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NEWS RELEASE

WATCH OUT FOR WILDLIFE ON KOOTENAY HIGHWAYS

(PRINCE GEORGE, October 21, 2014.) – Drivers are advised to watch out for deer and other animals on local roads and highways, particularly along Highways 3, 6, and 33 where many wildlife vehicle collisions occur. The critical times to watch for wildlife on the roads are between 5:00 to 8:00 am and 5:00 to 7:00 pm when animals are most active, light levels are changing, and traffic volumes are higher as people drive to and from work.

“Although a collision with wildlife can happen at any place and at any time, in the west Kootenays, the highest risk months for wildlife vehicle collisions are October through December,” says Barb Waters, Regional Manager, BC Conservation Foundation. “There can be two or three collisions each day during these months.”

Annually, in BC’s southern interior, about two people are killed and 180 people are injured in animal-related vehicle collisions.

Recent information from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure places several stretches of Highway 3 and Highway 33 in the top ten list of highway corridors where high numbers of wildlife collisions occur.

The Wildlife Collision Prevention Program offers the following hints for the highway.

- Both drivers and passengers must actively watch for wildlife on the road and roadside area.
- People think of the road as a dangerous place, but, in fact, animals are often attracted to the road and roadside area. Drive expecting to see wildlife.
- During the rutting season animals are frequently on the move, and vehicles might be the last thing on their minds!
- Animals don’t think or perceive danger the same way that humans do. They may not recognize a vehicle as dangerous or a horn as a warning, or even if they do, they may not react safely.
- Animals are unpredictable in their behaviour and may bolt in front of a vehicle or cross and then immediately re-cross the road.
- Deer are often seen in groups, so if there is one animal there are usually more. The deer you are watching may not be the one that poses the threat; it may be the second or third deer following behind that causes the problem.

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