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Watch out for wildlife on Alberta's roads

Edmonton... Wildlife can be a hazard to motorists travelling on Alberta's roads and highways. Ninety per cent of animal-vehicle collisions occur in rural areas but there are still urban areas close to parks, reservoirs, river valleys, wooded areas and open space that wildlife frequently cross.

In 2008, about 10 per cent of reported vehicle collisions involved animals, mostly wildlife, and resulted in 498 injuries and nine fatalities. Some species are more active at dawn and dusk, especially deer, elk and moose during the mating season. Driving visibility may be reduced and traffic volume can be high during this same time period. In the past five years, about one-third of collisions involving animals occurred between 7 and 11 p.m.

Here are quick tips for avoiding collisions with wildlife.

- Pay attention to wildlife warning signs and drive accordingly.
- Adjust your speed to road conditions.
- Reduce speed at dawn or dusk, especially on unfamiliar rural roads near water or lined with trees.
- Slow down in a curve, when reaching the crest of a hill or in wildlife-populated areas.
- Use high beams whenever possible. Deer's eyes will glow when they catch light but larger animals such as moose may not be as easy to see.
- Remember that, at night, lights from oncoming traffic make it difficult to see an animal on the road.
- Improve visibility by keeping the vehicle's windshield and headlights clean.

There are a number of precautions to take if you see wildlife on the road.

- Look for more than one animal - some species travel in groups.
- Brake firmly if an animal is in the vehicle's path but avoid swerving. However, if a large animal such as a moose is in your path and you cannot stop in time consider swerving in a safe direction. A collision with a moose which can weigh up to 500 kg (1,200 lbs) represents a high risk of injury or death to motorists and passengers.
- Honk in a series of short bursts to encourage animals to move out of the way.

If you are involved in an animal collision:

- report collisions to your insurance company and police service;
- contact the nearest Sustainable Resource Development office in cases where an animal is injured or poses a threat to public safety (dial 310-0000 for nearest office); and
- call the nearest regional Transportation office at 310-0000 to have road kill removed.

For more information, contact the Office of Traffic Safety at 780-422-8839 or your regional traffic safety coordinator. To find your local coordinator, visit www.saferoads.com and click on Contact Us, then the [Regional Traffic Safety Coordinator](#) on the left-hand side.

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