

Wildlife Making Texas Highways More And More Treacherous

The increasing number of motorists and deer in Texas are leading to a greater frequency of collisions between the two on the state's roadways.

Cooler weather and the annual rut season should make for even more hazardous conditions in the coming weeks.

Texas leads all other states in motorist who have been killed in vehicle-animal collisions.

Texas also has the largest deer population in the country.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) says our state's abundant wildlife and additional traffic have made Texas the most hazardous state for vehicle-animal crashes every year since 2000.

Several roadways in Texas are more dangerous than others, but Texas Parks and Wildlife officials say deer are moving into areas all over the state.

Last year in Kerr County alone, Texas Department of Transportation employees removed more

than 1,500 dead deer off of the county's roadways.

Wayne Bordovsky with the Texas Department of Transportation Kerr County District Office says the 1,500 deer doesn't reflect all of the vehicle-animal collisions that occurred in 2005.

"That number didn't count the number of deer that were struck by vehicles and later died off the roadway or the deer that were killed within the city limits of Kerrville."

Texas Department of Public Safety officials say many accidents involving deer are never reported to area law enforcement officials, but are handled by local insurance agents.

Mark Hanna, a spokesman for the Insurance Council of Texas, says your auto insurance policy will protect you if your vehicle strikes an animal.

"An auto policy with comprehensive coverage will pay for repairing or replacing a vehicle after the accident, minus the

deductible," Hanna said.

"Personal injury protection (PIP) will provide up to the limit purchased for any injuries the driver or passengers might sustain in the collision. You will want to report the accident to your insurance agent or company representative as soon as possible."

In Llano County, which calls itself the Deer Capital of Texas, deer hunting and traffic accidents involving deer both work their way into the economy.

Eighty percent of the body work taking place at the Economy Body and Paint Shop in Llano involves repairing vehicles that have collided with deer.

"We had one lady who brought her SUV in for repair after hitting a deer," said Daniel Baker of Economy Body and Paint.

"We repaired her damaged front fender and added a new grill guard. In less than a week she was back in here because she had struck another deer that had bounced off the grill and went

through her front windshield."

L. David Sinclair, chief of wildlife enforcement with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department said many deer tend to venture near roadways because that's where they can find more food and greener grass because of rain runoff from the pavement.

Sinclair said dusk and full moon evenings bring out the deer.

Texas Department of Public Safety Sergeant Stephen Bynum in Lampasas said drivers should note deer behavior.

"It's not the deer that are grazing on the side of the road that drivers should be concerned with. It's the deer that are moving and the herd mentality of others that are following that you need to be watching."

Bynum said drivers should also be holding the steering wheel in a 10 and two position.

"If you hit a deer, oftentimes, your air bag will deploy and I have seen numerous broken arms and broken noses where the driver was not holding onto the steering wheel properly."

Bynum said his current patrol car has been struck twice by deer.

Both times, he had brought his vehicle to a complete stop and the deer ran into the side of his car.

If you cannot avoid a head on collision with a deer, Bynum advises you hold onto your steering wheel tightly, driving straight forward and riding out whatever happens.

"Trying to dodge a deer at a high rate of speed can result in a rollover and I've never seen the damage from hitting a deer as bad

as a rollover," Bynum said.

More than one million vehicle-deer collisions occur each year in the United States resulting in more than \$1 billion in vehicle damage.

The IIHS says three out of every four vehicle-animal collisions in the U.S. involves deer.

Texas Department of Public Safety Sergeant Lee Snead in Fredericksburg said the state's newest road hazard has become feral hogs.

"Unlike deer that will damage the outside of a vehicle, feral hogs will tear up the bottom of a car or truck."

Many vehicle-animal crashes are unavoidable, but recognizing the danger and being prepared can save lives.

-- Drivers are advised to scan roadways for deer; if at night, motorists should look for deer eye reflections. Passengers can help "keep an eye out for deer."

-- Keep headlights on high beam as much as possible with-

out blinding other drivers. When a deer is spotted, drivers should reduce speed but maintain control. Use emergency flashers or pump the brakes to alert vehicles approaching from behind.

-- Do not attempt to steer into oncoming traffic or veer off the roadway to avoid colliding with an animal.

