

Watch out for wildlife while driving around Caledon

From the desk of Inspector Tim Melanson

Over the past number of weeks, Caledon OPP officers have investigated a significant number of motor vehicle collisions involving wildlife.

As drivers, many of us are aware that any contact between a motor vehicle and an animal can result in significant damage and in some cases even death. Drivers are being asked to be vigilant and to watch for large wild animals crossing roadways throughout the area, as many of these animals are making their way to higher ground in preparation for winter.

On average, there is a motor vehicle/wild animal collision every 38 minutes in Ontario. One out of every 17 motor vehicle collisions involves a wild animal. As well, 89 per cent occur on two-lane roads outside of urban areas and 86 per cent occur in good weather. Wild animals are unpredictable at all times. However, there are two peak times when the risk of a collision is highest; May and June and from October to January.

Reduce your collision risk

Watch

Scan the road ahead from shoulder to shoulder. When you see wildlife beside the road, slow down and pass carefully as they may suddenly bolt onto the road.

Watch for the yellow wildlife warning signs that indicate an area of increased risk. Slow down when travelling through these areas.

Use high beams at night where possible and watch for glowing eyes of animals.

Steer

Stay in control. Watch your speed and take extra precautions when driving at night, as visibility is greatly reduced. Slowing down will give you that extra second to respond.

Never swerve suddenly. This could cause your vehicle to go out of control or head into oncoming traffic.

Brake

Brake firmly if an animal is standing on, or crossing, the road. Never assume the animal will move out of your way.

Stop

Stop as safely as possible if a wild animal is crossing the road. Remember, if one animal crosses the road, others may follow.

If possible, avoid driving during dusk or dawn when most wildlife collisions occur. Swerving to avoid hitting a wild animal may result in a more serious collision. If hitting a wild animal is unavoidable, remember to stay in control.

People who live adjacent to highways are encouraged not to feed deer during the winter, as this increases the probability of traffic collisions, resulting in more personal injuries and increased deer mortality.

Motorists should watch for these potential problem areas and drive carefully when passing through them.

For more information, refer to the Ministry of Transportation website mto.gov.on.ca