

MIDWEST DEER-VEHICLE CRASH FACTS

October 2001

The Upper Midwest region is home to millions of white-tailed deer. They are a valuable part of our ecology and economy. At the same time, deer on our highways are an important traffic safety issue.

This issue is being addressed in the region through the new **Deer-Vehicle Crash Information Clearinghouse** at the Midwest Regional University Transportation Center in Madison, Wisconsin.

The approximate numbers of deer-vehicle crashes shown below—and related deaths, injuries and property damage—are preliminary best estimates that may not be directly comparable between states. These numbers will be evaluated and updated as part of the Clearinghouse effort.

The first task of the Clearinghouse will be an evaluation of research that has been done on deer-crash reduction measures. What has been shown to work? What is questionable? Results will be issued in early 2002.

Preliminary Deer-Vehicle Crash Estimates Per Year¹

	Pre-Hunt Numbers in Deer Herd	Deer-Vehicle Crashes	Deaths	Injuries	Vehicle Damage ²
Michigan	1,900,000	65,000	8	2,000	\$110 mil
Wisconsin	1,600,000	20,000	5	800	\$34 mil
Minnesota	960,000	19,000	2	450	\$32 mil
Illinois	800,000	19,700	5	800	\$33 mil
Iowa	210,000	7,800	3	600	\$13 mil
Midwest (5 states)	5,470,000	131,500	23	4,650	\$222 mil
United States ³ (partial)	27,000,000	720,000	211	29,000	\$1.2 bil

¹ Reported crashes.

² Based on estimated \$1,700 average insurance claim, "Monetizing the Cost of Auto-Deer Collisions," Gregory Krohm, Krohm Insurance Strategies, Madison, Wisconsin, February 23, 2000.

³ Estimates for U.S. are from the Jack H. Berryman Institute for Wildlife Damage Management and the Quality Deer Management Association.

Regional Technical Advisory Committee

Michigan Department of Transportation	Pete Ollila
Michigan Department of Natural Resources	Wildlife Division Rep
Wisconsin Department of Transportation	Dick Lange
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Robert Rolley
Minnesota Department of Transportation	Robert Weinhilzer
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Brian Haroldson
Illinois Department of Transportation	Richard Meyers
Illinois Department of Natural Resources	Marty Jones
Iowa Department of Transportation	Steve Gent
Iowa Department of Natural Resources	Willie Suchy

The Technical Advisory Committee will advise the research team, review project results and suggest improved technical approaches.

DRIVER TIPS FOR AVOIDING DEER

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Investigators at the University of Wisconsin **Deer-Vehicle Crash Information Clearinghouse** are reviewing research on collision reduction technologies—from motion detectors, deer crossings and roadside vegetation to fences and reflectors.

The most effective crash avoidance strategies, however, are already in drivers' hands. Whether you're driving a car, truck or motorcycle, protect yourself, your passengers and your vehicle by following these driving tips:

Be alert in the fall and spring

While deer-vehicle crashes happen throughout the year, more than half occur either in the October–November mating season or in the May–June birthing season when deer are most active.

Watch out between dusk and dawn

Deer move back and forth from daytime bedding sites to evening feeding areas. A high percentage of deer-vehicle crashes occur during the low-light or dark hours between dusk and dawn.

Expect deer at crossing signs

Deer crossing signs identify stretches of road where deer crashes frequently occur. Slow down to increase your response time. Scan the sides of the road for deer when driving through woods or near river and stream banks.

Drive defensively

If you spot a deer anywhere near the road, slow down and expect the deer to dart in front of you. If there's one deer, watch carefully, there will probably be more.

Don't swerve

If a deer is in your path, use your brakes not your wheel. Swerving can take you into the path of an oncoming vehicle or into the ditch. Both are potentially far more dangerous than striking a deer.

For more information, contact:

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Check the MRUTC Web site www.mrutc.org in early 2002 for a link to the new **Deer-Vehicle Crash Information Clearinghouse**.

