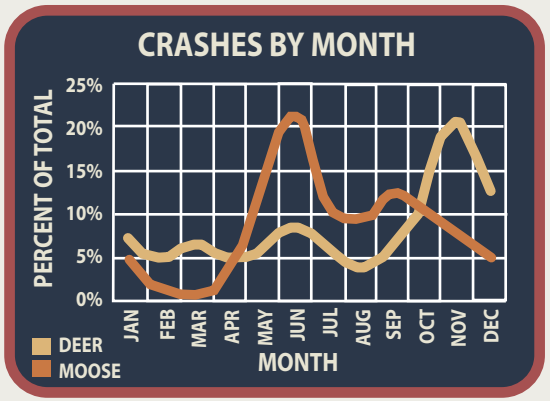
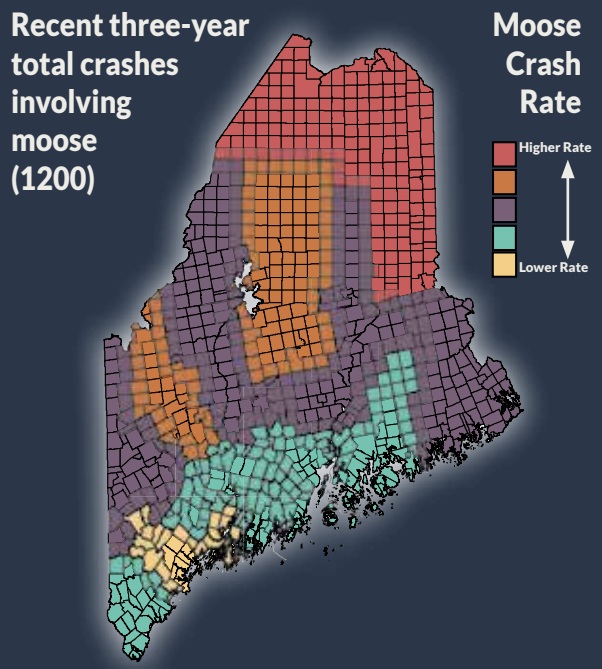


Tip: Deer eyes reflect light from headlights very well. But because moose are taller, drivers won't see their eyes reflected in the headlights. This makes moose even harder to see in time to avoid a collision.

Drive safely ALL the time



MaineDOT

A Maine Department of Transportation Publication

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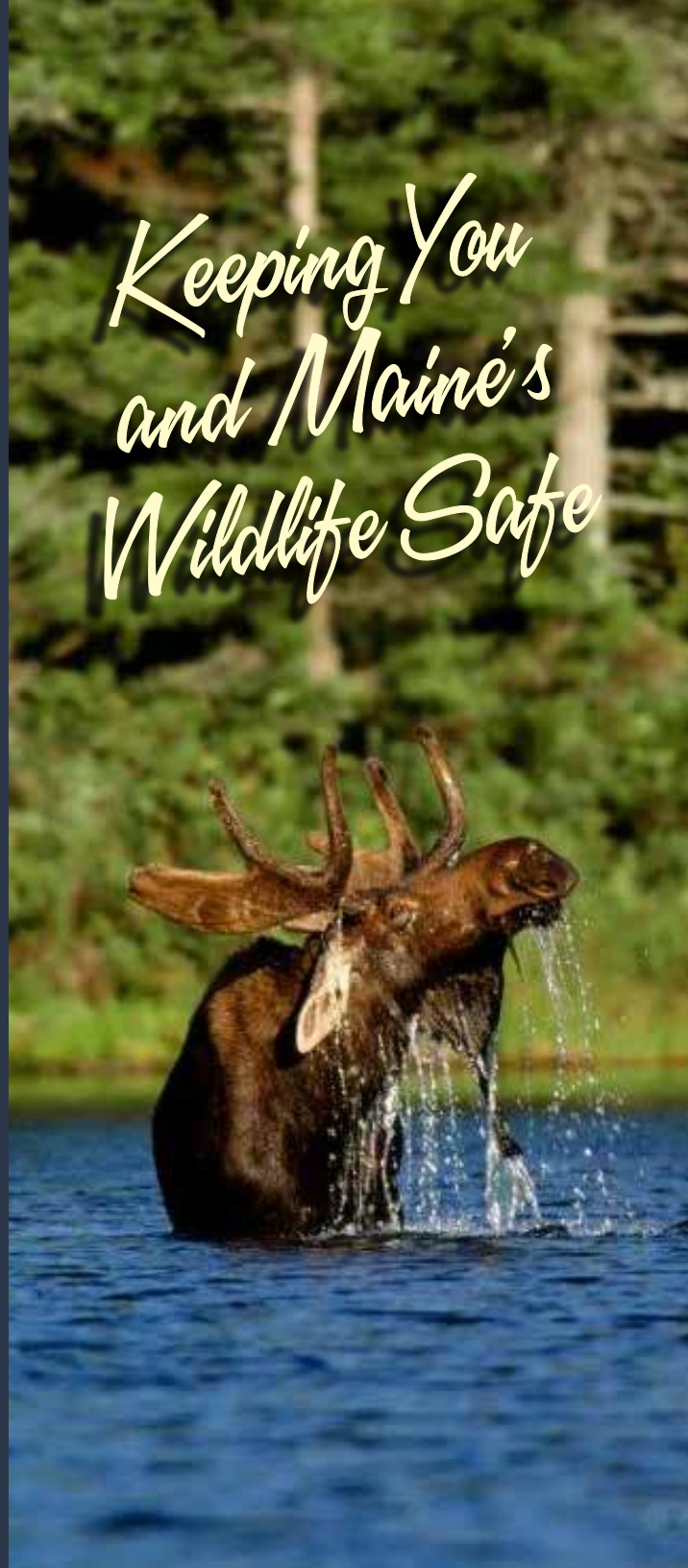

