

## Watch for Deer When Driving, Especially at Dawn and Dusk

The white-tailed deer is found throughout North America and is abundant in southeastern Nebraska. This deer is named for its most distinctive feature — the white “flag” under its tail you can see as the deer bounds away from you.

White-tailed deer are important game animals. The amount of money spent on white-tail hunting activities in Nebraska is near \$7-8 million each year. In addition, many landowners, outdoor enthusiasts and photographers enjoy the aesthetic value of the deer.

Despite their economic and aesthetic impacts, deer have a variety of negative impacts including damage to crops and personal property. Again this year, many people will experience one of those negative impacts — a close encounter with a deer and a vehicle. These collisions are costly and can be life-threatening. As you drive through Nebraska, be aware of deer movement and activities.

Fall is the height of the deer breeding season. Deer begin to

travel more especially as crops are harvested and they begin their mating activities. Breeding occurs from mid-October to about January. The peek activity is in November. It isn't a surprise that this is the time when most deer-vehicle collisions occur.

### To Reduce Your Chances of Hitting Deer

- **Pay more attention to the road and roadside and intentionally look for deer.**

Be especially alert at dawn and dusk, the peak movement times for deer and when visibility is low.

- **Watch for deer-crossing signs.** It is easy to take these signs for granted especially if we've driven by them several times without spotting a deer. Deer signs are posted where deer-vehicle collisions have repeatedly occurred, and near woods, parks, streams and creeks. When you see a deer-crossing sign, be especially



aware and drive cautiously.

But, don't always count on signs to warn you of deer activity, many deer-vehicle encounters occur where signs are not posted.

- **Follow the law — wear safety belts and drive at safe, sensible speeds for conditions.** Statistics show that most people injured or killed in deer-related collisions were not wearing seat belts.
- **When driving at night, use**

**high beams when there's no traffic coming from the opposite direction.** High beams will illuminate the eyes of a deer on or near the roadway, giving you more reaction time.

- **If you see one deer along a road or highway, expect others are nearby or going to follow.** Deer usually travel in groups. When one deer crosses the road, there may be others about to cross. Slow

down and watch for others to dart into the road.

- **If deer are grazing or standing near the highway, slow down and stay alert.** Deer can be unpredictable and may be startled by headlights, horns sounding and fast-moving traffic.
- **The most serious accidents occur when drivers lose control of their vehicles trying to avoid an animal.** If a deer bolts into the road and you can't stop, don't swerve out of your lane or take any unsafe evasive actions. It is usually safer to strike the deer than another object such as a tree or another vehicle.
- **Motorcyclists must be especially cautious this time of year.** Fatality rates are higher in deer-motorcycle accidents than in deer-car crashes. If you hit a deer, report the crash to local law enforcement.

Sources: Nebraska Game & Parks Commission; Kansas Highway Patrol

## Head Lice Resources You Can Trust

Now that kids are back in school, it's time for parents to start regularly doing head checks for head lice. If all parents would routinely inspect their children, many infestations could be wiped out before lice have the chance to spread to other family members, friends and classmates.

UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County has developed resources in multiple formats to help families identify head lice, understand infestations, and control lice safely.

### Publications

The Lancaster County Extension office, located at 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln, has the following handouts:

- **Head Lice Management** (educational resource #18) — provides a comprehensive overview on managing head lice, including identification, biology, inspection, treatment options, how to use a lice comb, and preventing reinfestations.
- **Quick Guide to Removing Head Lice Safely** (available in English, Spanish and Arabic) (educational resource #18) — summarizes how to identify and safely remove head lice.

### Video

An award-winning, eight-minute video was developed by UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County and Nebraska Health and Human Service System:

- **Removing Head Lice Safely** (available in English, Spanish and Arabic) — demonstrates how to inspect for head lice and nits, how to use a lice comb, and discusses treatment options.

The video is available at many schools, is being aired on Lincoln cable access (see side bar), can be viewed free online, and is available for purchase from Lancaster County Extension for \$13.

### Head Lice Video On Cable Access Sundays & Thursdays

The award-winning videotape “Removing Head Lice Safely,” is currently airing on Lincoln's cable access channel, 5 City TV. Watch for it on Sundays at 11:30 a.m. and Thursdays 6:30 p.m.

