as they were doing night population surveys, to avoid the light hitting them.

Whistles – There are folks who have purchased and mounted these whistles on their vehicles. I have bought these and have them mounted on both of our vehicles. Can't say that they help, but I have seen deer on the side of the road and they flare away as we pass. I don't know if it is the whistle or the sound of the engine that causes them to leave.

Safety Tips for Avoiding Animal Collisions-

- **Look for animal crossing signs** – Be extra careful in the areas that have the animal warning signs mounted on the side of the road. Use your high beam to spot animals on the side of the road. It is easier to see them from a greater distance away.
- **Drive slower at night** – We should always respect speed limits, but it especially more important at night. Driving at slower speeds at night gives you more time to react to animals.
- **Deer travel in groups** – If you see one deer, there are others lurking close by. Be careful when slowing down for the one - don't accelerate because there may be another just down the road.
- **Be extra careful at dusk and dawn** – Deer are most active in the daylight and dusk hours. So be extra cautious during these times.
- **Don't swerve or slam on the brakes** – If you do encounter deer or other wildlife in the road, slow down gradually and honk. Swerving can cause you to lose control. Sudden stops or movements could spook the animal, causing it to run in the path of your vehicle.
- **If an accident seems inevitable** – Again don't swerve or attempt a sudden stop - try to take the line of least resistance. If an accident does occur, survey the situation, take care of yourself and your vehicle occupants, and then call the law enforcement for help.

**ALWAYS OBEY THE SPEED LIMIT
& WEAR YOUR SEATBELTS**

**◁ SAFETY IS AS SIMPLE AS A-B-C-
ALWAYS BE CAREFUL ▷**

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INVEST IN TOMORROW!

OBEY THE RULES TODAY!!

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Excerpts: <http://blog.driversed.com>
www.statefarm.com