

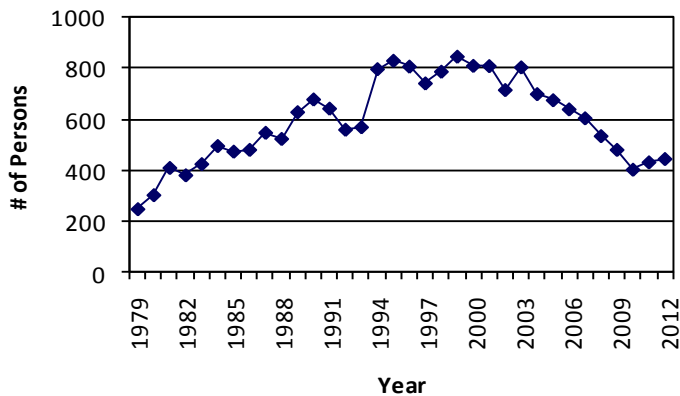
MOTOR VEHICLE-DEER CRASHES IN 2012



Motor vehicle-deer crashes continue to be cause for concern in highway safety. Deer are the third most commonly struck object in Wisconsin (behind striking another vehicle and striking a fixed object). In 2012, 14 people died in 14 fatal motor vehicle-deer crashes. In addition, 81 people suffered incapacitating injuries; less serious injuries totaled 210; and 140 people were possibly injured.¹ A recent study by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation made the following discoveries:



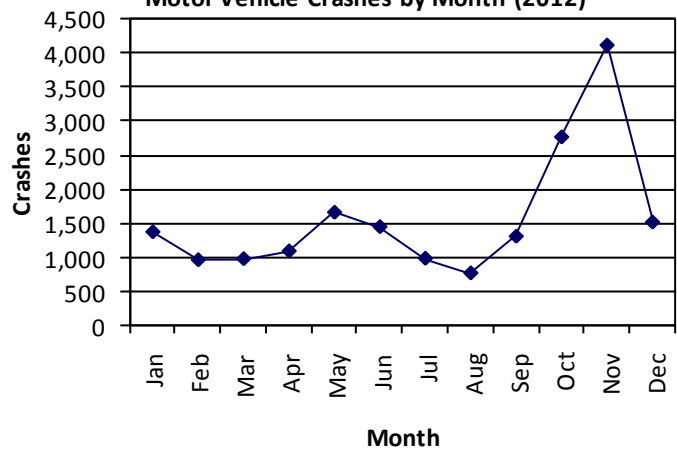
Figure 1:
Motor Vehicle-Deer Crashes:
Persons Injured or Killed (1979-2012)



- **The number of persons injured or killed in deer crashes has increased since the late 1970s.** Since 1979, there has been a general increase in the number of persons injured or killed in motor vehicle crashes with deer. However, we are seeing a slight uptick from the previous decline. The 445 people injured or killed in 2012 is the 8th lowest annual total in 34 years of record keeping. 1999 was the highest with 847 (Figure 1).
- **Deer crashes peak in October-November with a secondary peak in May-June.** In 2012, investigating officers reported 18,895 motor vehicle-deer crashes.² Of those, 6,904 (36.5%) occurred in October and November. The secondary peak time of May-June included 3,094 crashes (16.4%) (Figure 2).

- **While October and November are the peak months, June often accounts for a surprising number of injuries.** In 10 of the last 17 years, June ranked as the worst or second worst month for injuries. In 2012, injuries were the worst in June with 75 injuries, 58 in July and 53 in October.
- The main peak in October-November occurs when the deer enter the mating season, also known as “The Rut” and are very active in their movements. The secondary peak in May-June is the result of inexperienced young deer that have been pushed out onto their own by mother and are less careful when wandering around

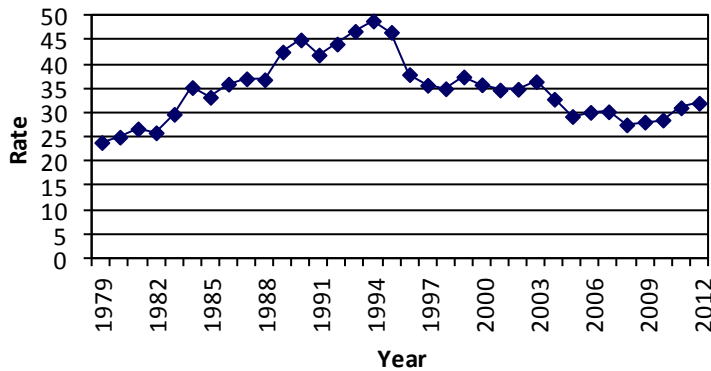
Figure 2:
Motor Vehicle Crashes by Month (2012)



¹ “Possible injury” is defined as any injury that is not evident at the scene but that is claimed by the individual or suspected by the law enforcement officer.
² Effective January 1, 1996, “property damage only” crashes with less than \$1,000 damage need not be reported. Previously, the threshold was \$500. Hence, reported property damage only crashes sustained a substantial drop overall during the past five years.

