

Deer strikes

Deer/vehicle collisions (DVCs) are a serious problem, according to the Deer Initiative which publishes evidence of a five year study concluded in 2007 on its website, www.deercollisions.co.uk. It estimates there are now 60,000 DVCs per year in England alone, and 74,000 in Britain as a whole. Note these figures against what I would believe is the common held belief that the greatest likelihood of a deer strike would be in Scotland. And bikes are acutely vulnerable. The study reports that in a sample of 200 accidents, 11% of them involved motorcycle, as against the 2% of traffic which motorcycles make up - this indicates that as motorcyclists we run a rather higher risk of hitting a deer than other road users.

The study records vehicle type for 35 accidents involving death or serious injury - of those, 10 involved motorcyclists. The two factors they identify as leading to accidents are deer numbers and amount of traffic, both of which are increasing.

In England you are most likely to hit a fallow, roe or muntjac deer, in Scotland a roe or red deer. All are easily big enough to have you off. Collisions are most likely in heavily wooded areas. They can happen any time of the year, but are most likely around April-June and October-January. Early morning and the period between early evening and midnight are the most dangerous times.

The places with the highest numbers of DVCs are:

1. B1106 Thetford Forest, Norfolk (42 collisions per year)
2. B4506 Ashridge Forest, Norfolk (41)
3. A27 Southampton to Portsmouth (38)
4. A49 Dinmore Hil, Herefordshire (25)
5. A419 Coates, Gloucestershire (17)
6. B2188 Ashdown Forest, Kent (12)

Relative frequency of Deer-Vehicle Collisions for Great Britain
reported to the project between January 2003 to December 2005
(based on 17035 reports with adequate location details)

