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Researchers at UA and AU Team to Study Deer-Vehicle Crashes

TUSCALOOSA, Ala.—Researchers from The University of Alabama and Auburn University recently released study results that focus on the role of wildlife habitat and its influence on deer-vehicle crashes.

Dr. David Brown, director of development for UA's [CARE Research & Development Laboratory](#), teamed with Dr. Jim Armstrong, associate professor and extension wildlife specialist, from Auburn's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. Brown, Armstrong, and AU post-doctoral fellow Anwar Hussain worked closely in developing the study, which began with the analysis of deer habitats in an attempt to find practical ways of mitigating deer-vehicle crashes in Alabama. Other factors taken into consideration included the time of day, month and location.

UA's *CARE* Research & Development Laboratory provided the vehicle crash data utilized in the study.

"The results of the study can help save lives and reduce injuries that result from the large number of deer-vehicle crashes in Alabama," said Brown.

Brown described this as a major research effort that teamed UA with the Center for Forest Sustainability at Auburn University. Others involved in the study include the East-Berryman Institute of Mississippi State University, the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, the Alabama Bureau of County Transportation, the Alabama Motor Vehicle Division and the Alabama Department of Transportation. The team also utilized the U.S. Agriculture and Population census reports.

The following are some of the major findings of the research:

- Forty percent of all deer crashes occur on country roads.
- The share of pasture land to woodland is significant, with an increase in pasture land proportion generally leading to an increase in deer strikes.
- An increase in hunting license sales and bag limits for deer without antlers were both found to be related to reduced deer strikes the following year.
- Counties that are part of metropolitan statistical areas have a higher probability of a deer-vehicle crash.
- More than 40 percent of deer-vehicle strikes occur during the three month deer season, which occurs during November through January.
- There is a significant shift in the time of day that deer crashes take place, from the daylight and dawn hours in the summer to the dusk and night time hours during the deer season.

The results of this research will be presented in a paper at the Urban/Rural Interfaces Conference in Atlanta on March 16, 2005.

UA's *CARE* Research & Development Laboratory uses leading edge technologies to offer products and specialized software development services in a variety of areas, particularly traffic safety and law enforcement. A few of the current projects include E-Citation, LETS, and the annual Crash Facts book for the state of Alabama.

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