

## Deer-Vehicle Crashes Increase in Fall

**(MSC News)--Mating season and the quest for more secure habitat have deer on the move this time of year, increasing the chances of vehicle collisions.**

**Typically, the greatest number of deer-vehicle crashes are in mid-November when the rut, or mating season, peaks. In addition to the rut, deer are also on the move in mid-fall seeking new food sources and shelter as crops are harvested and leaves fall from trees and shrubs, leaving them less secure than in their summer habitats.**

**“The deer population has stabilized over the last five years, so areas that have had deer likely still have them,” said Levi Jaster, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Big Game Coordinator. “Young animals are dispersing to find new areas and breeding season is approaching. More animals moving means more of them are going to be crossing roads, so be extra cautious and reduce speed, especially in areas with good deer habitat.”**

**According to the Kansas Department of Transportation, 10,235 (16 percent) of the 62,150 vehicle crashes reported in 2016 were deer-related (crashes in which a deer and vehicle actually collided or the presence of a deer was a contributing circumstance). Although crashes involving deer occur throughout the year in every Kansas county, the highest number of crashes typically occur where there are the most vehicles. Butler County had 385 deer-vehicle crashes in 2016, the most of any county, while Sedgwick County followed with 375 deer-vehicle crashes.**

**The Kansas Highway Patrol cautions drivers to refrain from making exaggerated maneuvers to avoid a deer in the road, lest a bad situation become even worse.**

**“If you are unfortunate enough to have a deer enter the highway in front of your car, it is best to hit the animal and not swerve to avoid it,” said the KHP’s Lt. Adam Winters. “Often we find more serious crashes occur when you swerve to miss the deer, potentially losing control of your vehicle, leaving the road or veering into oncoming traffic.”**