



The Montgomery County Deer Management Work Group

Maryland Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division,
M-NCPPC, Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning
Montgomery County Cooperative Extension Service
Montgomery County Police Department
USGS, Biological Services Division, Patuxent Wildlife Research Station

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November is Peak Time for Deer-Vehicle Collisions

The Montgomery County Deer Management Work Group reminds county residents that it is once again the peak time for deer-auto collisions in the county. Deer breeding season runs from mid-October to January with a peak of activity the first three weeks of November. During this time deer are more active than usual and less wary of their surroundings, posing a greater than normal danger on the roads.

Over the last 15 years, auto collisions involving deer have risen as both deer and human populations have increased in the county. Since the year 2000, the increase in accidents has leveled off but still remains high. Montgomery County Police reported about 2,000 deer-auto collisions last year.

A campaign is underway to reduce deer-related collisions through the County's Deer Management Plan adopted in 1995. Included in the campaign are public awareness and education, the use of experimental roadside reflectors designed to prevent deer from crossing roads when traffic is approaching and deer population reduction programs.

Driving in Deer Country

The most important thing drivers can do to reduce the chances of being in an accident with a deer is to drive the speed limit. At night reduce speeds below the limit, especially during precipitation or fog. Here are some other things for drivers to keep in mind.

- Deer are most active at dawn and dusk.
- Watch for deer where roads pass through wooded or rural areas.
- Deer crossing signs indicate where heavily used deer trails cross roadways. Slow down and watch for the eye-shine of deer near the road edges.
- Be especially cautious during seasons of high deer activity including October to January - during the breeding season, and May and June - when yearlings are seeking new territories.
- Deer usually travel in groups. If you see a deer cross the road, slow down and use caution; more are likely to follow.

What should I do if I suddenly see a deer in front of the car?

Every case is different, but there are a few things to consider if you find yourself in this situation. The most important thing to remember is to maintain control of your car. Apply the brakes in a controlled manner. Deer are quick and agile animals; it is more likely that they will leap out of your path than that you will be able to brake and steer around them. Most serious injuries occur when a driver skids out of control and leaves the road or, worst of all, swerves into oncoming traffic. These circumstances arise quickly allowing very little time to react. Think ahead. When drivers see a deer crossing sign, think about what to do if a deer suddenly jumped into the road, mentally practice keeping a cool head and reacting in a controlled fashion. Drivers who anticipate and practice these skills may be more likely to react appropriately.

What should I do about deer in my yard?

The Montgomery County Deer Management Work Group offers homeowners suffering deer damage to their landscaping free workshops by request. Workshops co-sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service and Montgomery Parks teach residents tips on the use of defensive landscaping, repellents, fencing and other methods to control deer damage around the home and keep deer out of your yard. Civic and homeowner associations that would like to schedule a free workshop can call 301-590-9650 or 301-949-2909.

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