



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton
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Grand Teton National Park News Release

New Year's Resolution: Slow Down and Be Alert for Wildlife on Park Roads

Grand Teton National Park Superintendent Mary Gibson Scott wants to encourage local residents and park visitors alike to make protection of park wildlife a part of their New Year's resolutions for 2007. Motorists are reminded to be alert for wildlife on park roads, to slow down, and drive with extra caution whenever animals are present.

On December 26 about 5:30 p.m., park rangers received a report that a yearling moose was standing in the middle of the southbound lane on Highway 26/89/191 just north of Gros Ventre Junction. Although rangers were unable to locate that particular moose, they were summoned just 1½ hours later to an accident scene involving the collision of a vehicle with a moose north of the Jackson Hole Airport junction. Luckily, the occupants of the vehicle were uninjured; however, the moose died as a result of the collision. Yesterday morning, December 28, an elk that was injured in a vehicle collision on Highway 89 near Cunningham Cabin had to be "put down" by park rangers. These two recent incidents serve as a reminder that wildlife are often on or near park roadways, and motorists must be alert and slow down for their own safety, as well as the welfare of park animals.

Over the past few days, several moose have been observed close to the highway between the Moose and Jackson Hole Airport junctions. These moose include at least four pairs of cows with their yearling calves. The animals wander back and forth across the highway in search of browse that is essential to their winter survival. Because moose are in close proximity to the roadway, and difficult to see especially during reduced light conditions at dawn, dusk or during nighttime hours, motorists should drive slower than the posted speed limit and pay extra attention to the sides of the roads for wildlife that might be alongside or wandering onto the road surface.

Motorists are reminded to drive the posted speed limit – or slower – and to be prepared to stop suddenly for wildlife on park roads. Driving slower than indicated speed limits, especially at night, can increase the margin of safety for people and wildlife. Collisions between motor vehicles and wildlife may result in severe damage to a vehicle, serious or fatal injuries to the occupants of that vehicle, and/or death for the animal involved.

Each year, well over 100 animals are hit and killed on park roads. So far in 2006, 115 animals have been killed by vehicles. These include deer, elk, moose, bison, bears, wolves and smaller creatures such as foxes, porcupines and badgers. With an extra measure of caution and increased attention to the road, this statistic could be greatly reduced in 2007.

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