



WGFD

Conserving Wildlife, Serving People

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News Release

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MOTORISTS URGED TO USE CAUTION WHEN WILDLIFE NEAR ROADS

CASPER – The Wyoming Game and Fish Department urges motorists to pay special attention for animals along our roadways. Wyoming is blessed with bountiful big game numbers, and with winter approaching these animals are more active than ever with mating seasons and migrations to winter ranges. Unfortunately, many of our roadways cut across traditional migration routes, which can lead to tragic and expensive collisions between wildlife and vehicles.

As daylight savings time ends on November 2, people will now be driving home from work at dusk when visibility is poor and when many big game animals are most active. And with many big game animals at the peak of their mating season they are more mobile, easily distracted and more likely to be crossing roadways.

These animals can appear just about anytime day or night and anywhere, rural areas or right in town. Nobody plans on having a collision with an animal, but it happens all the time and it's never a good situation. "At best, you end up with a dead animal and several hundred dollars in vehicle damage," said Robin Kepple, information specialist with the Game and Fish Department. "And the sad thing is, many times, it could have been avoided by just slowing down a little. A lot of times motorists see the deer grazing alongside the road but still go blazing by at 60 or 70 miles per hour like the animals are not even there. The only way to avoid collisions with wildlife is to slow down and watch out for them. You can save yourself some expense and save a wild animal just by slowing down."

Paying attention to your surroundings as you drive can also help avoid collisions with wildlife. "People just need to be cautious when they see wildlife near the side of roads. People can't assume those animals are going to stay in place as they drive by them," said Daniel Beach, game warden trainee for the department's Casper office. "Also, drivers need to pay extra attention in areas that have tall brush or trees in the ditches or close to the roadways.

Wyoming has many rural paved roadways that have tall brush and trees very close to the road surface. In these locations drivers should always assume wildlife could be concealed in that forage and should slow their speed and pay extra attention to those areas," Beach said.

Tips for driving with wildlife in mind:

- Slow down!
- Expect wildlife on our roads.
- Scan the sides of the roads for wildlife.
- Stay alert while driving at dusk, dawn and at night and be prepared to stop.
- At night travel at a speed that will allow you to stop in time if an animal comes into your headlights.
- If you see one elk, deer or antelope along the roadway, you are likely to see more.
- If you see an animal on the road expect the unexpected. They do not instinctively know how to react to your car.
- Give the animal time and room to move off the road. Do not try to out-run it.
- If you see a wildlife crossing sign, pay attention. It is there for a reason.
- Do not swerve to miss an animal. Steer towards the animal's hindquarters, as they most often will move forward.

If you are involved in a wildlife/vehicle collision and the animal is still alive, contact the Wyoming Game and Fish Department at (307) 745-4046 or 877-WGFD-TIP, or local law enforcement personnel. Do not attempt to kill the animal yourself.

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