

## OH DEER! Avoiding Collisions with Whitetail Deer

In some regions, a deer hunting license is nearly a prerequisite for driving. Anyone who has driven a vehicle in rural Arkansas more than twice has likely encountered a deer. One man attested, “avoiding deer can be as difficult as avoiding a visit from your mother-in-law, sooner or later it is going to happen.” Traffic accidents involving deer can be quite destructive, or even fatal. A single doe or buck, crashing into an automobile or truck, can cause substantial damage to the vehicles and its occupants.

These pictures show the damage an impact can have on a vehicle and the danger to the occupants:





## *Tips for Avoiding Deer Collisions*

- ✓ Expect the unexpected – deer blend in naturally with their environment and aren't always easily seen. You may not notice them until they are bounding across the road in front of your vehicle. Keep your eyes on the road and alert to deer in ditches or wood lines ahead of you.
- ✓ Don't be distracted – avoid distractions such as adjustments to the radio, talking or texting on a cell phone, digging for something in the floorboard, or anything else that might inhibit you being aware of a deer in your oncoming traffic.
- ✓ Be aware of a deer's habitat – you are most likely to encounter a deer when driving near an area that is suitable to wildlife. Wooded areas, clean cuts, rivers, lakes, and dirt roads are all more likely to encounter a deer than when driving inside city limits.
- ✓ Deer activity near roadways is often elevated at night, dusk, or early dawn. These are the times of day when they are the most difficult to see as well.
- ✓ Slow down at the first sight of deer. Deer often travel in groups, especially a fawn following a doe. One deer may indicate that others are nearby in the woodline. Just because one deer has safely crossed the road ahead of you does not mean that another will not unexpectedly bound into the road. Many accidents happen when they impact a second deer they had not first noticed.
- ✓ If you are a passenger, don't pull down your hat and take a nap. Assist the driver by being on the outlook for deer and other potential road hazards.

