

Press Release



Greene County Public Health
A Safe Communities Grantee of Ohio Department of Public Safety
Ohio State Highway Patrol-Traffic Safety Division
360 Wilson Drive, Xenia, OH 45385



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Tips to avoid hitting deer on the road - Stay safe during deer season *Deer breeding season runs from October through January.*

XENIA, OH – Autumn is here, and that means that the deer are on the move. During the day or at night, encountering a deer while you're on the road can be dangerous and scary. Deer season is fully upon us and the Greene County Safe Communities Coalition would like to remind you that your safety on Greene County roadways is a top priority.

Deer Stats for Ohio:

- For **Greene County**, there were 319 deer related crashes in 2023.
- Since 2018, 104,328 deer-related crashes have occurred in Ohio. While 95% of deer-related crashes only result in property damage, 33 of these crashes were fatal and resulted in 34 deaths. In 2023, six fatal deer-related crashes occurred through July matching the total from all of 2022. Motorcycles are only involved in 1% of deer crashes, however, 82% of fatal crashes are motorcycle-related.
- Over this time, at least 50 deer-related crashes have happened in each Ohio county. The most crashes have happened in Stark County (2,960), followed by Richland (2,627), Hancock (2,541), and Defiance (2,382). Combined, these four counties accounted for 10% of deer-related crashes.
- From 2018-2022, 47% of deer-related crashes occurred during the months of October, November, and December. Further, the dawn and dusk hours are the most likely times for deer-related crashes. Twenty-six percent (26%) of these crashes happened between 5:00am and 7:59am and another 31% of crashes took place between 6:00pm and 9:59pm.
- US-30 (1,557), SR-2 (1,555), I-71 (1,550), I-75 (1,494), and I-77 (1,474) have been the top routes for deer-related crashes since 2018. Combined, 7% of deer-related crashes occurred on these five routes.
- According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), the average claim for an automobile involved in a crash with an animal (mainly deer) was \$5,447 in 2022.
- Additional information on deer-related crashes is available on the Ohio Statistics and Analytics for Traffic Safety (OSTATS) crash dashboard at: <https://statepatrol.ohio.gov/ostats>

What can you do to stay safe during deer season? Knowing what to do when you encounter a large animal on or near the roadway can be a lifesaver. Here are some tips:

- Deer are most often along the roadside near dawn, around 7 a.m., and again at dusk, approximately 7:30 p.m.
- Deer breeding season runs from October through early January, and during this time they are highly active and on the move.

- Though deer may wander into suburban neighborhoods, they are most frequently found on the outskirts of town and in heavily wooded areas.
- As pack animals, deer rarely travel alone. If you see one deer, you can bet that others are nearby. Watch for the shine of eyes along the roadside and immediately begin to slow.
- Use your high beams whenever the road is free of oncoming traffic. This will increase your visibility and give you more time to react.
- Deer can become mesmerized by steady, bright lights so if you see one frozen on the road, slow down and flash your lights. Some experts recommend one long blast of the horn to scare them out of the road, as well.
- Pay close attention to caution signs indicating deer or other large animals. These signs are specifically placed in high-traffic areas where road crossings are frequent.
- If you're on a multi-lane road, drive in the center lane to give as much space to grazing deer as possible.

Preventive Techniques

- To avoid a deer-vehicle collision, SLOW DOWN. If you are driving through an area known for high deer populations, slow down and observe the speed limit. The more conservative you are with your speed, the more time you will have to brake if an animal darts into your path.
- ALWAYS WEAR A SEATBELT. The most severe injuries in deer-vehicle collisions usually result from failure to use a seatbelt.

Encountering a Deer

- Never swerve to avoid a deer in the road. Swerving can confuse the deer on where to run. Swerving can also cause a head-on collision with oncoming vehicles, take you off the roadway into a tree or a ditch, and greatly increase the chances of serious injuries.
- Deer are unpredictable creatures, and one that is calmly standing by the side of the road may suddenly leap into the roadway without warning. Slowing down when you spot a deer is the best way to avoid a collision. However, if one does move into your path, maintain control, and do your best to brake and give the deer time to get out of your way.
- Don't rely on hood whistles or other devices designed to scare off deer. These have not been proven to work.
- If you do collide with a deer (or large animal), call emergency services if injuries are involved, or the local police if no one is injured, but damage has been caused to your property or someone else's. Never touch an animal that is in the roadway. Report the incident to your insurance company as soon as possible.

Keeping calm and driving smart improves your chances of avoiding a collision and staying safe on the road. For more information about Greene County Safe Communities, call Loressa Gonyer at 937-374-5655 or email her at lgonyer@gcph.info.

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