



State of Illinois

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Illinois Department of Transportation

Omer Osman • Acting Secretary

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Colleen Callahan • Director



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Oh, deer: Mating season ups crash risk

IDOT, IDNR remind motorists to stay alert, don't veer for deer

SPRINGFIELD – As the leaves begin to change and cooler temperatures prevail, the Illinois Department of Transportation and Illinois Department of Natural Resources are reminding you to watch out for deer. With autumn comes deer mating season, a time of increased activity at dawn and dusk from October through December.

“We are starting to begin our peak season for deer-vehicle crashes,” said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “We ask all drivers to keep a watchful eye and remember the cardinal rule: don’t veer for deer. While the urge to swerve is instinctual, it could cause you to lose control of your vehicle or drive into oncoming traffic, increasing the severity of a crash.”

This fall, take the following steps to help ensure your safety:

- Be aware of your surroundings, especially in areas with deer crossing signs.
- Scan the sides of the road for eye shine – the reflection of headlights in their eyes.
- Slow down if you see a deer. They travel in groups, so more are likely nearby.
- Prepare for the unexpected. Deer may stop in the middle of the road or double back.
- Deer are adaptable and can flourish in rural, suburban and urban environments.
- If a collision is inevitable, try to glance your vehicle off the deer and avoid swerving into opposite lanes of traffic.

In 2019, a total of 16,213 crashes involved deer in Illinois. Of these, 15,605 resulted in damage to property or vehicles, while 604 caused personal injuries. Four of the crashes were fatal.

More than 40% of crashes involving deer in Illinois occurred in October, November and December, with November being the highest-risk month. Rural environments were the site of more than 90% of all motor vehicle crashes involving deer, with more than 70% occurring at twilight or nighttime.

The top 10 Illinois counties for crashes involving deer in 2019:

1. Cook	472	5. Fulton	346
2. Madison	434	6. Peoria	340
3. Sangamon	406	7. Kane	337
4. Will	375	8. Rock Island	318

“Deer populations are common in both rural and urban areas which means deer-vehicle collisions can happen anywhere,” said IDNR Director Colleen Callahan. “And remember, if you do hit a deer, report the accident to local law enforcement or Conservation Police Officer. They can help control traffic, clear the roadway or in the event the animal must be euthanized.”

If you hit a deer, pull off to the shoulder, turn on your hazard lights and call 911 to report the accident. Do not exit the vehicle to check on an injured deer or pull it from the road.

For more information on how to claim a deer that was involved in a crash, visit www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/deer/Pages/Claim-a-Road-Kill.aspx. To report possession of a deer killed in a deer-vehicle crash, fill out the form at [http://dnr.illinois.gov/SalvageDeer/\(S\(2g2y5tunjelyrx45y2dzqd55\)\)/SalvageInfo.aspx](http://dnr.illinois.gov/SalvageDeer/(S(2g2y5tunjelyrx45y2dzqd55))/SalvageInfo.aspx).

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