

Deer-Related Crashes in Wisconsin

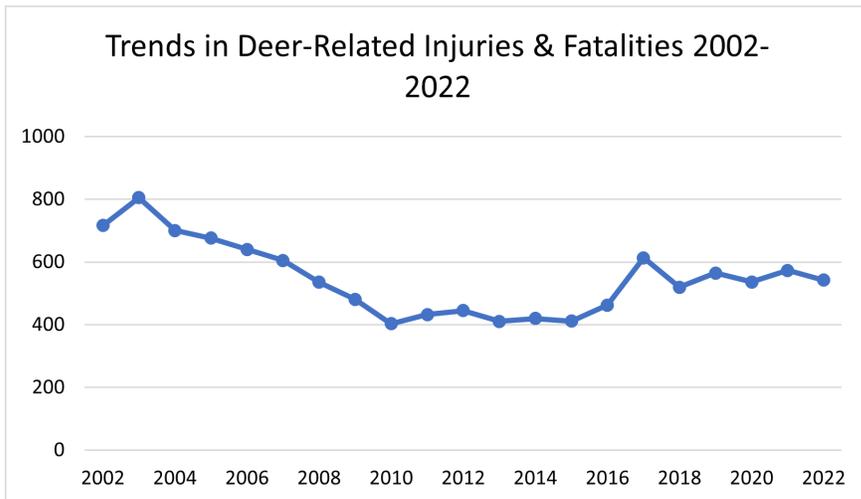


Did you know...

In Wisconsin, one person was injured or killed in an deer-related crash every 16.2 hours in 2022.

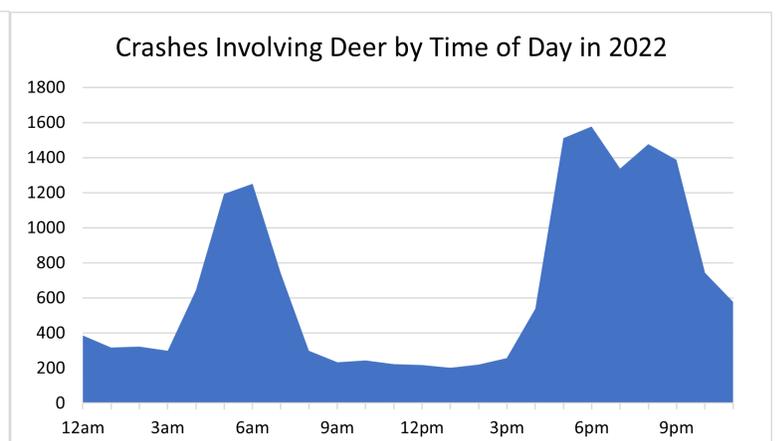
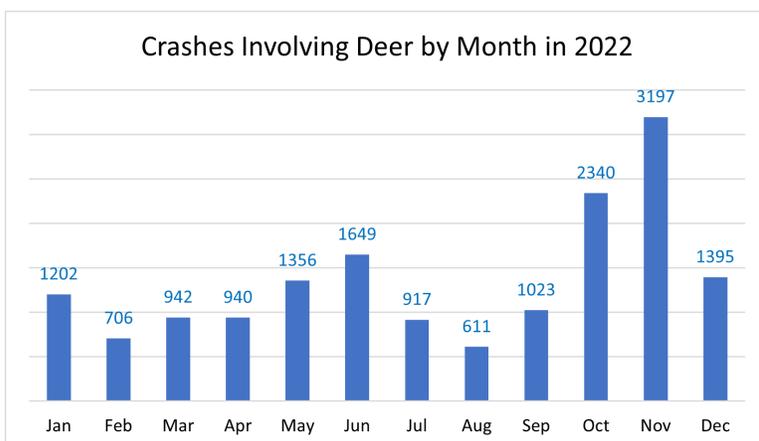
- 16,278 crashes involved deer in Wisconsin in 2022.
- In these crashes, 5 people were killed (4 of which were motorcyclists) and 537 people were injured.
- Motor vehicles most commonly crash into other motor vehicles, fixed objects, and deer.

Scope of the Problem



- Since 2000, there has been a general decline in deer-related crash injuries and fatalities.
- This is likely due to the increasing use of seat belts and motorcycle helmets, and because motor vehicles and motorcycles have more built-in safety features.
- Still, deer/vehicle crashes remain a concern despite increasing innovation in safety protocols. We saw a peak in 2017 with 6 motorists killed and 607 motorists injured in deer-related crashes. It has remained lower, yet steady, since then.

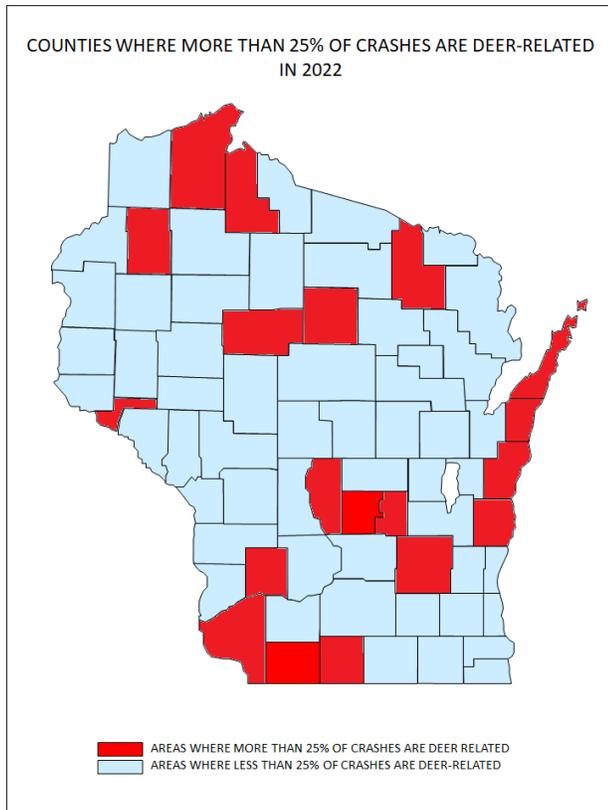
When do Deer-Related Crashes Occur?



- Deer-related crashes tend to peak during the months of October and November during the “rut” or mating season for white-tailed deer.
- Another peak period typically occurs in May and June when female deer give birth and young deer separate from their mothers. Motorist-related deaths and injuries in deer crashes often peak during this period as overall vehicle speeds tend to increase and there are typically more motorcycles on the roadways.
- Deer/vehicle crashes can happen any time of day, but are most frequent during the early morning (dawn) and evening hours (dusk).

Who is at Risk?

- Motorcyclists are most at risk because motorcycles are lighter and lack the physical “compartmentalization” offered in most motor vehicles and trucks. When deer/motorcycle crashes occur, they are far more likely to cause severe injuries or fatalities.
- The 212 motorcycle-deer crashes in 2022 in Wisconsin resulted in 4 fatalities and 64 serious injuries. There were 13,636 deer crashes involving auto and light trucks resulting in 1 fatality and 4 serious injuries. Put another way, there is about a 32% chance that a motorcycle-deer crash will result in a fatality or serious injury, compared to less than 0.1% in auto or light truck deer crashes.



Where do Deer-Related Crashes Occur?

- Deer crashes occur most frequently in areas where there are high deer populations combined with high traffic levels.
- In 2022, Waukesha County reported the most deer/vehicle crashes (917), followed by Washington (846) and Dane (771).
- Last year, in Lafayette County, 43% of all reported crashes involved deer.

Preventing Deer-Related Crashes

- While deer crashes can occur throughout the year, be especially alert during the months of May, June, October, and November when crashes tend to peak. Deer tend to be most active during the early morning and early evening hours. Slowing down and carefully scanning the roadway ahead is a good strategy to avoid deer crashes.
- If you see one deer cross your path, slow down and watch carefully for more—deer seldom travel alone.
- If a collision with a deer is unavoidable, brake firmly, stay in your lane and maintain control of your vehicle. Sudden swerving can result in a loss of vehicle control and a much more serious crash with another vehicle or a stationary object like a tree, utility pole or embankment.
- If you hit a deer, get your vehicle safely off the road if possible. Turn on the vehicle’s emergency flashers and contact law enforcement. Generally, it’s safest to stay buckled up inside your vehicle. Walking along a highway is always dangerous as you could be struck by another vehicle.
- Don’t attempt to move an injured deer.