



STAY SAFE ON OUR COUNTRY'S ROADS OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON

18th December 2014

Start

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) cautions drivers to keep safe and take extra precautions when driving this festive season. During this time of the year our roads are guaranteed to be busy, with many people travelling to holiday destinations to celebrate with family and friends both near and far.

Approximately 14,000 people are killed each year on our roads in South Africa, with collisions between animals and vehicles resulting in numerous injuries, deaths, and extensive damage to vehicles. What isn't widely publicised, however, is the fact that wildlife is also significantly impacted on by road collisions. Insurance claims in South Africa suggest that approximately R82.5 million is paid each year against collisions with wildlife, though the biodiversity costs of these collisions are never calculated.

The EWT's Wildlife and Roads Project collects roadkill incident data which it assesses on a regular basis as part of its ongoing efforts to minimise the impact of roads on wildlife and has developed some safety tips to ensure the safety of motorists and wildlife, on the roads over this holiday period:

- Take special care near animal crossing warning signs or signs signalling the absence of fences.
- Minimise distractions from passengers, food, and accessories like cell phones.
- Scan the roadside as you drive and be especially watchful in areas near thick bush and water.
- If you see one animal, expect that there may be others nearby.
- Nocturnal species are the most vulnerable to being hit on roads. Drive a little slower at night and if you see an animal in the road ahead, dim your lights and hoot. Car headlights blind animals so that they don't always move away.
- Drive within the speed limit to increase your own and the animal's reaction times. Slow down if you know there is a possibility of wildlife coming onto the road.
- Always wear safety belts.
- If an animal is in your path, brake firmly but do not swerve to avoid it. Sound your horn in a series of short bursts to frighten it away. Provided you can slow down with control, steer around the animal but stay on the road if possible. Watch out for oncoming traffic.
- If a collision seems inevitable, don't swerve to avoid the animal; your risk of injury may be greater if you do. Report the accident to the police and your insurance company.
- If you hit and injure an animal, call the nearest wildlife rehabilitation centre or vet. Be wary of handling potentially dangerous animals yourself.

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The Endangered Wildlife Trust is a non-profit, public benefit organisation dedicated to conserving species and ecosystems in southern Africa to the benefit of all people.

NPO Number: 015-502, **PBO number:** 930 001 777, **Member of IUCN** - The International Union for Conservation of Nature
The Endangered Wildlife Trust is US 501(c)(3) compliant under **US IRS Registration number:** EMP98-0586801.



- Don't throw food scraps or other rubbish out of your car since it attracts wildlife to the roads.

The EWT's Wildlife and Roads Project has been actively collecting roadkill data on South African roads for the last year. A national campaign was also launched in November 2014 to encourage members of the public to assist with roadkill data collection by reporting their sightings. The EWT is calling on members of the public to continue to submit roadkill data and photographs over the festive season. Participants should specify the location of the roadkill (preferably using GPS co-ordinates), try to identify the species seen and record the date on which it was seen.

Roadkill sightings and photographs can be emailed to roads@ewt.org.za and/or submitted via the EWT's Road Watch South Africa smartphone app which can be downloaded on <http://www.prismsw.com/roadwatch/android/RoadWatchSouthAfrica.apk>. The South African iTunes store also offers a facility to download the EWT's Road Watch app for iPhone users.

The EWT's Wildlife and Roads Project Executant, Wendy Collinson said "Almost 200 roadkill submissions were received in November alone, with most common incidents being for Black-backed Jackal, Bat-eared Fox and owls. There have also been a few unusual sightings such as the Aardvark and African Hedgehog".

Seven members of the public who accurately record and submit the most roadkill sightings between 1 November 2014 and 31 January 2015 will stand a chance to win prizes. For further details please visit www.ewt.org.za.

The EWT's Wildlife and Roads project is supported by Bridgestone SA and Arrow Bulk Logistics, with logistical support from Mopane Bush Lodge. For further information please contact Wendy Collinson on wendyc@ewt.org.za

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