### Internet

Lancaster County Extension has made its head lice information available online 24-hours a day/seven days a week because parents often need this information on weekends and at night.

The following “Head Lice Resources You Can Trust are online at [lancaster.unl.edu/enviro/pest/lice.htm](http://lancaster.unl.edu/enviro/pest/lice.htm):

- **Head Lice Management**
- **Quick Guide to Removing Head Lice Safely**
- **Removing Head Lice Safely** — eight-minute video viewable with RealPlayer
- **Photo Album**
- **Frequently Asked Questions**

Since January 2000, the Web site has been accessed more than 295,000 times — more than 5,300 times per month. People in 30 states and eight countries have used the information. Feedback has shown:

- 95 percent were more confident, making informed decisions about managing lice.
- 100 percent would use the Web site information as a step toward managing head lice.
- 96 percent would share the information with others (child care providers, schools, patients, co-workers, friends and family).

## The Hazards of Biting Fleas

One day in late August, Patty (not her real name) called the Lancaster County Extension Office with the following story:

Her friend, a real cat lover, has several cats. When she (her friend) finds a flea when grooming her cats, she puts the flea between her teeth and “pops” it. Patty was pretty grossed out by this behavior and wondered if there are diseases that could be transmitted this way. She wanted ammunition to convince her friend to stop this disgusting

method of killing her cats' fleas.

After consulting a medical entomology text, I told Patty that fleas are the intermediate host of the helminth, the double-pored dog tapeworm, *Dipylidium caninum*. This tapeworm normally develops in the digestive tract of dogs, cats and wild carnivores, but can also occur in humans. And, ingesting fleas is the way this tapeworm is introduced into the digestive tract. Patty's friend is at risk of contracting tapeworms, if she

doesn't already have them.

I told Patty, a safer method of killing the fleas is to drop them in a small bowl of soapy water and flush them. Or, even better, there are several flea medications that can be prescribed by a veterinarian. These medications are effective and much less hazardous than “popping” fleas between one's teeth.

This is a true story...one so bizarre no one could possibly make it up. (BPO)

## Nebraska Water Facts

- About 65 percent of the High Plains Aquifer (also called the Ogallala Aquifer) lies beneath Nebraska and contains about two billion acre-feet of water. This is equal to about 25 years of the state's average annual stream-flow or about 700 times the average amount of water in its surface water reservoirs.
- Nebraska has nearly 2,000 natural lakes in the Sandhills.
- Nebraska has more than 5,000 wetlands, including many saline sites and more than 1,000 reservoirs and sandpit lakes.
- Nebraska ranks 10 nationally in number of stream miles, including its major river systems and ranks 16 nationally in total wetland acres.

Source: Water Current, Summer 2004, UNL Water Center (BPO)

## Upcoming Household Hazardous Waste Collections

Residents of Lancaster County can bring household hazardous wastes to the following collection sites.

**Saturday, Oct. 9 • 9 a.m.–1 p.m.**

Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department  
3140 N Street, south parking lot

**Saturday, Nov. 6 • 9 a.m.–1 p.m.**

State Fair Park, 4-H Youth Complex

Items you can bring for disposal:

- **HEAVY METALS:** items containing mercury such as thermometers and fluorescent bulbs.
- **SOLVENTS:** mineral spirits, turpentine, paint strippers and thinners, oil-based paints, varnishes, stains, polishes, waxes.
- **PESTICIDES:** weed killers, garden sprays, wood preservatives, pet flea and tick products, roach powder, rat poisons. You may also bring banned products, like DDT, chlordane, 2,4,5-T, pentachlorophenol, silvex.
- **PCB'S:** Ballasts from old fluorescent fixtures, small capacitors from old appliances, including radios, motors and televisions.

Leave products in their original container and keep the label intact. If the label is destroyed or unreadable, label the products to the best of your knowledge. Open, leaking or rusted containers should be placed in a clear plastic bag during transport. Do not mix chemicals.

Do not bring latex paint, medicines, explosives, fertilizers or general household trash. Used oil, antifreeze and batteries should be recycled.

**For more specific information, call the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department at 441-8040**