



How you can Reduce the Risk of Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions

Herpetofauna¹

Reptiles and amphibians move among habitats in the spring and summer, often requiring them to cross roads. Some species are also attracted to roads as feeding and/or basking sites. Small, slow, nocturnal, and/or inconspicuous species are especially vulnerable to being killed by vehicle traffic. Road mortality can be devastating to local and vulnerable populations. In some cases, reptiles and amphibians comprise more than 94% of road mortalities.

Birds³

Approximately 14 million birds are killed by vehicles in Canada each year during the four month breeding season alone. Birds are often attracted to roads as a source of food, salt, grit, and/or water. Owls and passerines are the most common species killed by vehicles in North America. Young, inexperienced birds are often more likely to be killed, but this differs among species and by season. The impact of road mortality has been attributed to significant declines in multiple species of European owls.

Contact Us

The CWHC relies on reports from the public and our partners to assist our surveillance efforts. This surveillance allows us to inform the public and government agencies of any significant risks to wildlife health in order to potentially mitigate these risks. Report any sick or dead animals to the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative. Find your closest regional centre at: <http://www.cwhc-rcsf.ca>

Mammals²

Many mammals use roadways as corridors for easier movement and/or as a feeding site where they can hunt/scavenge. Large mammals make up the vast majority of reported animal collisions, however, smaller animals tend to cause little or no damage and these collisions are rarely reported. In Canada, during 2000 there were more than 28800 reported collisions that resulted in property damage, ~1890 collisions resulted in human injury, and 23 resulted in human fatalities.

Mitigating Collisions⁴

Barriers and/or signage are often used to mitigate collisions. However, these are often expensive, require government action, and efficacy varies among methods. Since wildlife are unpredictable and collisions can still happen even with the implementation of preventative measures, it is necessary that individuals exercise safe driving practices: reduce speed, stay alert, and continuously scan the road for signs of wildlife on or near the road.

References

1. Ashley, Robinson [1996]: *Can. Field Nat.* 110: 403-412.
2. L-P Tardif & Assoc. Inc. (2003): *Final Report of Collisions Involving Motor Vehicles and Large Animals in Canada to Transport Canada Road Safety Directorate.*
3. Bishop, Brogan (2013): *Avian Conserv. Ecol.* 8: 2.
4. *Wildlife Collision Prevention Program.*