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Illinois Vehicle Crashes Involving Deer Still on the Decline

IDOT, IDNR Urge Motorists to Drive Defensively, Stay Alert for Seasonal Wildlife Activity on Illinois Roadways

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) today announced that crashes involving deer are still on the decline in Illinois. Data reveals a one percent decline in motor vehicle vs. deer crashes, from 15,495 in 2012 to 15,334 in 2013.

The number of deer-vehicle crashes that resulted in property damage only decreased to 14,811 in 2013 compared to 14,969 in 2012. Accidents involving deer were responsible for six fatalities in 2013, an increase from four fatalities in 2012. Although the number of crashes resulting in injuries declined slightly in 2013 compared to 2012, the number of injuries resulting from these motor vehicle crashes involving a deer increased from 608 in 2012 to 617 in 2013.

About four in every five crashes occurred on rural roadways and almost 80 percent occurred at twilight or nighttime.

Despite the decline in the number of deer-vehicle accidents, IDOT and IDNR want to remind motorists to be alert for deer along roadways during one of the most active periods of the year for wildlife activity. Approximately 40 to 50 percent of all accidents involving deer in a typical year occur during the months of October, November, and December – with November being the highest-risk month.

The top 10 counties for collisions involving deer in 2013 were:

1. Madison - 432
2. Cook - 426
3. Will – 373
4. Peoria - 372

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5. Lake - 352
6. Fulton - 342
7. Sangamon - 323
8. Kane - 311
9. Pike - 297
10. Rock Island - 297

Suggestions for motorists to avoid colliding with deer include:

- Be particularly cautious at dusk and dawn, when deer are most active.
- Keep track of locations where deer have been spotted in the past to avoid being surprised.
- Reduce speed and be prepared to stop, especially near water, farm fields and wooded areas.
- Deer will cross the road and double back. Make sure deer have moved away before proceeding.
- Be mindful that deer will follow each other. One deer can mean others are nearby or close behind.
- Avoid swerving into traffic or off the road if deer are on the roadway. Instead, slow to a stop and wait for the deer to move along.
- Flashing the headlights and honking the car horn will encourage deer to move off the road.
- Alert other motorists to the presence of deer by tapping the brakes.

If an accident with a deer does occur, drivers and passengers should provide assistance to anyone injured. Contact local, county or state law enforcement to report the incident. Do not attempt to remove a dead or injured deer from a busy roadway. Illinois law requires that all accidents resulting in damage of at least \$1,500 to be reported to police.

The driver involved in the accident may take possession of the animal. If the driver does not want it, any Illinois resident can claim the deer. Those taking possession of the deer are not required to phone in a report and obtain a registration number for the deer, unless the deer is taken to a taxidermist or tannery. If the deer is to be taken to a taxidermist or tannery, please call the IDNR Office of Law Enforcement at (217) 782-6431 to obtain a tag before delivering the deer.



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Anyone possessing the deer must keep a personal record of the date the deer was claimed, the sex of the animal, the location of the accident and the place where the deer or deer parts are stored. This information must be kept until the deer is consumed or no longer in the possession of any person. This information also must be provided to any law enforcement officer investigating the death and possession of the deer.

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