



NEWS RELEASE

Doug Neville, Director of Communications

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 11, 2010

CONTACTS:

Nathan Bowie, DPS, 651-201-7571
Colleen Coyne, DNR, 651-259-5023.

DEER-VEHICLE CRASHES PEAK IN NOVEMBER — DON'T VEER FOR DEER *Motorcyclists Accounted for 16 of the 19 Deer-Vehicle Crash Fatalities in Last Three Years*

ST. PAUL — “Don’t veer for deer” is the message to Minnesota motorists as the state’s deer population becomes more active during mating season — at a time when deer-vehicle crashes historically spike.

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) urge motorists to drive at safe speeds and pay attention. Deer movement peaks after sundown and before sunrise.

In Minnesota during the last three years, 2007–2009, there were 8,325 deer-vehicle crashes — 1,845 in November — resulting in 19 deaths of which 16 were motorcyclists. The crashes also resulted in 65 serious injuries of which 55 were motorcyclists.

“Deer can be a major hazard on the road, but serious injuries or death can be prevented if motorists don’t swerve to avoid a deer,” says Captain Matt Langer of the Minnesota State Patrol. “Swerving to avoid a deer or any other animal can result in your vehicle going off the road or into oncoming traffic. The best defense is to be buckled and brake.”

DPS motorcycle safety experts say motorcyclists should ride only during daylight hours and avoid roads and areas that are likely to have high deer activity. Officials say a rider’s best response when encountering a deer is to slow down quickly and then drive carefully around the animal at low speed. Riders are encouraged to wear helmets and other high-visibility protective gear to prevent injury or death in a crash.

Col. Jim Konrad, DNR enforcement director says being knowledgeable about deer activities can help Minnesotans stay out of harms way, especially during the fall breeding season when deer are more active than usual. Summer fawns can also make their ways onto roadways after their mothers leave them to mate.

“This time of year, deer movement is affected by a variety of disturbances,” Konrad says. “The rut, hunting pressure and harvest activities by farmers all increase deer movement, increasing the chances of collisions with motorists. Drivers need to stay alert at all times to the possibility of deer crossing our roads and highways.”

Hunters also play a role in moving deer during daylight hours. Small game hunters moving through fields occasionally flush deer from their resting places.

Motorists also should slow down whenever farmers are harvesting cornfields because deer are often flushed from fields as farm equipment approaches.

—MORE—

Alcohol
and Gambling
Enforcement

Bureau of
Criminal
Apprehension

Driver
and Vehicle
Services

Emergency
Communication
Networks

Homeland
Security and
Emergency
Management

Minnesota
State Patrol

Office of
Communications

Office of
Justice Programs

Office of
Traffic Safety

State Fire
Marshal

Don't Veer for Deer
November 12, 2010

If a deer is struck by a vehicle, but not killed, people should keep at a distance because some deer may recover and move on. However, if a deer does not move on, or poses a public safety risk, people are encouraged to report the incident to a DNR conservation officer or other local law enforcement agency.

Motorist Safety Tips for Deer:

- Drive at safe speeds, be buckled up, and be prepared and alert for deer.
- Don't swerve to avoid a deer. Swerving can cause motorists to lose control and travel off the road or into oncoming traffic. The best defense is to buckle up and brake.
- Don't count on deer whistles or deer fences to deter deer from crossing roads.
- Watch for the reflection of deer eyes and for deer silhouettes on the shoulder of the road. If anything looks slightly suspicious, slow down.
- Slow down in areas known to have a large deer population; where deer-crossing signs are posted; places where deer commonly cross roads; areas where roads divide agricultural fields from forest land; and whenever in forested areas between dusk and dawn.
- Deer do unpredictable things. Sometimes they stop in the middle of the road when crossing. Sometimes they cross and quickly re-cross back from where they came; sometimes they move toward an approaching vehicle. Assume nothing. Slow down; blow your horn to urge the deer to leave the road. Stop if the deer stays on the road; don't try to go around it.
- Any Minnesota resident may claim a road-killed animal by contacting a law enforcement officer. An authorization permit will be issued allowing the individual to lawfully possess the deer.

###