WILDLIFE SMART

Most vehicle collisions with deer occur between dusk and dawn and most frequently in October and November.

COEXISTING WITH WHITE-TAILED DEER

White-tailed deer are one of Manitoba's most valued wildlife species and are found in many parts of Manitoba. White-tailed deer are remarkably adaptable, and can easily live in close proximity to people. This provides for interactions and potential conflicts between people and deer.

There are things you can do to reduce the risk of conflicts and coexist with deer. This fact sheet offers some advice to help protect yourself, your family, your property and deer.

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DEER

- There are currently more than 6,000 known deer-vehicle collisions in Manitoba each year, including about 600 in Winnipeg. These collisions injure more than 200 people per year and cost more than $27 million in property damage and injuries.
- Deer seeking food can cause damage to gardens, shrubs, trees, agricultural crops and other property.
- Deer typically respond to a potential threat by fleeing. However, deer living in close proximity to people learn to be less fearful of people and accept people at much closer distances. People should not approach deer and should always ensure the deer has an escape route. A deer that cannot escape, or senses a threat to itself or its young may in rare cases become aggressive towards pets and people. Bucks (male deer with antlers) tend to be more aggressive during the breeding season (mid-October to mid-December). Although very uncommon, deer can seriously injure pets and people with both their hooves and antlers.

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE THE RISK OF CONFLICT

Reduce the risk of deer-vehicle collisions

Slow down

- When you see deer crossing signs along roadways, as these signs signify areas frequently used by deer and of prior deer-vehicle collisions.
- Especially at dawn, dusk and at night, when deer are most active and difficult to see. It is important to note that deer are more active in the fall and the risk of deer-vehicle collisions increases at that time.
- In areas with brush and tall grass near the road.
- Drive at a speed where you'll be able to stop within the zone of your headlights.

Watch carefully

- Scan the roadside for animals. Your passengers can help.
- Watch for the reflection of headlights in the eyes of a deer.

- Watch for dark silhouettes.
- If you spot a deer, continue to watch for others in the area – they are often in groups.

If an animal approaches or crosses the road

- Slow down, dim your headlights and be prepared to stop.
- Press and hold your horn to scare the animal off the road.
- Avoid swerving – you may lose control or crash into another vehicle.
- Brake firmly to reduce the impact between the deer and your vehicle.

If you hit an animal

- If the deer is still alive, do not touch it – an injured or scared deer can hurt you.
- Move your vehicle off the road if possible.
- If the deer is alive but injured, and remains on site, call the TIP line (1-800-782-0076) to report it.
- If the deer is dead and on the road, and you can safely remove it without putting yourself or others at risk, please move the deer off of the road. This will minimize the chances of it being struck by another passing vehicle and causing a potential accident.
- If the deer is dead on a provincial road and you are unable to remove it from the road safely, contact Manitoba Infrastructure to have it removed. If the deer is dead on a municipal road and you are unable to remove it from the road safely, contact the municipality to have it removed. Outside of regular business hours, contact your local police.

Deer fawns are born in May and June. If you find a fawn hidden in vegetation, do not approach it. If you suspect it may be orphaned, make note of its location and contact Sustainable Development.

Deer can cause serious injury to people and pets with both their hooves and antlers. Never approach/crowd a deer and always ensure they have an escape route.

Don't Feed Deer

- Deer typically become food-stressed every winter and have developed physiological and behavioural adaptations to help survive.
- However, deer die every year because of natural factors, such as extreme weather conditions, predators and diseases. This keeps deer populations balanced with the habitats available to them.
- Supplemental feeding is no longer considered a sound wildlife management practice, because of the associated risks, including:
  - transmission of disease and parasites
  - worsening habitat conditions
  - an increased deer density and associated depredation
- Providing supplemental food to deer can cause them to lose their natural fear of people, putting deer and people in closer proximity and at greater risk.
- When deer travel across roadways to feed at supplemental food sources, the risk of deer-vehicle collisions increases.
- Starting in late fall, natural deer food drops in quality and deer shift to eating lower quality woody materials. This natural seasonal dietary and digestive change can be disrupted by providing deer relatively high quality food and can lead to bloating, diarrhea, enteritis and in some cases, death.

Feeding the birds is not recommended from April to November. If you choose to feed birds in the winter, feeders should not hang below two metres.

