

# Researchers predict locations for deer vs. car collisions

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University of Alberta researchers have produced a map of Edmonton predicting the most likely locations where vehicles will collide with deer. These collisions can be fatal for drivers and their passengers. The hot spots for deer vs. vehicle collisions virtually encircle Edmonton along the city limit, border line.

Mark Boyce is a U of A [ecologist](#) and co author of the paper. Boyce found that the most dangerous rural roadways share three features; Natural vegetation, bushes and trees, run right up to the roadside, the roads pass through a landscape of farm fields and forests and the final factor, [speed limits](#) are high.

The researchers analyzed data from 260 deer, vehicle collisions in the Edmonton area between 2003 and 2007. Across Canada the cost of vehicle collisions with animals like deer and moose is \$300 million a year.

When heavy vegetation runs right up to the roadway drivers don't have a chance to avoid a deer popping out of nowhere. The solution is to groom natural vegetation along busy [rural roads](#), creating a buffer zone where drivers can see grazing and approaching animals.

Boyce says the mix of agriculture land alongside sheltered, forest areas is the perfect habitat for deer. Deer venture out of the forest in the morning and evening for easily accessible food. The researchers say agriculture and wildlife management policies that reduce the number of

predators and strict policing of poaching laws has been a boon to the [deer population](#) across North America.

The conflict comes when urban expansion results in more traffic moving through prime, rural real estate for deer.

Boyce says now that the highest deer—vehicle collision locations around Edmonton are known the solution is to cut back [natural vegetation](#) along the roads, reduce speed through these hot zones and improve the signage alerting drivers to [deer](#) crossings.

The research was led by U of A PhD candidate Rob Found. It was published in the *Journal of Environmental Management*.

Provided by University of Alberta

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