-- If a deer is observed crossing the road, reduce speed. Deer are social animals and often travel in family groups, so it is likely that others will follow.

-- If you collide with an animal, immediately turn on your flashers and move onto the shoulder to avoid oncoming traffic.

-- Call 911 to report the mishap and contact your insurance agent or insurance company representative to repair your vehicle.

-- The Insurance Council of Texas is the largest insurance company trade association in the state consisting of more than 500 property and casualty insurers writing business in Texas.

Sheridan Library Lines

The deadline for ordering calendars has come. Patrons have purchased over 170 birthday calendars for 2007. The new calendars will be distributed at the end of December. Helping get orders for the calendars were Zelda Walker, Natalie Dupre, Patsy Fuller, Irene Hagendorf, Rose Thumann, Darnell Varley, Barbara Brisco, Marilyn Murphy, and Lillian Gohlke. Thanks to the community in helping support the library.

The final listing of Friends of the Library totals 119 members. Special thanks to Ruth Brisco for reminding patrons to join before the calendar deadline. These 119 Friends will be listed on the back of the 2007 calendar.

Friends for 2006 include Harry and Grace Brisco, Charles and Mary DeShazo, Alton and Sybil Balusek, Dorothy Balut, A.T. Blanchard, Earlene Botard,

Barbara and Reggie Brisco, Helen Brisco, Lavo and Ruth Brisco, Monica Broesche, Allen Brogger, Bobby and Kathy M. Brown, Joe and Melba Castillo, Nancy Chabreck, Laverne and McDowell Criswell, Mary Lou Criswell, Penny Dodd, Vernita Dopslauf, Bessie Dorhauer, C.E. and Leona Flippin, Patsy Fuller, Bill and Lillian Gohlke,

Fred and Sharon Grahmann, Irene and Willard Hagendorf, Bobby Haines, Megan Hinze, Matthew Hinze, Megan Hinze, Carol Hobbs, Carmen, Ray Lee, Chris, and Leigh Jackson, Sandy and Ronny Jones, Becky and Steve Keller, and Alan and Debbie Kloss.

Also, Brianna and Ashlin Linnemier, Elaine and Phil Mailoux, Carlos and Helen Manning, Beverly and Gordon Mercer, Sharla, Austin, and Jacob Miller, Shirley Moore, James and Marilyn Murphy, Jeanette Nance,

Eldon and Joyce Ohm,

Jordyn and Kayleigh Pausewang, Aileen and Monte Peck, Claude and Earline Perrin, Shirley Pittman, Martha Polach, Lawrence Porter, Ruby Prasatik, Hazel Prichard, Darrel, Cindy, Drew, and Cynthia Marie Quinney, Duane and Kathy Ricks,

Jim and Lucy Ross, Pauline Solomon, Lois and Eddie Ray Taylor, Vera Tesch, "Pete" and Rose Thumann, Ora Vanek, Larry, Darnell, Andrew, and Kim Varley, Betty and Dean Varley, Jean, Zelda, and Franklin Walker, and Dot Warthan.

Also, Brandon, Tiffany, and Jordan Whitley, W.O., Regena, and Lenora Williamson, Marvin and Lisa Willis, Angie and Dennis Zbraneck, Jr. and Wanda and Dennis Zbraneck, Sr., Wayne, Natalie, and Audrey Dupre.

The library received the following memorials during the month of October:

In memory of C.A. Pecoraro: Bill and Lillian Gohlke, Fred and Sharon Grahmann, Wayne and Natalie Dupre; In memory of Irma Kelley: Wayne and Natalie Dupre; In memory of Patricia Ann Leske: Wayne and Natalie Dupre; In memory of Cyril Mmstik: Wayne and Natalie Dupre;

In memory of Rose Kloppenburg: Helen Brisco; In memory of Arthur Blanchard: Larry, Darnell, and Kim Varley, Brandon, Tiffany, and Jordan Whitley;

In memory of Geryllyn Tra-beaux: Larry, Darnell, and Kim Varley, Brandon, Tiffany and Jordan Whitley; In honor of Audrey Dupre's 90th birthday: Larry, Darnell, and Kim Varley, Reggie and Barbara Brisco, Lavo and Ruth Brisco; In honor of Jean Walker's 80th birthday: Lavo and Ruth Brisco, Reggie and Barbara Brisco.

