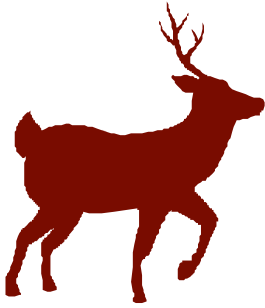


## MOTOR VEHICLE-DEER CRASHES IN 2000



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 2000, five people died in 5 motor vehicle-deer crashes. In 690 injury crashes, an additional 97 people suffered incapacitating injuries; less serious injuries totaled 322, and 387 people were possibly injured.<sup>1</sup> A recent study by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation made the following discoveries:

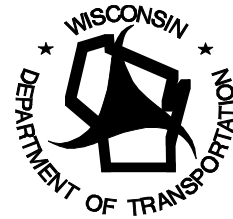
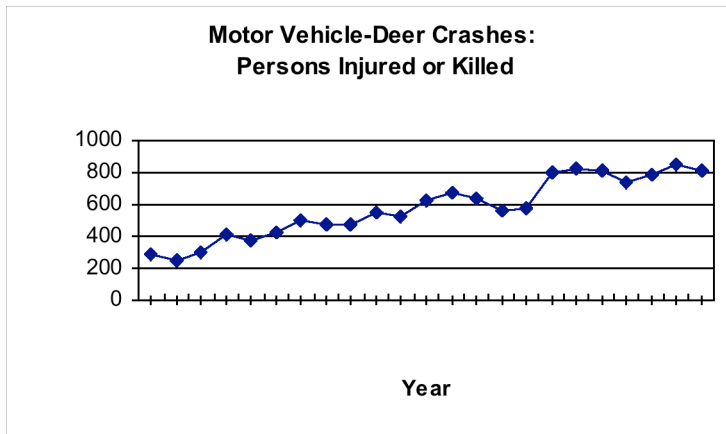


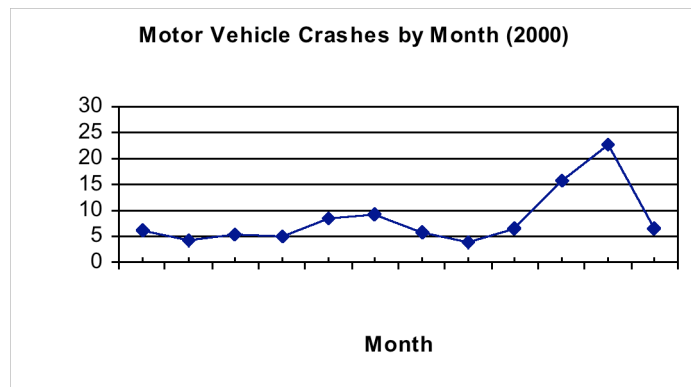
Figure 1



- **The number of persons injured or killed in deer crashes has increased.** Over the past 22 years, there has been a general increase in the number of persons injured or killed in motor vehicle crashes with deer. The 811 people injured or killed in 2000 was 132 more than in 1990 and the third highest in 22 years of tracking. 1999 was the highest with 847 (Figure 1).
- **Deer crashes peak in October-November with a secondary peak in May-June.** In 2000, investigating officers reported 20,468 motor vehicle-deer crashes.<sup>2</sup> Of those, 7,860 (38.4%) occurred in October or November. The secondary peak time of May-June included 3,697 crashes (18.1%) (Figure 2).

- While October and November are the peak months, June often accounts for a surprising number of injuries. In 5 of the last 10 years, June ranked as the worst or second worst month for injuries. In 2000, however, injuries were the worst in the fall, with 139 injuries in November and 144 in October compared to 98 in June.
- Deer crashes follow time of day patterns based on the season. In 2000, deer crashes from April to August were most likely to occur between 8 p.m. and 11 p.m.; from November to January, they were most common between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Figure 2

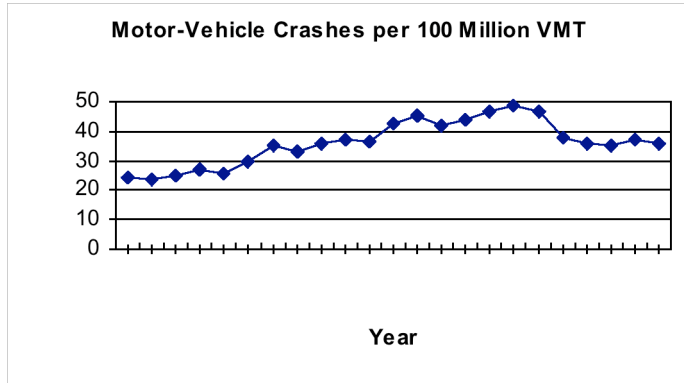


<sup>1</sup> "Possible injury is defined as any injury that is not evident at the scene but that is claimed by the individual or suspected by the law enforcement officer."

<sup>2</sup> 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.

- **Dane, Marathon, and Shawano counties had the highest number of reported deer crashes.** Dane County had the most motor vehicle-deer crashes reported in 2000 with 1,216. Marathon followed with 971 and Shawano with 810.

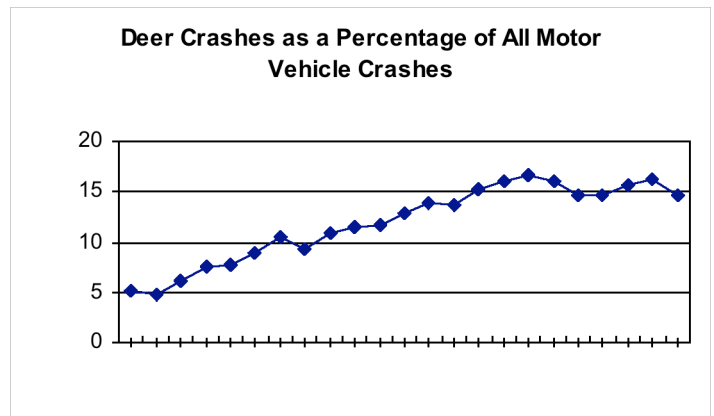
Figure 3



- **The number of reported deer crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled was on an upward trend from the late 1970s up until 1994. After 1994, the declined sharply. Since then, the rates have remained steady, averaging 36 crashes per 100 million VMT over the past five years (Figure 3).**

Figure 4

- **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. By 2000, the percentage had increased to 14.7% (Figure 4).
- **Deer crashes typically occur in rural settings.** In 2000, 19,086 of the 20,468 (93.2%) deer crashes occurred on rural roads.
- **Motorcyclists need to be particularly alert to deer.** In 2000, while only 2.1% of passenger cars and 1.1% of utility trucks involved in deer crashes resulted in a fatality or injury to an occupant, 80.2% of motorcycle-deer crashes resulted in a fatality or injury to a cyclist. Four of the five fatalities in 2000 were motorcyclists.



These statistics are based only on crashes reported to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation by law enforcement officers. Deer crashes self-reported by drivers are *not* included. Also, crashes caused by drivers avoiding deer are *not* included. The information used in this monograph was taken from *The Wisconsin Crash Facts Book* and the Division of Motor Vehicles Accident Database.