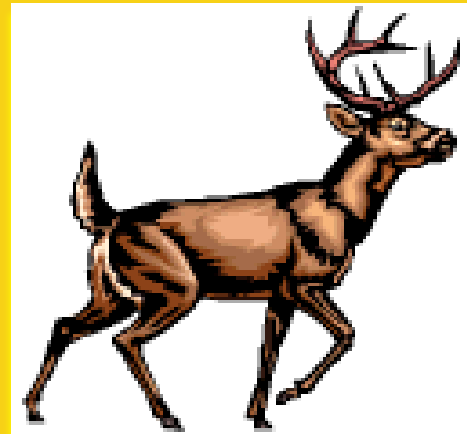




Wildlife Strikes

Upstream Americas
Road Transport



Dean Dobrescu

Impact of Wildlife Strikes

North America

- 750,000 deer-vehicle collisions annually.
- \$1.2 billion in property damage annually.
- Average repair cost of car colliding with a deer is \$3000.
- Wildlife collisions occur every 39 mins.
- ~200 motorists die in the US each yr. from wildlife collisions.
- 1 out of 17 collisions involve wildlife.
- In rural Alberta nearly half of rural collisions involve an animal.



Vehicles Stop Wildlife DEAD in their tracks

- As our population continues to grow, our highway networks expand further into wildlife habitat. With these expansions and increases in traffic volume and speed, it is inevitable that wildlife-vehicle collisions will become more frequent.
- The most dangerous times for a strike to occur are early morning and early evening.

Wildlife are actually attracted to the Road

Most people think of the road as a dangerous place, but wildlife may actually be attracted to the road for many reasons.

- The timing and amount of mowing and brushing of the ditch and right of way can increase forage palatability.
- Removal of snow in the winter can provide for ease of movement.
- More wind on the road and right of way provides relief from biting insects.

Wildlife are actually attracted to the Road - continued

- Product spillage (such as grain) from accidents can create temporary food sources.
- Application of salt and other deicing materials to the road is a major attractant for wildlife.
- Proximity to agricultural crops such as alfalfa increases the amount of wildlife in the area.

Preventing Wildlife Vehicle Collisions

- Driver awareness and behaviour is key to reducing the number of highway strikes.
- Be alert- use quick glances to scan ahead for animal movements or shinning eyes.
- If you spot one animal, look for others. Animals often travel in groups.
- Improve visibility. Keep your windshield and head lights clean.

Preventing Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions - continued

SLOW DOWN

- Headlights have an illumination range of 200-250ft so allow for extra breaking time. Reducing your speed from 100 kph to 80 kph gives an extra 30 meters or 90 feet to stop – that's several car lengths.
- Reduce your speed at dusk and dawn; during the night; on dark, overcast or foggy days; in unfamiliar or rural areas; or on roads near water.
- If you see wildlife, slow down immediately and be prepared to stop, even if the animal is a considerable distance from the road.

Preventing Wildlife Vehicle Collisions - continued

- Resist the tendency to speed up on long straight stretches with good driving conditions. Collisions occur more than expected in good conditions.
- Use high beams at night where possible and watch for glowing eyes of animals.
- Headlights will not illuminate on moose's eyes.
- Do not ignore wildlife warning signs. They indicate an area of increased population. Take extra precaution when travelling through these areas.



Do Deer Whistles work?

- There is no published research which verifies the devices effectiveness.
- Ultrasonic sound does not carry very well. It does not travel a long enough distance to warn an animal.
- Deer hear approximately the same frequencies as humans. If we can't hear it chances are the deer won't either.
- A deer's reaction is unpredictable. Its response will depend on a number of factors – age, sex, type of enemy, and surroundings.

What if a Collision is Inevitable?

- Sometimes, there is no real choice except to strike the animal. If this is the case:
- Look where you want to go, not at the animal. The vehicle tends to go where you look.
- Brake firmly and quickly, then look, and steer your vehicle to strike the animal at an angle.
- Let up on the brake just before you hit the animal.



To swerve or not to swerve...

- Generally, it is best not to swerve to avoid hitting wildlife, instead:
Stay in control, steer and firmly brake to a stop
Swerving can lead to rollovers or more serious collisions with oncoming vehicles or stationary objects
- The lone exception is *Moose*:
An adult moose can grow up to 1 600 pounds and is comparable to a vehicle on stilts. There is a significant chance that a moose-vehicle collision will result in a human fatality.
So if the situation allows, **swerving for a moose is the defensive option.**



What should you do if you hit an animal

After you hit the animal:

- Pull off the road. Turn on hazard lights. Stay away from wounded animals, as they can be very dangerous. You are not required to put an injured animal out of its misery or move a dead animal.
- Inspect your vehicle to see if it safe to continue driving. Call the RCMP if there is damage over \$1000 or any human injuries.
- Call the local law enforcement agency if there is a dead or injured animal to report.
- Reporting the exact location of collisions helps wardens monitor injured animals and recover dead ones.
- Quick removal prevents other animals from being attracted to the highway.

