

# CRASHES INVOLVING ANIMALS: PREVALENCE AND CHARACTERISTICS

## INTRODUCTION

Crashes involving animals are a roadway safety concern. AAA received multiple inquiries on the topic in the past, both from members and media, especially during time periods when animals such as deer are more active. In a previous query of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) crash data, the AAA Foundation estimated that 350,000 police-reported crashes, 42,000 injuries, and 300 deaths occurred in crashes involving deer and other large animals in 2017. The purpose of the project is to provide current national statistics on crashes in which vehicles strike or are struck by large animals or crash after attempting to avoid animals; injuries and fatalities involving animal crashes will also be examined. Additionally, a deeper examination of some of the prevailing factors will be explored to provide a comprehensive understanding of this issue and information that can be used to educate motorists to reduce their risk.

## PROJECT GOAL AND PLAN

This study will aim to understand crashes involving animal strikes and extend general knowledge on this roadway safety concern through (a) a literature review of relevant findings related to contributing factors in animal crashes; (b) analysis of national-level data sources, including NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) and Crash Report Sampling System (CRSS); and (c) an in depth analysis of at least one state where granular data is available.

## Project Team

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## Period of Performance

Q1 2026 – Q4 2026