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Forks Township Community Center
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Pennsylvania Game Commission Urges Drivers to Stay Alert as Deer Activity Peaks

By State Rep. Joe Emrick

Deer are becoming increasingly active this time of year and with daylight-saving time set to end on November 1, 2026, the Pennsylvania Game Commission is urging motorists to slow down and remain vigilant on the roads.

Autumn marks a surge in deer activity as the fall breeding season, known as the "rut," approaches. During this period, many yearling bucks leave their birth areas in search of new territory, sometimes dozens of miles away. At the same time, adult bucks are actively roaming their home ranges in pursuit of doe, often chasing those they encounter.

The end of daylight-saving time means more vehicles will be on the road during dusk and dawn, which are the peak hours for deer movement.

"The rut is an exciting time for hunters but needs to be a time of heightened awareness for drivers," said Game Commission Executive Director Steve Smith. "Whitetails are ramping up their activity levels and expanding their home ranges, so it's imperative that motorists exercise increased caution and attentiveness during this time of year."

Data from around the country has shown that Pennsylvania drivers face some of the highest risks of vehicle collisions with deer or other large animals. However, drivers can reduce their chances of collisions with deer by staying alert, obeying the state's cell phone laws and understanding deer behavior. Paying close attention while driving on stretches marked with "Deer Crossing" signs can make a difference.

Deer often travel in groups and walk single file. So even if one deer successfully crosses the road in front of a driver, it doesn't mean the threat is over. Another could be right behind it.

A driver who hits a deer with a vehicle is not required to report the accident to the Game Commission. If the deer dies, only Pennsylvania residents may claim the carcass. To do so, they can call the Game Commission at 1-833-PGC-HUNT or 1-833-PGC-WILD and an agency dispatcher will collect the information needed to provide a free permit number, which the caller should write down.

A resident must call within 24 hours of taking possession of the deer. A passing Pennsylvania motorist also may claim the deer, if the person whose vehicle struck it doesn't want it.

Those taking possession of road-killed deer are reminded that rules related to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) are still in effect.

If a deer is struck by a vehicle but not killed, drivers are urged to maintain their distance because some deer might recover and move on. However, if a deer does not move on or poses a public safety risk, drivers are encouraged to report the incident to the Game Commission or another law-enforcement agency. If the deer must be put down, the Game Commission will direct the proper person to do so.

To report a dead deer for removal from state roads, motorists can call the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation at 1-800-FIX-ROAD.