



preventing suffering, teaching compassion

FACT SHEET: Driving in Deer Country

Increasing human populations, more roads through wildlife habitats, hunters scaring deer out of the woods and dangerous driving habits (ie: speeding, driving while intoxicated), all contribute to deer/car collisions, but there are many humane ways to address this issue.

There are many successful and proven products that prevent deer/car collisions:

- Strieter-Lite Reflectors – which are eligible for 100% funding - create reflected light that appears to be moving. The intent is to keep deer and other wild animals from crossing a road until a car passes. Deer and other wild animals have acute night vision and do not need bright lights to alert or deter them. To the driver the effect is hardly noticeable because the reflectors aim light across the road and not back to the drivers. The reflectors work by setting up what looks to the average deer as a red line fence when the reflector picks up the light from an approaching car's headlights. Most of the time (estimates range from 50% - 90% depending on who did the test) the Strieter reflector stops the deer cold. And that means that deer/car collisions are reduced significantly. In fact, the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) tested the reflector and found it an effective tool. Recent data is available via the internet. www.strieter-lite.com/proof.php.

In 2007 Strieter Lite Reflectors were installed along Dulaney Valley Road through Loch Raven Reservoir in Maryland and deer-car collisions have been dramatically reduced by an estimated 90%.

- The Deer Warning System: tells you about deer crossing the road BEFORE you get there! The Minnesota Department of Transit says the number of deer related accidents has been cut in half in the test area. There are a couple of solar powered posts about 50 feet from the roadway that send an invisible beam to each other. When the beam is broken, a signal is sent to activate a yellow light on top of deer signs, warning motorists there is deer activity in the area so they can slow down and drive cautiously to avoid an accident with deer.

- **Public Education:** Seasonal signage, print ads and radio/TV spots are needed during the Fall when hunting and mating seasons start and the highest percentage of accidents occur. This information would help to alert drivers about increased deer activity. Many people do not know deer travel in groups. If you see one deer crossing the road, even if it is in the distance, you need to be prepared to stop for the rest of the group may still need to get across the road. Deer do not have traction on asphalt and very often slip when trying to cross roads, so you may need to stop or slow down. Install deer warning signs and reduce speeds in deer "hot spots" areas. Students taking driver's education should be taught about deer crossing the road.

Killing some deer will not stop the remaining deer from crossing at the same "deer hot spots". It even has been suggested that hunting season has a disruptive effect by startling deer and putting them more "on the run". Erie Insurance Group did an independent study and found that deer/ car collisions increase during the beginning of hunting season.

Spring/Summer Driving Alert

Beginning in May does start having fawns. When they start traveling with their mothers at about a month old drivers need to be alert to mothers crossing roads with their babies.

When you see one deer STOP!

Expect fawns right behind them. Assume animals do not know to get out of your way. Young animals, in particular, do not recognize cars as a threat.

Fall/ Winter Driving Alert

Beginning in October the deer start mating. With bucks in "rut" chasing does and hunters scaring deer in the woods, deer are on the run. With deer activity at such a high point drivers need to be especially careful this time of year. Be Alert! Scan the road as you drive, watching the edges for deer to cross. Assume that animals do not know to get out of your way. Stop if you see one deer crossing the road.

Deer travel in groups so there will very likely be more following right behind.