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Watch out for deer, wild boar and other animals on the roads...

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STAY ALERT, BUT DON'T VEER FOR DEER, WARNS GEM...

ROAD SAFETY organisation GEM Motoring Assist is urging drivers to take extra care in areas where deer are common. The rutting (or breeding) season means deer are more mobile than usual, bringing them onto roads and increasing the risk of collisions.

GEM chief executive Neil Worth says: "We encourage drivers to be extra observant, but we recommend that you 'don't veer for a deer', purely because of the risks that go with a sudden change of direction while driving.

Periods of highest deer activity tend to occur at dawn and dusk, coinciding with the morning and evening rush hour, increasing collision risks in areas where deer are common."



Experts believe the UK deer population numbers more than two million, and research from the RSPCA shows around 75,000 deer are involved in vehicle collisions each year (according to The Deer Initiative), with 10,000 killed instantly.

The human death toll from deer collisions ranges between 10 and 20 annually, while industry estimates put the cost of damage to vehicles alone to be at least £11 million (Figures from Moneysupermarket.com).

But it's not only deer drivers should be looking out for. In some regions, such as the Forest of Dean, collisions with wild boar have exceed those involving deer.

Although wild boar became extinct in the UK nearly 400 years ago, they are now back in some parts of the country. The UK is home to an estimated wild boar population of 2,600 or more (according to The Woodlands Trust). Around 500 die in the Forest of Dean each year, either through culling by marksmen or as a result of a road collision.

Wild boar can reach 150 kg (331 lb) in weight, meaning a collision could have severe consequences both for boar and vehicle. The animals can be seen in daylight hours, but they usually come out after dark, adding to the collision risk.

GEM offers five simple tips for drivers to reduce risk from deer collisions:

1. Take note of deer warning signs. These are placed in locations where wild animal crossings are likely, so keep your speed down and be ready to encounter a deer at very short notice.
2. Be particularly watchful at dawn and dusk, when deer are most active.
3. If you spot one animal, it's likely there may be others following, so don't speed up and assume the danger has passed.
4. Remember the importance of always being able to stop - on your side of the road - in the



distance you can see to be clear ahead. But also be ready to react if a deer leaps out right in front of you.

5. Ideally we want to avoid any sort of collision, but swerving to avoid a deer could prove a very dangerous action if it leads to a collision with another vehicle.

Your deer questions answered:

What should you do if a deer jumps out in front of you?

If you spot a deer or other animal on the road ahead, stay in control, reduce your speed as much as possible and steer straight. **Don't veer for deer.** By changing your direction quickly, you increase the risk of losing control, running off the carriageway and rolling your vehicle. This increases the likelihood of sustaining greater damage to your vehicle and serious injury.

What can I do to avoid hitting a deer?

If you're on an area where you can expect deer, scan the ditches and not just the road ahead of you. You may spot deer or other wildlife approaching the road and be able to take precautions. Where you see one deer, expect more. Slow down. The slower you go, the more time you have to react should you encounter any wildlife on the roadway. Watch for glowing eyes at night.

What time of year is most common for vehicle collisions with deer?

From year to year, statistics show that collisions are consistently higher from now (mid October) into December.

What time of day are collisions with deer most common?

Dusk and dawn are the most common times of day for deer to be on the move, but they can



actually appear on the road or roadside at any time of day or night.

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More about GEM: They say...

GEM Motoring Assist provides two levels of recovery service; Recovery EXTRA and Recovery RECLAIM, to suit all needs and pockets.

GEM provides a unique, comprehensive and competitively-priced Roadside Assistance and Vehicle Recovery Service. GEM has been voted number one for Breakdown Cover, or has been a close runner up, in the Auto Express Driver Power Survey for the last 12 years. GEM breakdown cover has also been awarded a 5 star rating by Defaqto, meaning GEM provides one of the highest quality offerings in the market. In May 2018, GEM became a Which? Recommended Provider after coming first in their survey of breakdown recovery providers.

GEM Motoring Assist was established in 1932, as an independent driver-based road safety association. GEM's aim is to improve safety for all road users through the sponsorship and initiation of accident prevention measures throughout the UK and to provide motoring and safety information to its own members. Member benefits include a quarterly magazine, free literature and advice and discounts on insurances and other services.