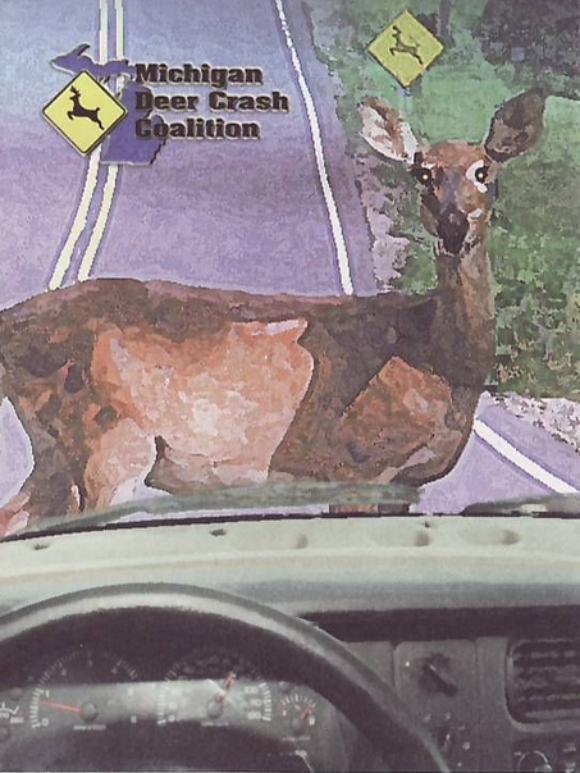


Don't Veer For Deer!

- Buckle Up
- Slow Down
- Stay Alert



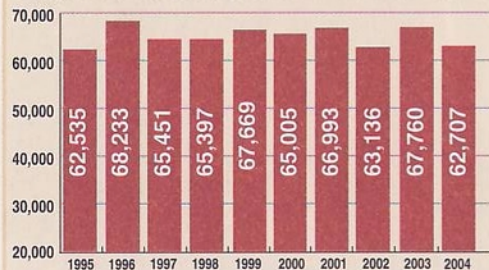
DEER DEMAND OUR ATTENTION

Car-deer crashes are a year-round problem that deserves the attention of the motoring public. Every year in Michigan, car-deer crashes take the lives of drivers or their passengers, cause thousands of serious injuries, and result in millions of dollars in property damage.



The state's 1.75 million-strong deer herd is most active in spring and fall, but it is autumn when the largest percentage of crashes occur. Car-deer crashes are at least a \$130 million a year problem in Michigan. The average car-deer crash causes about \$2,000 in damage, usually to the front end, often leaving the vehicle undrivable.

CAR-DEER CRASHES IN MICHIGAN



When you see a deer on the roadway ahead, you sometimes have only a brief moment to react. And you may not know the right thing to do. Statistics show that most motorist deaths and injuries occur when drivers swerve to avoid hitting the deer and strike a fixed object, like a tree, or hit another vehicle. No one wants to see a deer destroyed, but striking the animal is often the safest action.

DEER-VEHICLE COLLISION FACTS

- In 2004 there were 62,707 reported car-deer crashes. However, because as many as half of all car-deer crashes may not be reported, the total is likely much greater.
- Three motorists were killed (compared to 11 in 2003) and 1,647 persons were injured (compared to 1,913 in 2003). Of the three motorists killed in 2004, one was riding a motorcycle at the time of the crash.
- Motorcyclists are especially vulnerable to injury or death in car-deer crashes. Some good news is both total and injury motorcycle-deer crashes for 2004 decreased 12% from 2003.



Motorcyclists must be especially wary of the possible presence of deer on the roadways they are traveling. Of special note, unlike car-deer crashes, motorcycle-deer crashes occur mostly in the summer months when large numbers of riders are out enjoying the countryside.

It must be stressed that over 80% of all motorcycle-deer crashes involve an injury. Riders are urged to lower their speeds on rural roadways, especially at dawn and dusk when deer are most active.

