



Animal Road Deaths

In The New Forest



Why do they happen?
How can they be avoided?

HOW FAST CAN I DRIVE ON THE FOREST'S ROADS AND WHEN IS DRIVING IN THE FOREST MOST DANGEROUS?

The speed limit on the unfenced roads in the Forest is never more than 40 mph and in some areas it is lower. The speed limit is the **maximum** speed you should drive at. You should reduce your speed when visibility is reduced or road conditions are poor.

Remember animals have no more road sense than a young child. You wouldn't speed past a toddler standing on a verge on their own; so please don't do it to an animal. Expect the unexpected. The Forest is a unique environment and you will encounter things here that you won't find elsewhere.



In Spring, stallions may chase the mares and both may cross the road, without warning and at speed.

In Summer foals are unpredictable; they may become separated from mum when grazing, and without warning gallop across the road to get back to her. Animals often congregate on the road under trees for shade and young animals may lay on the tarmac. Please be patient. Banging the side of your car with your hand usually moves them on. 'Nudging' an animal with your vehicle is unacceptable and illegal.



In Autumn pigs are turned out to eat the acorns and are often found eating acorns on the verges and tarmac. A pig is smaller than a pony or cow and less easy to see. Ponies also like acorns (even though they are poisonous to them) and they may also be found in the road hoovering them up.

In Winter you are more likely to be driving when visibility is poor; in bad weather, at twilight and in the dark. Oncoming headlights can easily blind you. If everyone slowed down when driving at night and when oncoming vehicles approached, there would be a significant reduction in the accident rate.

At all times, take care when driving around bends and over the brow of hills – an animal may be standing in the road just out of sight.

Animals can also be hidden by vegetation. Forestry England carries out an extensive programme of roadside vegetation clearance every year, but there is a limit to its resources.

Many accidents occur where there is clear visibility for hundreds of yards because drivers fail to slow down and move over when passing animals on the roadside. You should be travelling at a speed where you can react quickly and stop if necessary.

WHY NOT FENCE THE ROADS?

Fencing the roads would have a significantly adverse effect on the environment because it would restrict the free movement of the animals. It would also 'urbanise' the Forest and the open, unique nature of the area would be destroyed.

DO FOREST ANIMALS HAVE RIGHT OF WAY?

On the unfenced roads within the Forest, the animals always have right of way.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AN ANIMAL IS HIT BY A VEHICLE?

A large animal coming into contact with a vehicle can result in considerable damage to both. The animal may be killed or sustain fatal injuries. It is an animal's instinct to run away and although it may not initially display a visible injury, it could be injured internally, or suffer broken bones. It may not be discovered until days later or worse, it may not be found, and it may die in considerable distress. This is why accidents must always be reported promptly.



Damaged vehicle & the pony it hit



WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T REPORT AN ACCIDENT?

For whatever reason a collision occurs, you are required to report it to the police as soon as practicably possible. Unless you must leave the scene to call for help, you should not drive off, particularly if the animal is still on the highway as it may cause a further accident. If you drive off and do not report the collision, you will be liable to prosecution if you are caught. There is also a reward of up to £5,000 for evidence leading to the successful prosecution of drivers who fail to report having an accident with a Forest animal.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I SEE AN ANIMAL IN DISTRESS, OR WHICH IS SICK, INJURED OR DEAD?

- Road traffic accidents involving ponies, cattle, donkeys, pigs, sheep or deer -
The POLICE (24 hours) Emergency Tel: 999
Non-emergency Tel: 101
- Sick, injured or distressed ponies, cattle, donkeys, pigs or sheep
The VERDERERS' OFFICE (Mon-Fri 9 am - 5pm)
Tel: 02380 282 052 (outside office hours, contact the Forestry England number below)
- Sick, injured or distressed deer, badgers or other wildlife
Forestry England (24 hours)
Tel: 0300 067 4600

Pony wearing reflective collar



WHAT ARE WE DOING TO TRY TO REDUCE ROAD ACCIDENTS WITH FOREST STOCK?

A group known as the Animal Accident Reduction Group was set up in 2007 by the Clerk to the Verderers. The group's membership includes the Police, Forestry England, Hampshire County Council Highways, the New Forest National Park Authority and the New Forest Commoners' Defence Association. These organisations work hard to develop new ideas to reduce the number of accidents which occur on the Forest's roads each year.

Some ponies are fitted with reflective collars to help make them more visible at night but beware that there may be other animals which are not wearing collars.

We are experimenting with road signs showing changing messages which we think drivers will notice more than signs that remain the same.

Speed Indicator Devices (SID's) can be seen around the Forest. They are designed to alert drivers who are driving faster than they should be.

Details of accidents are published weekly in the local press and on various websites.

You can help by driving especially carefully when you are in the Forest and by passing the messages contained in this leaflet to your friends and family.

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