



UGA Study Focusing on Deer Crashes

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Each year in Georgia, there are more than 40,000 crashes involving deer, killing hundreds, injuring hundreds of thousands, and causing nearly a billion dollars in damages.

"We've got the suburban urban sprawl that's moving out into the rural lands around Atlanta [and] we've got deer in that land that are adapting to the humans," said Dr. Karl Miller, a wildlife professor at the University of Georgia.

So, how do we stop deer from darting in front of cars?

The problem is that no one really knows what deer can hear, and so no common sense approaches to avoiding deer can be counted.

Several studies have shown that deer whistles don't work

The solution may be in a captive deer herd at UGA.

The Georgia Department of Transportation has funded UGA doctoral student Gino D'Angelo's three-year study to find out exactly what deer hear and respond to.

"We're measuring the hearing thresholds of deer. We're trying to understand more what deer can actually hear," D'Angelo said.

During the study, deer from the herd are sedated and then taken to a soundproof room.

"We'll actually put speakers in front of their ears, at a certain distance from their ears and subject them to that sound. Although they're sedated, their brain should show a response to that sound if it's audible to them," D'Angelo said.

Researchers measure the deer's brain stem response, noting when the deer hears a noise.

They hope what they learn will end once and for all these collisions between civilization and nature. The study is expected to take many more months.

Twenty-five percent of all deer and car collisions occur from November to January because it is mating season.

Driving slow is not exciting advice, but experts say that is the best advice.