

Road Accidents Involving Animals

Issue 14

The most common animals on Australian roads and therefore susceptible to collisions with vehicles are; the kangaroo, wombat, wallaby and emu.

Vero's motor fleet claims statistics from the last 5 years state:

- ▼ Collisions with animals are the seventh most reported type of claim.
- ▼ Most animal strikes, approximately 60%, occur between the hours of 5am to 8am (dawn) and 5pm to 9pm (dusk)
- ▼ Drivers are at a greater risk of an animal strike in the winter months where there are less daylight hours

The likelihood and severity of an unforeseen animal strike can be reduced. Here are a few simple tips to assist drivers while driving in areas with animal activity.

1. **Scan the road environment**
Look as far ahead as you can and scan the side of the road for any signs of activity.
2. **Peak times for animal traffic**
Some animals become more active at dawn and dusk. Take extra care during these hours and in particular between the hours of 5am to 8am and 5pm to 9pm. Our vision is also less effective as night moves into day and vice versa.



3. **Be aware of the environment**
Consider the location you are travelling in. Rural or bushland. Could there be kangaroos? Drive to the conditions.
4. **Look for clues of animals**
Look out for any early warning signs that animals could be around including road signs or dead animals.
5. **Reduce your speed**
Stay within the speed limit or below when in peak times for animal traffic. Try to anticipate what could happen next and proceed with caution.

Month of year	Percentage of animal strikes
January	6%
February	6%
March	7%
April	7%
May	9%
June	10%
July	10%
August	10%
September	10%
October	10%
November	9%
December	6%

Table 1 – Vero Fleet Animal Strikes (%) by month of year (2010-2015)

If a collision with an animal is unavoidable here are some additional tips to minimise the damage to your vehicle including injury to you and your passengers.

- ▼ If you see an animal on or near a road, brake heavily in a straight

line and steer/swerve later once you have slowed down and if safe to do so.

- ▼ Sound your horn to alert the animal.
- ▼ If you hit an animal, stop your vehicle and assist the animal only if deemed safe. Be aware that some animals can become extremely aggressive when injured.
- ▼ Call the local, state or territory wildlife rescue group for help.

Pre-emptive measures

Journey Management Planning
Improved planning of future journeys can minimise exposure to animal strikes. This planning could include:

- ▼ Eliminating/minimising the use of routes frequented by animals if alternative routes are available. This could involve risk profiling each route using a simple risk assessment such as previous crashes in the area.
- ▼ Planning out each day and if possible avoid travelling at dawn or dusk in areas where animals are known to be in high density. It may be possible to travel these areas at times where animals are less frequent.

Vehicles can be fitted with non standard features, such as bull bars or Shuroo (high pitched animal warning system) which claim to minimise vehicle damage in the event of an animal strike or even avoid a collision entirely.

For more information:

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