



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
TRANSPORTATION CABINET
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Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Annual 'Antler Alert' Provides Reminder of Fall Driving Hazard

Peak season for collisions involving deer in Oct-Nov-Dec

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Oct. 4, 2022) – The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) has issued an annual "Antler Alert" to remind motorists that the peak season for deer-vehicle collisions has arrived. About half of all such crashes occur during the last three months of the year.

"October, November, and December bring a noticeable increase in highway collisions involving deer," KYTC Secretary Jim Gray said. "We'd like to remind drivers to be especially watchful for deer and other wildlife on the move at dusk and at night, when poor visibility is already an issue."

According to Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Deer Program Coordinator Noelle Thompson, shorter days and cooler nights help to trigger deer mating season and put deer on the move.

"The onset of autumn brings about physiological changes in male deer," Thompson said. "Bachelor groups of bucks break up and expand from their core area, leading to increased deer movement and the possibility of being hit on the roadways."

Autumn harvesting also contributes to this movement as deer are forced to range farther afield for forage and hiding places.

In addition to causing vehicle damage, deer can be hazardous to humans. Deer are among the leading causes of animal-related human fatalities in the United States, contributing to about 200 deaths on the highway every year.

In Kentucky, 2,988 highway crashes involving deer were reported to police in 2021, according to crash data used by the KYTC Office of Highway Safety to monitor highway crash trends. That was an increase of about 100 crashes from 2020. There were three reported fatalities and 25 serious injuries due to deer collisions in 2021.

A complete list of deer-vehicle crashes listed county-by-county can be found [here](#).

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co., which uses insurance claims to produce a closely followed annual report on collisions involving wildlife, said deer accounted for 1.5 million of the 1.9 million animal collision claims in the United States for the year ending June 30, 2020.

On average, U.S. drivers have a 1 in 116 chance of a collision with an animal. Kentucky ranks above the national average and 18th among the states at 1 chance in 88. Drivers in neighboring West Virginia run the highest risk – 1 in 37, according to State Farm.

KYTC offers these driving tips:

- Slow down immediately upon spotting a deer crossing the roadway; they tend to travel in groups.
- Don't swerve to avoid a deer, which can result in a more serious crash with an oncoming vehicle or roadside object.
- In the event of a crash, keep both hands on the wheel and apply brakes steadily until stopped.
- Always wear a seat belt.
- Keep headlights on bright at night unless other vehicles are approaching.
- Eliminate distractions while driving: Phones down!
- Drive defensively, constantly scanning the roadside, especially at dawn and dusk, when deer are most active.

Motorists are asked to report all deer-vehicle collisions to police. KYTC traffic engineers use the crash data to aid in placing deer-crossing warning signs and other safety measures.

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Deer Crash Numbers 2017 to 2021

Year	Total Collisions	Fatalities	Suspected Serious Injury	Suspected Non-Serious Injury	Possible Injury
2021	2,988	3	25	82	58
2020	2,886	3	11	65	80
2019	3,069	3	12	71	82
2018	3,073	3	8	45	82
2017	3,181	0	17	66	86

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