

Driving in Deer Country



Valley residents have learned that deer will cross roads at any time of day or night. The hazard is worse where roads bisect winter range or migration routes. Here are some Methow Valley driving hints: (from the “Living With Mule Deer” brochure published by the Dept of Wildlife, Forest Service, and the Dept of transportation)

1. Remember that deer are most active at dawn and dusk. Watch especially during these times.
2. One deer crossing the road is usually a sign that two or three more are about to cross. Watch for other deer to follow: they will move fast to catch up with the leaders and will not be attentive to traffic.
3. When the vehicle ahead puts on its brake lights, a deer may have been spotted. Be alert when you go by the same area as more animals may be trying to cross.
4. Wonder why the person ahead is driving so slowly? Chances are the driver is a seasoned local who knows where to slow down and be extra alert. Don't be too quick to pass and watch out.
5. Restricting your night speed to 45 mph will give you time to stop after seeing a deer with your headlights.
6. Be especially watchful when traveling near steep roadside banks. Deer will pop onto the roadway with little or no warning.
7. Be aware that headlights confuse deer and may cause them to move erratically. Deer hooves slip on pavement. It is not uncommon for an animal to fall in front of a vehicle just when you think it is jumping away.
8. Deer whistles, small tube-like devices that can be mounted on your vehicle, emit a shrill sound that supposedly alerts deer. Their effectiveness is not known. If mounted so they can be seen by the driver, they will at least remind you to watch for deer.



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