



Fact Sheet 4 What is the history of deer/automobile collisions?

A leading factor in advocating the hunting of deer has been the history of deer/automobile accidents.

From the Fairfield County Deer Management Alliance web site

This introductory material is extracted from an article that is one of a series by the 17-town Fairfield County Deer Management Alliance. The alliance aims to increase public understanding of the hazards posed by an overabundant deer population, and to support legal hunting in the interests of public health and safety and ecological balance.

While vehicle accidents involving deer occur all year round, the greatest likelihood of such collisions is after dark on rural roads during November. This coincides with the height of the deer mating season.

The cost of vehicle repairs is enormous, totaling over \$1.1 billion in the USA. In the average front-end collision, a deer causes \$4,500 to \$7,500 worth of repairs. This leads to inflated

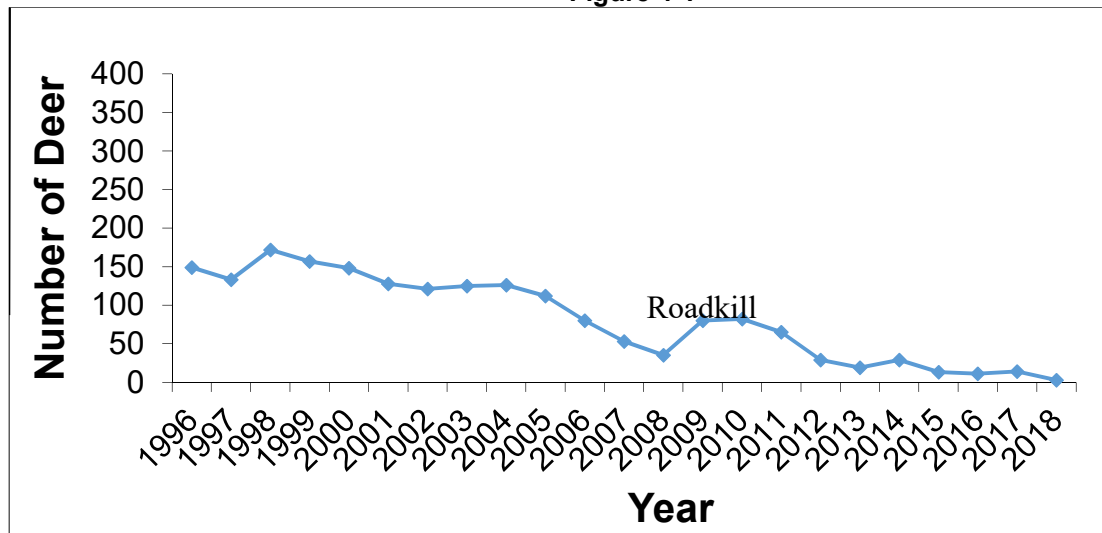
insurance premiums for all motorists living in areas of high density deer populations.

During the past 5 years, there were over 3,000 vehicle accidents resulting in deer deaths on Fairfield County roads reported to the state DEEP--although Howard Kilpatrick the DEEP's deer expert, estimates the actual total to be 8.6 times higher, based on a 2003 study in eight towns across CT.

From Andrew Labonte (DEEP) email to Stefano Zandri (February 7, 2019)

Data on the number of roadkills from 1996 to 2018 is presented in Figure 4-1. Basically the graph shows a continuing decrease in the number of accidents over the 22 years. It should be noted that the number of accidents was decreasing before the town hunt started in Ridgefield in 2006. This suggests that there are a variety of factors that the deer population and thus the amount of accidents. For example, the amount of food (e.g., acorns) and climate conditions could be having as much of an effect as the hunt.

Figure 4-1



The Ridgefield Police Department has provided more details regarding deer/auto accidents for 2016 through 2018 as shown in Table 4-1. At

least in 2016 and 2017, a higher proportion of accidents occurs in the October to November timeframe.

Table 4-1
Deer/Auto Accidents by Month in Ridgefield

Year	2016	2017	2018
January			2
February	1	2	3
March	2		
April		2	1
May			2
June	2	3	3
July		2	1
August	2	1	1
September			
October	1	3	1
November	8	4	3
December	2	4	2
Total for Year	18	21	19



The Bottom Line

Deer/auto accidents have been on the downturn for at least 20 years. The controlled hunt in Ridgefield started in 2006 suggesting that there are other factors that affect the number of accidents than the hunt itself such as the availability of food.