It happens all the time. In Maine, cars and trucks crash into moose and deer **thousands** of times every year. It's that big a problem.

Of course, most people are delighted to see a beautiful white-tailed deer or a majestic bull moose. But few people know how to handle a head-on encounter with Maine's largest and wildest creatures.

The following safety tips will help you avoid the tragic results of colliding with moose, deer, and bears.

From dusk to dawn.

Although collisions can happen any time of the day, moose and deer are most active from dusk to dawn. They also travel at night. So be especially alert after sunset because dark-colored animals can be very hard to see until they are right in front of your headlights.

November is deer collision month.

Collisions with deer increase in the autumn, peaking in November - during breeding season. But they can happen any time of the year.

May and June are peak moose collision months.

Collisions with moose increase dramatically in these months. Autumn incidents are also common. But don't let your guard down. Crashes happen 12 months a year.

Warning signs mean business.

The locations for Maine's moose-and deer-crossing signs are chosen based on where there are high concentrations of wildlife and where collisions are common.

Pay attention and keep to the speed limit.

Driver distraction and inattention, combined with excess speed, often result in vehicle-wildlife collisions. Always scan the roadside as well as the road. Reducing speed at night greatly improves safety.

Good visibility is a must.

In reduced visibility due to darkness, rain, or fog, travel speed should be adjusted to the conditions. Slowing down when visibility is poor greatly increases your safety.

Animals live in the woods.

Be alert in rural and forested areas. Deer are commonly seen near fields and orchards. Moose are often found near wetlands. Use high beams whenever possible. Watch for the reflective eyes of deer and the silhouette of a moose.

"Herd" the one about the traveling moose?

Moose and deer often travel in small groups. If one animal crosses the road, you can bet that there are more animals nearby that may be crossing.

How far ahead can you see?

Do not drive "beyond your headlights." If you can't stop within the distance of your headlight visibility, you could hit something just beyond your viewing area. You won't see the animal in time to stop.

The moose standoff.

If you see a moose standing in or near the roadway, use extreme caution, especially during mating season from August through October.

- Slow down.
- Do not try to drive around the moose.
- Stay in your vehicle. Do not get out to observe or to chase it off the road. By getting out of the car, you put yourself and other drivers at risk. Moose can be unpredictable and may attack your vehicle.
- Give moose plenty of room and let them wander back off the road.

Believe it or not! What at first appears to be a gentle, lumbering moose can suddenly charge a car, then stride quietly away.

What if a crash is unavoidable?

If a crash with an animal is imminent, apply the brakes and steer straight. Let up on the brakes just before impact to allow the front of your vehicle to rise slightly and aim to hit the tail end of the animal. This can reduce the risk of the animal striking the windshield area and may increase your chances of missing the animal. Duck down to protect yourself from windshield debris.

Be aware that wildlife collisions can occur at any time, under almost any circumstances and anywhere in Maine. Moose have been hit in heavily populated neighborhoods in Portland, Lewiston-Auburn, and Bangor - Maine's three largest communities. So, pay attention, stay alert and always remember... safety is no accident.