What You Can Do

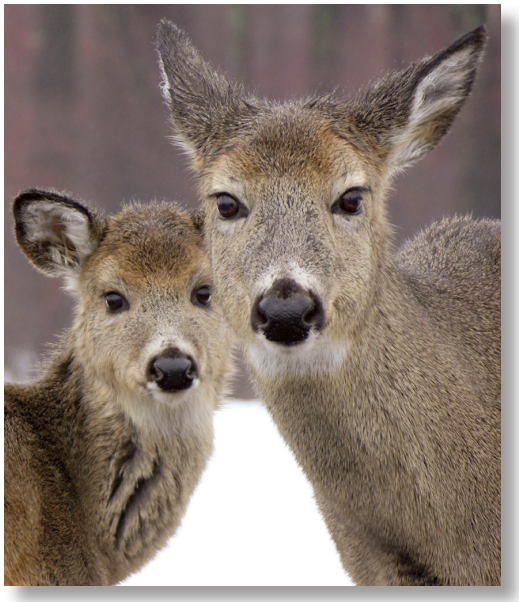
- Stay aware, awake, alert and sober.
- Safety belts are your best defense in any collision.
- Be especially alert in spring and fall, but keep in mind that car-deer crashes occur year-round.
- Heed deer crossing and speed limit signs.
- Deer frequently travel in groups. If you see one deer crossing or standing alongside the road, chances are there are others nearby that you might not see. If you see one deer, 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 won't 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 a crash to the nearest police agency and your insurance company. Car-deer crashes are typically covered by the comprehensive portion of your insurance policy and should not adversely affect your rates.
- Police or DNR conservation officers may issue you a permit to keep the deer.



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SEMCOG AAA

This brochure has been developed by SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, and AAA Michigan.

Vehicle/Deer Safety Begins With You

Don't Veer For Deer!

Buckle Up, Stay Alert, Slow Down

Michigan Deer Crash Coalition

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 $2,100 in damage, usually to the front end, often leaving the vehicle undriveable.

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 hurt or killed, but striking the animal is often the safest action.

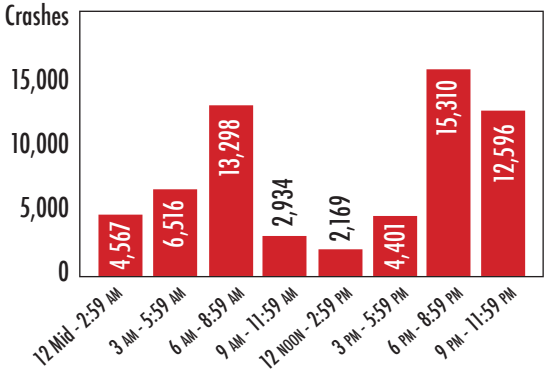
Deer – Vehicle Collision Facts

- In 2007 there were 61,907 reported car-deer crashes. As many as half of all car-deer crashes may not be reported, so the actual number is likely much greater.

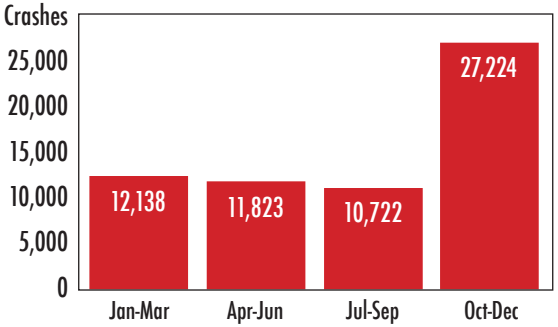
- Eleven motorists were killed in 2007 (compared to 12 in 2006) and 1,614 persons were injured (compared to 1,676 in 2006).

Motorcyclists are especially vulnerable to injury or death in vehicle-deer crashes. Over 80% of motorcycle-deer crashes involve an injury and in 2007 fatalities increased.

2007 Time of All Motor Vehicle-Deer Crashes



All 2007 Motor Vehicle-Deer Crashes by Quarter



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

- 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 more than 10 times larger in southern Lower Michigan - the problem is not going away.