

# **Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes**

**Natural Resources Department**

**Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation & Conservation**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## ***Give Wildlife a Brake!***

“Reducing animal vehicle collisions on highways are an issue facing highway planners and wildlife managers”, said Whisper Camel, Tribal Wildlife Biologist.

Fall and early winter pose particular hazards for wildlife and motorists alike. Many species of wildlife are most active at dawn, dusk and the first few hours after darkness falls.

This time of year daylight hours are shorter. For many of us those are the hours we are on the highway driving to or from work or school.

The edges of roads that are boarded by agricultural fields, forested areas or along creeks, streams or rivers are places to be particularly watchful for wildlife.

Assume animals you encounter don't know to get out of your way. Young animals in particular do not recognize that cars are a threat.

“The Highway 93 wildlife crossing structures are getting a lot of use, but wildlife exhibit a learning curve for safe travel across the highways and some will probably continue to cross on roadways for the next couple of years”, added Whisper Camel.

Speed is a common factor in wildlife collisions. Speed reduces a driver's ability to steer away from a hazard. Some studies suggest that wildlife collisions occur more than expected on clear dry nights and on long straight stretches as drivers tend to increase speed under good conditions.

‘If you are involved in a wildlife collision, do not put your safety at risk, or attempt to move the animal unless you can do so in absolute safety.’ emphasized Camel.

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Drivers should watch for movement of animals and shining eyes on or beside the road. Drivers tend to pay more close attention to the right side of the roadway and ditch because headlights illuminate that portion of that road better so remember to pay attention to both sides of the road.

If you are involved in a wildlife collision contact Tribal Dispatch at 675-4700 or your local dispatcher. For more information on wildlife motorist hazards contact Whisper Camel or Germaine White at 883-2888.

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