Wildlife Accident Monitoring and Mitigation in British Columbia

WARS 1988–2007
Special Annual Report

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Engineering Branch
Environmental Management Section
Library and Archives Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Sielecki, Leonard E.
Includes bibliographical references
HE5620 W54 S53 2010 363.12'51209711021 C2010-904370-7

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http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/publications/eng_publications/environment/WARS_reports.htm
Abstract: The Wildlife Accident Reporting System (WARS) is designed to collect and store information on wildlife killed on highways in British Columbia. The WARS database contains over 109,000 records collected since 1978. Wildlife accident information is used by the Ministry to:
1) Identify accident-prone locations and accident trends;
2) direct cost-effective mitigation efforts;
3) evaluate the effectiveness of mitigation techniques;
4) provide data for highway planning purposes;
5) model and forecast accidents;
6) analyze traffic and climatic relationships for species-specific accident trends;
7) develop species-specific accident risk profiles for highway corridors; and
8) establish policies and strategies for accident issues and mitigation initiatives.

The success of the WARS system in British Columbia has made it a model for other agencies seeking to monitor wildlife-related motor vehicle accidents.

Comments: In 2007, Ministry Maintenance Contractors reported finding 5,913 dead wild animals on British Columbia highways. Approximately 76% of the animals reported killed were deer.

Keywords: WARS, wildlife, accident, reporting, system, road, kills, statistics, exclusion, fencing, British Columbia, risk, cost, deer, moose, elk, bear, sheep, mitigation, overpass, underpass, road ecology.
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (BCMoT) administers the Wildlife Accident Reporting System (WARS). The WARS system is designed to analyze wildlife accident data collected by BCMoT Maintenance Contractors on numbered highways in British Columbia.

Since 1978, over 109,000 wildlife accidents have been reported on provincial highways. More than 90% of the accidents involved bears, deer, elk and moose. Between 1988 and 2007, 37 people were reported killed in wildlife-related motor vehicle accidents in British Columbia. After weather, the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) rates wildlife as the next highest environmental contributing factor for police-attended accidents. Between 1997 and 2007, ICBC spent over $278 million on wildlife-related motor vehicle accident claims.

In 2007, over 5,000 wildlife-related accidents were reported in British Columbia (table below).

**Wildlife Accidents by BCMoT Region (Year 2007)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Wildlife Accidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>1,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>3,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>1106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,913</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2010, it is estimated wildlife accidents cost the Province over $23 million in motor vehicle accident claims; $670,000 in highway accident clean-up costs; $370,000 in lost provincial hunting license revenues; and $35 million in lost value to residents and non-residents who view or hunt wildlife.

BCMoT is committed to protect the safety of the motoring public; stem the rising societal cost of human fatalities and injuries, motor vehicle damage, and highway maintenance; and reduce the loss of wildlife on provincial highways. Consequently, BCMoT uses the WARS system to:

1) identify accident-prone locations and accident trends;
2) direct cost-effective mitigation efforts;
3) evaluate the effectiveness of mitigation techniques;
4) provide data for highway planning purposes;
5) model and forecast accidents;
6) analyze traffic and climatic relationships for species-specific accident trends;
7) develop species-specific accident risk profiles for highway corridors; and
8) establish policies and strategies for accident issues and mitigation initiatives.

The WARS system is becoming an increasingly valuable information resource for BCMoT, and other government agencies, consultants, researchers, wildlife associations, special interest groups and members of the general public. The Ministry of Environment uses WARS data to assess provincial wildlife population trends. ICBC uses WARS data for identifying highway locations where joint BCMoT/ICBC initiatives, such as exclusion fencing, warning reflectors, and infrared camera detection systems, can be targeted to reduce wildlife-related motor vehicle collisions. The success of the WARS system in British Columbia has made it a model for other agencies seeking to monitor wildlife-related motor vehicle accidents.
Acknowledgements

In the year 2007, the consistent daily collection of wildlife accident information and submission of the monthly reports, critical for the operation of the WARS system and production of this report, was done by the staff of the following British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Private Maintenance Contractors:

- Argo Road Maintenance (North Okanagan) Inc.
- Argo Road Maintenance (South Okanagan) Inc.
- Argo Road Maintenance (Thompson) Inc.
- Billabong Road and Bridge Maintenance Ltd.
- Capilano Highways Services Co. Ltd.
- Caribou Road Services Ltd.
- Emcon Services Inc.
- Emil Anderson Maintenance Co. Ltd
- HMC Services Inc.
- Interior Roads Ltd.
- Lakes District Maintenance Ltd.
- Mainroad Contracting Ltd.
- Mainroad East Kootenay Contracting Ltd.
- Mainroad Howe Sound Contracting Ltd.
- Mainroad South Island Contracting Ltd.
- 141187 Ventures Ltd.
- O’Brien Road and Bridge Maintenance Ltd.
- R1890 Holding Ltd.
- VSA Highway Maintenance Ltd.
- Yellowhead Road and Bridge (Fort George) Ltd.
- Yellowhead Road and Bridge (North Peace) Ltd.
- Yellowhead Road and Bridge (Vanderhoof) Ltd.
- Yellowhead Road and Bridge (Central Kootenay) Ltd.

This report was made possible with assistance provided by the following Government of British Columbia staff and contractors:

- Gord Bonwick, Manager, Engineering Systems, British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Kim Brunt, Wildlife Biologist, Environmental Stewardship Division, British Columbia Ministry of Environment
- Lucille Green, Area Manager, Fort George District, British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Ian Hatter, Manager, Environmental Stewardship Division, British Columbia Ministry of Environment, Fish and Wildlife Branch
- Sharlie Huffman, Bridge Seismic Rehabilitation Standards Engineer, British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Tammy Liddicoat, Information Officer, Parks and Protected Areas Division, British Columbia Ministry of Environment
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Gord Smith, Graphics Department Manager, Engineering Systems, Engineering Branch, British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Wayne Yee, Programmer Analyst, Engineering Systems, Engineering Branch, British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Additional information was provided by the following Wildlife Consultants:

Bill Harper, Osiris Wildlife Consulting, Victoria, British Columbia
Trevor Kinley, Sylvan Consulting Ltd., Invermere, British Columbia
Nancy Newhouse, Sylvan Consulting Ltd., Invermere, British Columbia

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Page 1-7  Kermode Bear, Tom Ryan, Tourism British Columbia
Page 2-2  Deer capture, Mike Kent, British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Page 2-2  Radio collar on a deer, Mike Kent, British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Page 2-3  Black Bear, Cliff Razzo
Page 2-3  Mountain sheep herd along highway, Cliff Razzo
Page 2-3  Cougar drinking, stock photo
Page 2-3  Coyote, stock
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Coyote, stock photo
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Mule Deer, Condon, US National Park Service
Mule Deer, Ron Shade, US National Park Service
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North American Badger, stock photo
Bison, stock photo
Bison, stock photo
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Page 6-14 Solitary Elk, BC Parks
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Page 6-18 Sheep, Tourism BC
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Page 6-20 Coyote, W. Scott Elliot
Page 6-20 Coyote, W. Scott Elliot
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