Reduce the risk of property damage and habitat degradation

- Deer that are accustomed to humans, and those attracted to supplemental food sources, can cause damage to surrounding plants, trees, shrubs, agricultural crops and stored hay.
- Supplemental feeding has the potential to increase deer reproduction and survival rates, leading to artificially increased populations that the habitat may not be able to sustain. This can cause long-term damage to that habitat, for both deer and other wildlife.

Understand and comply with the laws under The Wildlife Act

- Attractant removal order – a conservation officer can order the removal of anything that may lure or attract wildlife, if it creates a risk to the health or safety of wildlife or people, or poses a risk of property damage.
- Cervid (deer family) attractant restriction – no one can place any substance for the purpose of luring or attracting members of the deer family (such as deer or elk) in the western areas of the province, as specified in the Wildlife Protection Regulation, 85/2003, Section 6.2 (www.web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/regs/index.php).
- Ban on placing attractants along major highways – no one can place any substance that may lure or attract wildlife in the road allowance of a provincial road or highway.

Reduce the risk of property damage

Exclusion

- Preventing deer from accessing an area or accessing individual plants and shrubs, is the most effective way to reduce deer damage. Before selecting and installing an exclusion system, consider the size of the area or number of plants to be protected, the number of deer in the area and their level of interest in this food source. This information will help you determine the appropriate materials and techniques to use for effective exclusion. Some fencing options to consider include wood (or another visual barrier material), woven-wire, electric, three-dimensional, or a combination of these fencing options.
- To be most effective, deer exclusion fencing should generally be at least 2.4 metres high.
- Some materials to consider using for the protection of an individual tree or shrub, or a small planting of vegetation include: plastic bird netting, burlap or wire mesh.

Repellents and scaring devices

- Repellents will generally result in a reduction, rather than total elimination, of deer damage. “Contact” repellents are applied directly to plants and repel by taste. “Area” repellents are applied near the plants and repel by odour. Effectiveness of repellents will be determined by the number of deer, their feeding habits and weather conditions. Repellents are available at most greenhouses, tree nurseries and pest control businesses. Most must be reapplied regularly to be effective. A low-cost home-made repellent can be applied to repel deer from shrubs and garden plants not destined for the dinner table; it must be reapplied frequently: Mix together one beaten egg, one tablespoon cooking oil, one tablespoon dish soap, ½ cup milk and four gallons of water. Allow mixture to brew while lightly covered (unsealed), for a day or two, before spraying on plants.
- The use of motion-activated devices (e.g., lights, water-sprayers or noise-makers) or radios and scarecrows can be effective, at least on a

temporary basis. Deer can quickly get used to the noise or action, making their effectiveness short-lived. To prevent habituation and prolong the scaring effect, change the type of device or move them regularly around the property.

- If you spot deer in your yard, make loud noises to scare them away. You can use your voice, an air horn, a whistle, something that rattles (e.g., pebbles in a canister), or you can bang pots and pans together.

Modify Landscape Practices

- Deer are selective feeders that prefer some plants to others. Other than cedars, plants native to Manitoba are generally more deer resistant. Try landscaping with plants that are less attractive to deer.

Hunting (where permitted by regulations and by-laws)

- By permitting hunting on their land, landowners provide public access to a renewable resource, reduce conflicts with deer, and assist in maintaining deer populations at levels that are socially acceptable, and that the local habitat is able to support.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER A DEER

- White-tailed deer young are typically born in late-May and June. If you find a deer fawn curled up and motionless, do not approach or move it. The doe (mother) will often leave her fawn(s) for extended periods of time during which the fawn will lie hidden to avoid detection from predators. If you suspect the fawn may be orphaned (the doe hasn't returned in more than eight hours), make note of the location and report it to your nearest Sustainable Development district office or call the **TIP** line at **1-800-782-0076**. A conservation officer will assess the situation and respond appropriately.

- Deer are wild animals; you should never approach deer, especially those with young, as they may become agressive, although this is rare. Laying their ears back is a sign of aggression. If a deer displays this behaviour, slowly and quietly move away from the animal, while keeping an eye on it to see if its behaviour changes. Try to put obstacles between you and the deer, to block a potential charge. In the unlikely event that you are attacked by a deer, try to stay upright, cover your head with your arms and move to shelter.

For more information on reducing the risk of conflicts with white-tailed deer and other wildlife, visit www.manitoba.ca/human-wildlife.

To report wildlife showing aggressive behaviour or that appears sick, injured, or orphaned, call the TIP line at 1-800-782-0076.