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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **NOVEMBER HIGHEST RISK MONTH FOR DEER VEHICLE COLLISIONS**

**(KAMLOOPS B.C. November 14, 2007)** - Roadkill. It's not a pretty sight, and not usually a topic of discussion, but it should be talked about more often in British Columbia. RCMP statistics show on average four people are killed every year while ICBC figures indicate that over 310 people are injured annually in wildlife collisions.

For the past year, the Wildlife Collision Working Group has been working on strategies to reduce wildlife collisions in north central BC. "One of our key outcomes was to provide community specific information for drivers using ICBC animal crash data from 1996 to 2005," says UNBC researcher Roy Rea. On roads around Dawson Creek, collisions with deer peak in November and occur most often between 5:00 and 6:00 pm. From 1996 to 2005, deer collisions reported to ICBC increased by over 300% - from 30 to 130.

The Wildlife Collision Prevention Program offers the following hints for the highway. The number one point: watch your speed. If you see an animal on or near the road, slow down immediately, and to alert other drivers, drive with your flashing lights on for about 500 metres.

Secondly, drivers and passengers must actively watch for wildlife on the road and roadside area. People think of the road as a dangerous place, but in fact, animals are often attracted to the road. During the rutting season animals are frequently on the move, and vehicles might be the last thing on their minds!

Wildlife collisions occur more than expected on long straight stretches of road, when weather and driving conditions are favourable. Drivers should resist the tendency to speed up on long straight sections of highway.

The last point is that animals don't think or perceive danger the same way that humans do. They may not recognize the vehicle as dangerous or the horn as a warning or even if they do, they may not react safely. Animals are unpredictable in their behaviour and may bolt in front of a vehicle or cross and then immediately re-cross the road. Deer are often seen in groups, so if there is one animal there are usually more. The deer you are watching may not be the one that poses the threat; it may be the second or third deer following behind that causes the problem.

The Wildlife Collision Prevention Program is a non profit organization that carries out public awareness projects throughout BC. Watch for their informational brochures at Visitor Information Centres, on board BC Ferries, signs at rest stop areas, and radio, magazine and newspaper ads. For more information on anticipating and avoiding wildlife collisions or to make a tax deductible donation, visit [www.wildlifecollisions.ca](http://www.wildlifecollisions.ca)

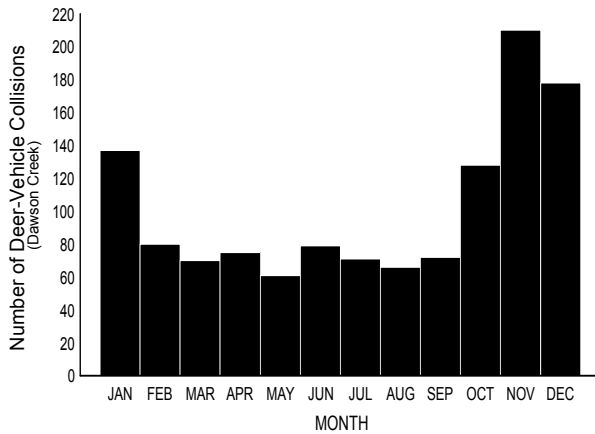
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**For more information, please contact:**

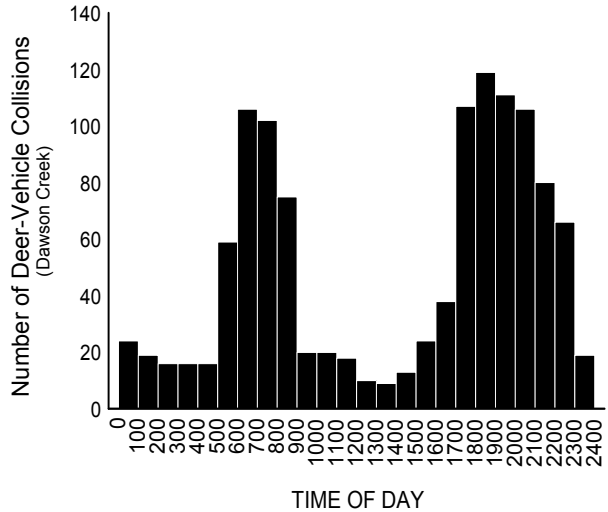
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**Patterns of vehicle collisions with deer between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1996 and November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005 for roads around Dawson Creek**

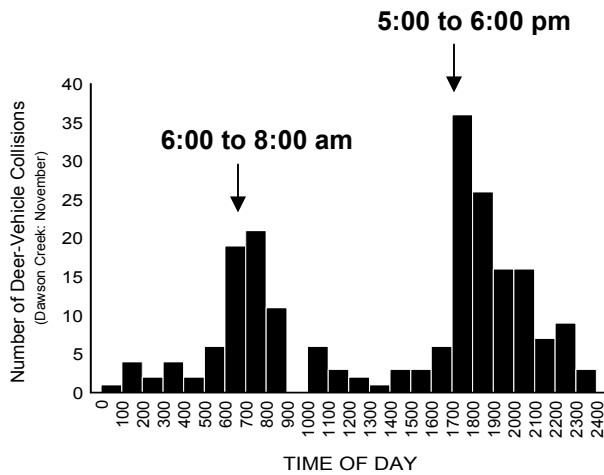
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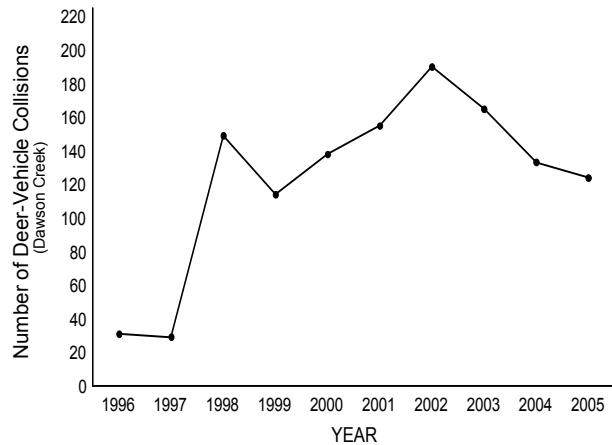
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**Graph A.** Number of collisions by month.

**Graph B.** Number of collisions by time of day.

**Graph C.** Number of collisions by time of day during November (when most collisions occur).

**Graph D** Number of collisions per year between 1996 and November 2005

**(Note: December 2005 collision data was not available at time of press).**

Source: Road Health-University Wildlife Collision Mitigation Research Team. 2006. Using Collision Data, GPS Technology and Expert Opinion to Develop Strategic Countermeasure Recommendations for Reducing Animal-Vehicle Collisions in Northern British Columbia. Unpublished report. Prince George, BC, BC. 145 p.

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