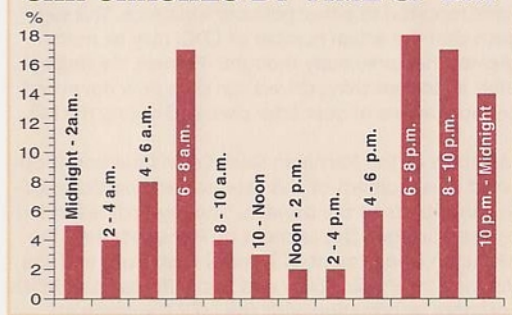
- About 80% of all car-deer crashes occur on two-lane roads between dusk and dawn.

CAR-DEER CRASHES BY MONTH - 2004 -



- Car-deer crashes occur all year, but they are especially prevalent during the fall mating season (Oct. 15 - Dec. 15) and during spring when deer seek out the first green grass near roads.
- Due to rapid development in previously rural areas and a statewide deer herd four times larger than in 1970—and 10 times larger in southern Lower Michigan - the problem is not going away.

CAR CRASHES BY TIME OF DAY



WHAT IS BEING DONE TO REDUCE CAR-DEER CRASHES?

The department of Fisheries and Wildlife at Michigan State University is completing two research projects that will give insights into what may be done to reduce the number of car-deer crashes (CDCs) in southeast Michigan. One study is determining environmental factors affecting the distribution and frequency of CDCs, while the other is examining drivers' knowledge and attitudes about CDCs with a hope of identifying educational opportunities. The studies were conducted in Oakland, Washtenaw, and Monroe counties, which represent a variety of traffic patterns, driver characteristics, land-use, and deer habitats.

Although it may seem that way sometimes, CDCs are not a random event on the highway and there are things that can be done to reduce their frequency if drivers take time to learn. The risk of a CDC is greatest on secondary 2-3 lane highways and increases in areas with higher speed limits. Deer density and vehicle miles driven on a highway that crosses through deer habitat combine to increase the likelihood of a CDC.

Commuters, especially middle aged male drivers, are the ones most frequently involved in CDCs. Whereas more CDCs occur at periods of dawn and dusk, the greatest risk of a CDC to individual drivers is in darkness, later at night. Drivers should be extra cautious in the fall between October 15 and December 15, as this is the season of greatest movement by deer. Less than half of CDCs experienced by questionnaire respondents were reported to either police or insurance. This suggests that the actual number of CDCs may be much greater than previously thought. Perhaps the single most important thing drivers can do is slow down and be more aware of deer after dark and during the fall.

Members of the Michigan Deer-Crash Coalition facilitated development of this research and participated as consultants to the projects. The research is funded by the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research at MSU. For more information, visit the MDCC website at: www.semcog.org/tranplan/trafficsafety/mdcc

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Stay aware, awake, alert and sober.
- Remember, safety belts are your best defense in any collision.
- Be especially alert in spring and fall, but keep in mind that car-deer crashes occur year-round.
- Heed deer crossing and speed limit signs.
- Deer are herd animals and frequently travel in single file. If you see one deer cross the road, chances are there are more waiting. If you see one, slow down.
- Be especially alert for deer at dawn and dusk.
- Don't rely on gimmicks, flashing your high-beam headlights or honking your horn to deter deer.

IF A CRASH IS UNAVOIDABLE

- Don't swerve!
- Brake firmly
- Hold onto the steering wheel
- Stay in your lane
- Bring your vehicle to a controlled stop

AFTER A CRASH

- Pull off the road. Turn on your emergency flashers and be cautious of other traffic if you leave your vehicle.
- Don't attempt to remove a deer from the roadway unless you are convinced it is dead. An injured deer's sharp hooves can easily hurt you.
- Report the crash to the nearest police agency and your insurance company. Car-deer crashes are typically covered under the comprehensive portion of your insurance policy and should not adversely impact your rates.
- Police or DNR conservation officers may issue you a permit to keep the deer. If you don't want it, consider donating it to Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger for use at food banks and shelters.

For information, call (313) 278-FOOD, or go to:
www.sportsmenagainsthunger.org.

For copies of this brochure, visit www.michigan.gov/ohsp
(Click on Traffic Safety Materials); fax to (517) 336-2663;
call (517) 333-2722; or e-mail
trafficsafety@michigan.gov.



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www.semco.org/tranplan/trafficsafety/mdcc

