

California's Deer Herds Facing Many Hazards, Not The Least Of Which Is Car

By DEVAN L. SHUMWAY
SACRAMENTO (UPI) — California's deer herd, the nation's largest, must put up with king-sized hazards.

First, there is the hunter. He accounted for more than 72,000 deer last year.

Then, there's the weather. Also, the deer falls victim to natural predators — the mountain lion, coyote and such.

But few sportsmen think about another major danger — the motorist. Even the State Fish and Game Department paid little attention to the motorist until recently.

For about a year, however, F&G has been gathering statistics on how many deer fall prey to drivers. And the final results are starting.

When all the figures from warrens throughout the state were

added together the total for 1959 came to 4,579 deer killed in highway accidents.

It develops like this: January 304, February 178, March 154, April 167, May 303, June 347, July 594, August 542, September 435, October 770, November 515 and December 416.

Kenneth Hooker, of the department's game management branch, said it's hard to set any pattern by the fact that the 770 in October was the high for the year while March with 154 was the low kill month.

"Migration may be involved in October," said Hooker, "but then August is the next highest month

and there's no migration then. So maybe it's the eating habits."

Hooker said few persons realized how big a factor the road kill was in deer population figures.

Now that the department is collecting the figures, what is going to be done with them?

"I don't know," said Hooker. "Of course, it's important to know the total number of deer taken by any source."

Freeways are a special menace to deer for a number of reasons.

The state, when it constructs freeways, insists on surrounding them with high fences. Some game experts are worried that these fences may stop deer migration.

"In most cases," said Hooker, "we've found that the east to west highways are running the same way as the deer migrate."

But still there are many places where the deer, following their natural urges, jam up against fences.

"There they can be shot by unethical hunters," said Hooker,

"and dogs can get at them." He said that around Truckee, for instance, there have been cases of dogs killing deer packed against fences.

Other cases have been reported of deer getting into the freeway fences and not being able to get out. A warden at Auburn reported that one truck killed half a dozen when it ran into a herd in this situation.

Hooker said most of the fatalities occur at night and he had a warning for motorists:

"When you see eyes shining along the side of the roadway, slow down, it may be a deer."

Generally a driver can see a deer if he is watching for the animal. And the first thing a driver sees often is the reflection of the eyes.

"A little light shining that might look like a beer can, could be a big buck that could wreck a car and kill its driver," Hooker warned.

He said that the department

gets calls from persons who want to collect damages for their vehicles from colliding with a deer. But California law makes no provision for that. But insurance companies pay off through their collision insurance.

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Principals Plan Spring Interviews

OREGON STATE COLLEGE — Oregon high school principals have been invited to the Oregon State College campus Feb. 13 for conferences with their recent graduates on college preparations, progress and problems.

OSC launched the unique interview series eight years ago to help pinpoint strong and weak points in the college's orientation program for new students and to help the high schools evaluate their college preparatory programs.

Started on an eight-school experimental basis, the program has received wide comment and the number of schools participating has increased each year. Some 50 or 60 high schools are expected to take part this year.

Dallas Norton, college personnel coordinator, is in charge. College students from the various high schools help arrange the student interviews for their principals.

Under the program, principals have individual, voluntary interviews with their former students. Talks center around the student's appraisal of high school preparation for college and progress and problems in studies at OSC.

After the interviews, the high school representatives meet with college leaders to review comments and recommendations made by the students. Findings in past years have brought changes and improvements in some aspects of both college preparatory programs in the high schools and in counseling programs designed to get "students off on the right foot" in college, Norton said.

Bulletin On Defense Out

A new bulletin known as Farmers' Bulletin 2107 is now available at the County Agent's Office. This bulletin is particularly important and should be read by all farmers in the area. This bulletin contains recommendations of scientists, engineers, Public Health officials, Civil Defense authorities, and other specialists, on what to do if and when fallout may occur. The bulletin stresses particularly what first to do in the event of an enemy attack in order to save yourself and your family, and next what to do in order to preserve and save your livestock.



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