

Kansas Department of Transportation

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Deer D-Day Just Around the Corner

KDOT urges motorists to be extra vigilant on November 18

Kansas drivers should be on high alert on November 18, Deer D-Day: the day deer/automobile crashes peak in the state. During the past decade, an average of 700 deer/vehicle collisions have occurred in Kansas on that particular date.

The state's large deer population, which fluctuates between 350,000 and 400,000, is particularly active during November and December. This time of year is mating, or rut, season. In addition, deer tend to widen their foraging range as they build up their fat reserves for the winter. They often migrate from one foraging range to another during early winter, exposing themselves to risks, like highways, with which they might not be familiar.

The results are often costly in terms of property damage, personal injury and even death.

"We continue to see a high number of crashes in Kansas," said Pete Bodyk, Chief of KDOT's Bureau of Traffic Safety. "Even though our numbers for deer-related crashes dropped overall in 2005, Kansas drivers need to stay alert to the dangers on roadways on November 18."

Kansas motorists are increasingly likely to experience deer on roadways during November and December, as the number of deer/vehicle crashes escalates dramatically during these two months. The Kansas Department of Transportation recorded a total of 8,819 deer-related crashes in 2005 in Kansas – that's almost 13 percent of all recorded collisions. Last year's number also represents the fewest crashes since 1996 when there were 8,415 deer-related crashes. Counties with a high population are credited with most of the deer-related crashes. Johnson County had the highest with 358, followed by Sedgwick with 345 and Butler County with 261.

KDOT encourages motorists to observe the following tips to avoid deer collisions:

- Be especially watchful at dawn and dusk, when deer are particularly active.
- Slow down to avoid a collision with a deer, but do not swerve. The most serious crashes occur when motorists take evasive action, which can lead to a loss of vehicle control.
- Elevate your awareness at locations with deer crossing signs, which indicate areas where heavily used deer trails cross roadways.
- When driving at night, use high beams when there is no oncoming traffic, as they are more likely to reveal a deer's eyes.
- Deer seldom travel alone. Chances are if you see one deer crossing a road, others are nearby.

For more statistics on deer-related crashes in Kansas, or to see your county's statistics, visit: <http://www.ksdot.org/burTransPlan/prodinfo/2005factsbook/Deer.pdf>

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