The following made monetary donations, or gave books and CDs to the library: Alice Hinze, Wayne Nichols, Phil Mailoux, Ida Haines, Wayne and Natalie Dupre, Norma Hooper, Carolyn Coleman, McDowell and Laverne Criswell, Angie Zbraneck, Mary Lou Criswell, Karen Cavazos, Kathy Ricks, Alton and Sybil Balusek, Regena Williamson, and Alan and Debbie Kloss. Thank you for your support.

TxDOT Improvements Hit Record High In 2006

Work to improve mobility in Texas has hit an all time high with the Texas Department of Transportation awarding a record \$5.3 billion in construction projects in fiscal 2006.

Local projects that began during the 12-month period include:

- FM 155 from Weimar to US 90A. Roadway will be reconstructed at a cost of \$7,859,000.
- IH 10 from the Brazos River to Caldwell County. Install median barrier at a cost of \$12.4 million.

"We are working every day to reduce congestion, enhance safety, expand economic opportunity, improve air quality and increase the value of transportation assets," said Mike Behrens, TxDOT executive director.

The \$5.3 billion in transportation projects easily surpassed the previous yearly total of \$4.5 billion in fiscal 2005 and nearly doubled what was spent statewide just four years ago.

State transportation leaders say nearly half of the money used in fiscal 2006 was the result of innovative financial tools - including the Texas Mobility Fund and State Highway Fund bonds - authorized by the Texas legislature and approved by Gov. Rick Perry and Texas voters.

"The mobility fund and highway fund bonds provided \$24 billion more in transportation improvements since August of last year," said Behrens. That translates in better mobility and safety for Texas motorists."

The mobility fund provides

new revenue for transportation, while highway fund bonds allow the state to borrow against existing transportation dollars.

Other tools being used to speed transportation projects include:

- Regional mobility authorities to enable communities to take control of transportation issues and accelerate solutions.
- The Texas metropolitan mobility plan to provide predictable transportation funding to the state's eight largest urban areas so they can plan better.
- Pass through finance agreements so local governments can accelerate needed transportation improvements.
- Comprehensive development agreements which allow private investments in the Texas Transportation System.
- Low interest loans from the State Infrastructure Bank to help local governments fund transportation improvements.

Still, not enough funding is available to meet the state's rapidly growing transportation needs, according to Behrens.

"We have an \$86 billion gap between what we can afford and what we need to do to meet the mobility needs by 2030," said Behrens.

To bridge the gap, TxDOT will use all financial options to build transportation projects, empower local leaders to solve local transportation problems, increase competition to drive down costs and demand consumer-driven decisions, Behrens added.

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Oral and Overall Health Linked

Many adults, especially between the ages of 45 to 64, fail to recognize that their oral health holds valuable clues that can affect their overall health. Members of this age group too often may not take the time to seek expert dental advice, especially if they are not in pain, although they are particularly vulnerable to developing Type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and heart disease. Regular oral exams can spot some diseases at their earliest stages, when they are most treatable.

All adults should be aware of any changes in the mouth area, such as lumps, bumps, sore spots, bleeding mouth and dry mouth, as well as any changes to the appearance of the gums, tongue, throat, insides of cheeks and the roof of the mouth. All can provide early warning signs of several diseases. Consult with your dentist if you have any questions about your oral health.

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Justice

Elsa Alcalá

Texas First Court of Appeals



EXPERIENCED

- Nine years as a Harris County prosecutor.
- Three years as a state district judge.
- Four years as a Justice, Texas First Court of Appeals.
- INVOLVED
- Tireless advocate for education.
- Leader in the legal community.
- Wife to veteran Houston police officer and mother of three.

ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7th

Vote for
Justice Elsa Alcalá

Pd. Pol. Ad., Justice Elsa Alcalá Campaign, Rosanna Moreno, Treasurer, 1533 West Alabama, Suite 100C, Houston, TX 77006. In voluntary compliance with the Judicial Campaign Fairness Act. For information: JudgeAlcalaCampaign@Houston.RR.com.

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