



POST OFFICE® COUNTS THE COST OF WILD ANIMAL ACCIDENTS

- **Over 100¹ people suffer serious or fatal injuries as a result of deer related accidents**
- **One million animals and ten million² birds killed on UK roads each year**
- **£17³ million spent on motor vehicle repairs resulting from deer collisions**

Post Office® Car Insurance is advising UK drivers to take extra care on the UK's roads as we enter a peak period of wild animal related road accidents.

Every year an estimated one million animals, including deer, foxes, badgers, otters and squirrels, are killed on UK roads, with many more suffering fatal injuries but crawling away from the roadside to die.

It's not only animal lives which are at stake; it's estimated that deer accidents alone account for over 500 personal injuries, including over 100 serious or fatal injuries¹. And costs for repairs to motor vehicles involved in animal collisions are estimated at over £17m.

The Spring season signals the start of a peak period for road accidents involving badgers and Roe Deer – road accidents account for an estimated 100,000² deaths of badgers and deer every year. As we move into Spring, the Post Office® is working with The People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) and the Deer Initiative to raise awareness of how to avoid accidents with wild animals, and what to do in the event of a collision.

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Richard Pennant-Jones, Post Office® Head of Motor Insurance said: “We want to encourage UK drivers to watch out for wildlife and help reduce the number of collisions with animals and birds by being extra vigilant at key times of the year when animals are migrating and most likely to venture onto the nation’s roads.”

It’s not just country roads where drivers need to beware of wild animals crossing - each year an estimated 20,000² urban foxes are killed on roads in UK towns and cities.

Birds are also at risk with an estimated ten million killed on the roads each year. Three million are pheasants and for increasingly rare species such as barn owls, a worrying 3,000 juvenile birds are killed by motor vehicles annually.

According to the PTES’s ‘Mammals on Roads’ survey, rabbits account for up to half of overall animal casualties, with the following creatures also accounting for tens of thousands of road deaths:

Animal type	Estimated annual road fatalities^{2&4}
Foxes	100k
Deer	50k
Badgers	50k
Hedgehogs	15k

Richard Pennant-Jones continued: “Just a few simple steps could help save thousands of animal lives, hundreds of serious and sometimes fatal injuries to people, and millions of pounds in damage to motor vehicles. Motor insurance companies do not require policyholders to report an accident involving a wild animal to make a claim, however, Post Office® Car Insurance is encouraging people to report collisions, particularly involving deer, to The Deer Initiative as this will help them take steps to reduce accidents levels.”

Jochen Langbein, who oversees The Deer Initiative’s National Deer-Vehicle Collision (NDVC) project, welcomes the Post Office®’s help in raising awareness of wildlife accidents. He said: “Aside from the resulting car repair and human injury costs, collisions with vehicles form the single greatest welfare issue for wild deer in the UK; around a third of deer hit by vehicles will survive the initial impact but suffer for prolonged periods at the roadside until a qualified person can

attend to humanly dispatch or treat them.”

David Wembridge of The People’s Trust for Endangered Species added: “Road traffic accidents have a major impact on the population levels of some UK mammals. In addition to the rabbits, hedgehogs, badgers and foxes recorded in our ‘Mammals on the Roads’ survey, thousands of smaller mammals such as mice, weasels and stoats go unrecorded.”

Post Office® Car Insurance Advice

The Post Office® Car Insurance has produced the following tips for motorists on how to avoid animal collisions and what to do if your vehicle is involved in an animal accident:

- Be extra vigilant at night and during dusk and dawn, as this is when deer, badgers, foxes, hedgehogs and owls are the most active
- Many areas have wildlife warning signs – take extra care when you see one, they are there to protect you as well as the wild animals
- Animals react differently when they are caught in car headlights - deer may freeze when caught in full headlights. If you see an animal ahead, slow down to give it time to move off the road
- If a deer crosses in front of you slow down – they often travel in groups so several more may be about to cross
- Avoid sudden breaking and don’t overswerve to avoid animals – this might lead to a worse accident
- If you are unable to avoid an animal and an accident happens, find a safe place to pull over and if it’s safe to do so, check to see if the animal can be helped. If the animal is still alive then phone the RSPCA emergency helpline on 0300 123 4999
- While you’re waiting for help to arrive throw a blanket over the animal to try to keep it warm; covering its head can help reduce stress and may help it survive
- Do not attempt to handle an injured deer, fox, badger or bird as it could inflict serious injuries to a human in its distressed state
- If the animal is dead and it’s safe to do so, move it away from the road so it doesn’t attract other wildlife.

Although there is no legal obligation to report an accident involving a wild animal, The Deer Initiative NDVC project⁵ (www.deercollisions.co.uk) monitors deer-related road accidents and

wants the public to report any deer related collisions. This information will assist it in its work to reduce accident levels. Also, recording animals killed on the roads can help monitor the habitat and populations levels of some important UK mammals. To find out more or get involved with the PTES 'Mammals on the Roads' survey go to www.ptes.org.

For more information on Post Office® Car Insurance visit www.postoffice.co.uk; call free on 08457 22 33 44, or visit your local Post Office® branch.

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Notes to Editors:

¹Serious injury and road fatality estimations provided by the Deer Initiative

²Estimations on UK mammal fatalities provided by the People's Trust for Endangered Species

³Damage to motor vehicle estimations provided by the Deer Initiative - 0.5% of motor collisions estimated to be deer related equivalent to £14m in personal motor vehicle claims and £3m in commercial vehicle claims.

⁴Estimations on deer and foxes provided by the Deer Initiative.

⁵The Deer Initiative is a broad partnership of statutory, voluntary and private interests in the UK dedicated to "ensuring the delivery of a sustainable, well-managed wild deer population in England and Wales
www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk