

WILDLIFE ACCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM

Overview

Wildlife vehicle accidents result in substantial personal and economic losses through vehicle damage, loss of wildlife, and human injuries or fatalities. Collisions between wildlife and vehicles are a serious problem in B.C., with over 4,800 accidents occurring in B.C. During that year the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) settled approximately 6,600 claims involving wildlife vehicle accidents at a cost of over \$17 million. However, the actual cost in terms of damage to vehicles is much higher, as many of these accidents do not result in ICBC claims. People involved in these accidents may choose not to put in a claim to ICBC, or they may be visitors to the province holding out-of-province insurance policies.

MoTH is addressing the pressing issue of wildlife vehicle accidents with a two pronged approach:

- These accidents should be identified and mitigated in such a way as to create an increased awareness,
- Mitigation techniques should be applied in a cost effective manner: both in terms of reducing accidents and their associated costs, and investing money in mitigation efforts in the most appropriate manner.

The Ministry of Transportation and Highways' Highway Environmental Management Section maintains the Wildlife Accident Reporting System (WARS), which enables the Ministry to record and track data on wildlife fatalities on B.C.'s roads and highways. WARS was established in 1988, and contains information dating back to January, 1978. WARS is a valuable tool which can be used to help analyze patterns of wildlife accidents. The data is used by MoTH, ICBC and Wildlife biologists. Research is ongoing to develop a better understanding of wildlife accidents. Many external forces such as migration patterns, weather, traffic flow and other factors may affect wildlife accident occurrences.

WARS can provide collision locations by Region, District, highway, segment number, km, and species on an ad hoc basis. WARS data is also used to produce a variety of reports such as annual reports and five year historical summaries. Each year, each Regional and District office will receive the annual WARS report summarizing the wildlife accident data received the previous year. This information provides a valuable tool for district personnel to use when making decisions regarding signing and other mitigation methods, as well as general safety issues.

The Ministry believes when interpreting WARS reports it is important to note that for every reported wildlife accident more than three to four accidents may go unreported. Much of the older WARS data, prior to 1993, lacks specific location information and many of the accidents that occurred during the first few years of the WARS system were not reported.

One of the main reasons why so many accidents are not reported is the behavior of the animals after they are hit. The majority of animals that are involved in accidents with vehicles try, if at all possible, to flee and find some sort of shelter for protection. Some animals recover from the accidents and move on, while others are only able to make it a short distance and soon die. Some animals are removed by predators, others are obscured by snow in the winter and leaves in the fall. In these situations the animal kills often go unreported.

For additional information on WARS Program please contact:

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For copies of the **WARS 1999: Wildlife Accident Reporting System, 1999 Annual Report (1995 to 1999 Synopsis)** please contact Queen's Printer

This report and a listing of more publications can be found under the [Ministry Publications Listing](#).

Other related topics include:

- [Wildlife Exclusion Fencing Program](#)
- [Wildlife Reflector Program](#)
- [Wildlife Warning Signs Program](#)

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