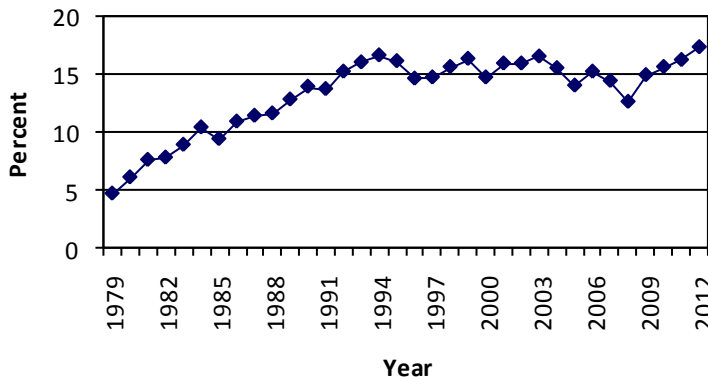
- **In three Wisconsin counties, motor vehicle-deer crashes outnumbered non-deer crashes.** In Green Lake, Shawano, and Taylor Counties, more than half of all police-reported crashes involved deer in 2012.
- **Dane, Shawano, and Waukesha counties had the highest number of reported deer crashes.** Dane County had the most motor vehicle-deer crashes reported in 2012 with 851. Shawano followed with 800 and Waukesha had 710.

**Figure 3:
Motor Vehicle Crashes per 100 Million VMT
(1979-2012)**



- **The number of reported deer crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled peaked in 1994.** In 1996, the rate declined sharply, tapering off through 2003, with a further decline to an average of 28 crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 2008 thru 2010. There is a noticeable increase in 2011 (Figure 3).

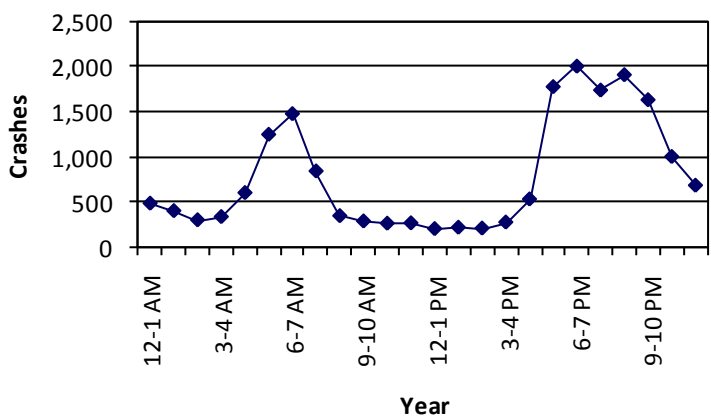
**Figure 4:
Deer Crashes as a Percentage of All Motor
Vehicle Crashes (1979-2012)**



- **Deer crashes account for a growing percentage of all reported crashes.** In 1978 and 1979, deer crashes accounted for only 5.1% and 4.7% of all crashes, respectively. From 1996 to 2012, the number of deer crashes as a percentage of all yearly crashes averaged 15.3% (Figure 4).

- **Deer crashes typically occur in rural settings.** In 2012, 17,064 of the 18,895 (90.3%) deer crashes occurred on rural roads.

**Figure 5:
Motor Vehicle-Deer Crashes by Time of Day (2012)**



- **Motorcyclists need to be particularly alert to deer.** In 2012, while only 12.9% of passenger cars and 7.4% of utility trucks involved in deer crashes resulted in a fatality or injury to an occupant, 69.9% of motorcycle-deer crashes resulted in a fatality or injury to a motorcyclist. Thirteen of the 14 motor vehicle/deer crash fatalities in 2012 were motorcyclists.
- **Deer crashes follow time of day patterns.** In 2012, deer crashes occurred between 5 a.m. to 8 a.m. in the morning and 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. in the evening. This corresponds to both the feeding habits of deer as well as the morning and evening times of people commuting to and from work (Figure 5).