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Fall Most Dangerous Time of Year For Deer/Vehicle Crashes

(LANSING, MI) — October and November are two of the most dangerous months in Michigan for deer-vehicle crashes. In 2014, 42 percent of all deer-vehicle crashes occurred in the fall, according a coalition of traffic safety organizations working to reduce these types of crashes.

“Vehicle-deer crashes in Michigan are expensive, causing at least \$130 million in damage annually,” said Lori Conarton, Chair of the Michigan Deer Crash Coalition.

In 2014, there were 45,690 deer vehicle crashes, down from 49,205 during 2013. Oakland County had the most deer/vehicle crashes with 1,750 crashes. The remaining top nine were Kent (1,338), Jackson (1,279), Lapeer (1,153), Eaton (1,077), Sanilac (1,053), Clinton (1,015), Montcalm (968), Genesee (964) and Washtenaw (952). (A full county listing is attached).

“Many injuries and deaths occur when motorists veer to avoid the deer,” said Conarton, who represents the Insurance Institute of Michigan on the coalition. “So when a deer crash is unavoidable, it is important to have your hands on the steering wheel, slow down and stay in your own lane.”

The state has a 1.75 million-strong deer herd. Deer frequently travel in groups. If you see one deer cross the road, chances are there are more nearby.

“Deer are often seen calmly feeding near highways, but when they panic, they may appear in front of your windshield in no time at all,” said Brent Rudolph, Deer Program Leader, Michigan Department of Natural Resources. “Drivers must be prepared – look for other deer following the first in a line and keep an eye for deer doubling back once they have moved out of a traffic lane.”

Last year, six people were killed in deer crashes, all on motorcycles. Another 1,072 motorists were injured in deer/vehicle crashes.

The Coalition offers the following safety tips:

- Stay awake, alert and sober;
- Always wear a safety belt
- Be especially alert at dawn and dusk;
- If you see one deer, slow down. Chances are there are others nearby.
- If a crash is unavoidable, don't swerve, brake firmly, hold onto the steering wheel, stay in your lane and bring your car to a controlled stop.

If you are on a motorcycle, follow these tips:

- Be alert for deer whenever you ride
- Slow down.
- Cover the brakes to reduce reaction time
- Use high beam headlights and additional riding lights when possible.
- Wear protective gear at all times.

The MDCC – a broad affiliation of groups representing law enforcement, traffic safety, insurance, natural resources, higher education and strategic regional planning in the public and private sectors – seeks to increase awareness of the problem among the driving public and reduce the number of deaths and injuries occurring each year on state roads. Members are: AAA Michigan • Insurance Institute of Michigan • Michigan Department of Natural Resources • Michigan Department of State • Michigan Department of Transportation • Michigan Driver & Traffic Safety Education • Michigan Sheriffs' Association • Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning • SEMCOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments) • State Farm Insurance and Traffic Improvement Association of Michigan. For more information, visit the coalition's website, www.michigandeercrash.com and join us on Facebook.

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Deer Crashes by County:

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>			
			Luce	82	94
			Mackinac	267	317
			Macomb	627	516
			Manistee	474	465
			Marquette	249	392
			Mason	671	723
			Mecosta	792	820
			Menominee	149	417
			Midland	791	865
			Missaukee	350	412
			Monroe	357	348
			Montcalm	968	1,073
			Montmorency	198	222
			Muskegon	447	490
			Newaygo	554	498
			Oakland	1,750	1,801
			Oceana	445	445
			Ogemaw	370	439
			Ontonagon	151	210
			Osceola	608	648
			Oscoda	132	180
			Otsego	211	230
			Ottawa	874	944
			Presque Isle	441	382
			Roscommon	283	364
			Saginaw	831	954
			St. Clair	755	749
			St. Joseph	437	464
			Sanilac	1,053	1,071
			Schoolcraft	140	188
			Shiawassee	760	881
			Tuscola	763	874
			Van Buren	510	592
			Washtenaw	952	1,058
			Wayne	394	410
			Wexford	479	430
			TOTAL	45,690	49,205
Alcona	391	435			
Alger	83	105			
Allegan	831	866			
Alpena	341	360			
Antrim	435	424			
Arenac	386	372			
Baraga	158	198			
Barry	624	586			
Bay	426	413			
Benzie	319	290			
Berrien	716	739			
Branch	761	805			
Calhoun	900	1,059			
Cass	379	401			
Charlevoix	560	532			
Cheboygan	449	408			
Chippewa	238	316			
Clare	512	541			
Clinton	1,015	1,056			
Crawford	265	288			
Delta	532	584			
Dickinson	419	394			
Eaton	1,077	1,076			
Emmet	464	490			
Genesee	964	952			
Gladwin	394	419			
Gogebic	50	79			
Grand Traverse	619	568			
Gratiot	850	933			
Hillsdale	773	807			
Houghton	171	191			
Huron	909	967			
Ingham	940	1,044			
Ionia	450	532			
Iosco	190	258			
Iron	250	310			
Isabella	823	917			
Jackson	1,279	1,480			
Kalamazoo	837	989			
Kalkaska	260	267			
Kent	1,338	1,447			
Keweenaw	22	33			
Lake	211	258			
Lapeer	1,153	1,229			
Leelanau	315	330			
Lenawee	574	706			
Livingston	722	785			