

New research on deer vehicle collisions in Scotland

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www.dcs.gov.uk

Between 7000 and 10,000 deer are estimated to die every year on Scottish roads according to research commissioned by the Deer Commission for Scotland (DCS).

The project, which forms part of work on deer-related road traffic accidents being undertaken by DCS, monitored and logged deer-related road accidents in Scotland over a three-year period.

In addition to deer deaths it was estimated that there were 74 injuries to drivers and passengers as a result of deer vehicle collisions in Scotland, including an estimated 16 serious injuries. In addition to the independent research, since 2001 DCS has carried out its own monitoring of deer collisions on Scotland's roads. As a result of this process panels were established across Scotland on specific roads where the risk of deer-related road traffic accidents was significant. The panels advise DCS on local solutions to local deer collision problems.

The new research was conducted by the Deer Initiative as part of a UK-wide study of deer vehicle collisions and was designed to assist DCS in its work to implement the best mitigation measures to deal effectively with the problem.

Chairman of the Deer Commission for Scotland, John Milne, said: "Deer vehicle collisions can have serious implications for driver safety, with some collisions resulting in serious injury and occasionally death. Deer welfare is also compromised as the deer is often fatally injured in a collision but instead of dying immediately it can die a slow and painful death by the side of the road.

"With this threat to deer welfare and driver safety it is clear that deer vehicle collisions do need to be addressed with specific and effective measures. The Deer Commission for Scotland is currently working with local communities, councils, police forces, road managers, landowners and other Government agencies and departments to address the issue and ensure appropriate measures are introduced in the future."

Peter Watson of the Deer Initiative said: "Now we have a clear picture of the scale and distribution of deer vehicle collisions in Scotland and England we will be able to focus awareness raising and mitigation measure more effectively. This should help reduce the huge cost of these accidents in terms of human suffering, deer welfare and the financial cost to motorists and insurers."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- The full results of the project are available on the Deer Commission for Scotland website – www.dcs.gov.uk and details of the Deer Initiative can be found at www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk
- The Deer Commission for Scotland is the Government agency responsible for the conservation, control and sustainable management of all species of wild deer in Scotland, and for keeping under review all matters relating to wild deer including welfare.
- The Deer Initiative secured funding of £57,500 from DCS to extend a project being carried out in England with funding from the Highways Agency and other members of the Deer Initiative Partnership (see www.deercollisions.co.uk)
- Researchers estimate the economic cost of preventing human injuries associated with deer-vehicle collisions as £4.5million.
- The incidence of deer-vehicle collisions is highest in the north and north-east of Scotland but there is a risk of collisions on roads across the country. These tend to be more frequent in areas with high deer densities and high volumes of traffic including the M90 and M9 motorways, the A9, A90, A82, A93, A835, A980, A830, B979 and the B9077.