



(Group of white-tailed deer running near road in Cole Harbour, NS. Photo courtesy of Stephen Ruxton. May 2020)

Media Release

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Watch for Wildlife warns drivers to Stay Safe as they Return to the Road

Kjipuktuk/ HALIFAX, NS - During COVID-19 lockdowns, experts have observed drastic decreases in animal vehicle collisions as a result of social distancing; less traffic has allowed wildlife to travel more successfully to habitats fragmented by roads. Now that restrictions are slowly being lifted, people will be making more trips in vehicles, causing concerns regarding increasing wildlife collisions.

“Since wildlife collisions have declined as a result of lockdown, they are bound to rise as we begin to leave the house more often,” states Allison Dean, the coordinator of Watch for Wildlife. “I know we are all excited to go out and participate in activities that have been restricted during lockdown, but we should also be aware that wildlife will be adjusting to our changing patterns.”

Wildlife will continue to cross roads as required by their ecological needs; the spring season—busy with feeding, mating, and having young—combined with traffic returning to pre-pandemic levels creates a recipe for increasing wildlife vehicle collisions.

“Wildlife has gotten used to our absence. They may not be expecting us on the roads. We need to be extra cautious of wildlife activity near roads. We should give them time to adapt back to knowing we are there,” cautions Dr. Karen Beazley, Biodiversity and Conservation Professor at Dalhousie University. “As we start to return to our daily patterns, drivers need to be mindful that

ultimately, as drivers, we can embrace practices that reflect human-wildlife coexistence, rather than human-wildlife conflict.”

To learn more about how drivers can prevent and respond to wildlife collisions, Watch for Wildlife offers tips on their website: www.watchforwildlife.ca. If you would like to receive a copy of their brochure to keep inside your vehicle, Watch for Wildlife will send brochures free of charge to interested individuals and organizations.

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For more information, please contact
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About **Watch for Wildlife**: Watch for Wildlife encourages drivers to be educated on best practices for avoiding collisions with wildlife, as well as how to properly respond and report in the event of a collision. The program aims to help deliver this information to the public across the Maritimes and better protect the safety of drivers and wildlife in the process.

