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## WVAPP Hints for the Highway

**Watch for the Signs** – Watch for and obey wildlife warning signs and speed changes. Don't disregard the signs just because you have seen them before. They are located in high wildlife use areas.

**Reduce Speed** – Collision avoidance and driver response time are improved at slower speeds.

### Drive Defensively and Be Alert

- Drivers and passengers must intentionally watch for wildlife, movement or shining eyes on or beside the road.
- Animals approaching from the right seem to be avoided more successfully than those approaching from the left, because drivers tend to concentrate on the right hand side of the road, and headlights illuminate that area better. Pay attention to the left hand side as well.
- About 40% of all wildlife collisions occur between 7:00 pm and midnight. Use caution between dusk and dawn when light levels are low and animals are active.
- Animals may bolt unexpectedly, or cross and then re-cross the road. Some animals travel in groups. If you see one, there may be more animals nearby.

**Use Your Vehicle** – Clean your headlights, use your high beams when safe, wear your seatbelt.

**Steer Clear** – Serious accidents can occur when drivers lose control of their vehicles while trying to avoid an animal. If a smaller animal such as a deer is in your way, consider using your brakes, not your wheel.

**Where Do Collisions Occur?** - Studies indicate that there are some common characteristics of high-risk location. These include areas of good roadside habitat with water nearby, where creeks intersect roads and long, wide, straight stretches of road.

**Time of Year** – Animals are active all year, and each season brings its own risk factors.

- Spring – Early vegetation growth attracts wildlife. Deer accident rates peak.
- Summer – Drought, food supply, and forest fires affect animal movement.
- Fall – Animals on the move during mating season.
- Winter – Road salt and better forage in valleys attracts wildlife to roads, but snow hinders movement.

### Know the Species

- Moose – Mostly solitary animals, except for cow/calf pairs. Collisions peak in Nov/Dec/Jan with a smaller peak in June/July. Highway 97 between Dawson Creek and Fort St. John has the highest rate of moose collisions in BC.
- Deer - Many animals can be on the road at once. Deer have risky and unpredictable behaviours. November has the highest rates of collisions.
- Bear – Collisions increase from July through Oct, with a large peak in Sept. This coincides with the end of summer and depletion of food sources in more remote areas, when bears appear to migrate to food sources near human settlements.