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NEWS RELEASE

MOOSE VEHICLE COLLISIONS BEGIN TO RISE IN OCTOBER NEAR PRINCE GEORGE

(KAMLOOPS B.C. October 1, 2007) - Roadkill. It's not a pretty sight, and not usually a topic of discussion, but it should be talked about more often in British Columbia. RCMP statistics show, on average four people are killed every year while ICBC figures indicate that over 310 people are injured annually in wildlife vehicle collisions.

For the past year, the Wildlife Collision Working Group has been working on strategies to reduce wildlife collisions in north central BC. "One of our key outcomes was to provide community specific information for drivers using ICBC animal crash data from 1996 to 2005," says UNBC researcher Roy Rea. On roads around Prince George, moose collisions increase in October and remain high through to the end of January. They occur most often between 5:00 and 6:00 pm.

"Moose collisions are serious for two reasons", says Barb Waters, Regional Manager, BC Conservation Foundation. First, moose are so tall that in a collision with most passenger vehicles the animal is knocked off its legs and can fall directly onto the windshield or roof of the vehicle with significant risk of human injury or death. Secondly, moose are very difficult to see at night, because of their dark coat colour and their eyes are higher than most headlight beams so there is no reflected eye shine to alert drivers.

The Wildlife Collision Prevention Program offers the following hints for the highway. The number one point: watch your speed. If you see an animal on or near the road, slow down immediately, and to alert other drivers, drive with your flashing lights on for about 500 metres.

Secondly, drivers and passengers must actively watch for wildlife on the road and roadside area. People think the road is dangerous, but in fact, animals are often attracted to the road in winter because of road deicing compounds and ease of movement along plowed highways.

Wildlife collisions occur more than expected on long straight stretches of road, when weather and driving conditions are favourable. Drivers should resist the tendency to speed up on long straight sections of highway.

The last point is that animals don't think or perceive danger the same way that humans do. They may not recognize the vehicle as dangerous or the horn as a warning or even if they do, they may not react safely. Animals are unpredictable in their behaviour and may bolt in front of a vehicle or cross and then immediately re-cross the road. Deer are also commonly seen around Prince George and often travel in groups, so if there is one animal there are usually more. The deer you are watching may not be the one that poses the threat; it may be the second or even the third deer following behind that causes the problem.

For more information on Wildlife Collision Prevention Program projects, anticipating and avoiding wildlife collisions or to make a tax deductible donation, visit www.wildlifecollisions.ca

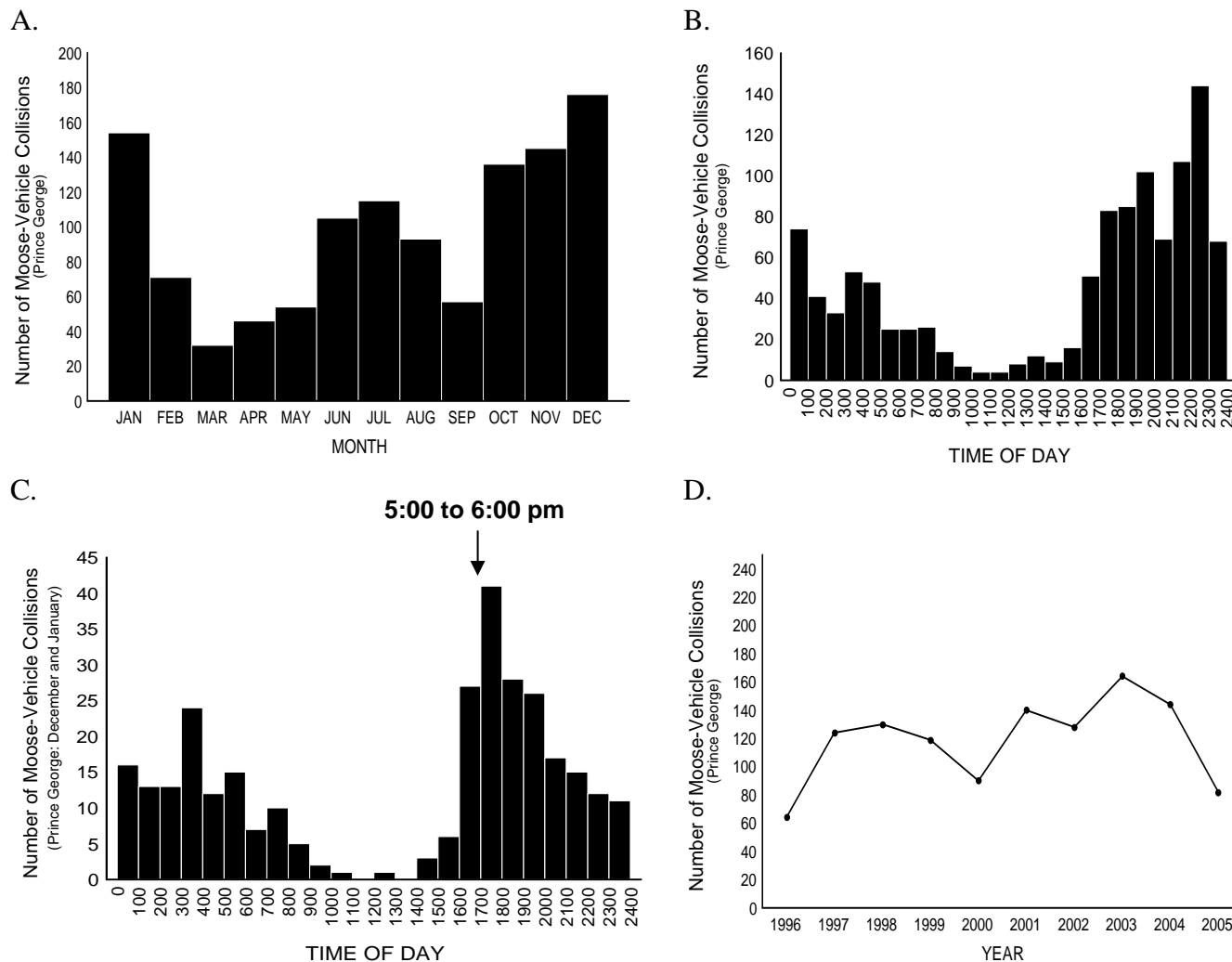
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Background Data

Patterns of vehicle collisions with moose between January 1st, 1996 and November 30th, 2005 for roads around Prince George



Graph A. Number of collisions by month.

Graph B. Number of collisions by time of day.

Graph C. Number of collisions by time of day during December and January (when most collisions occur).

Graph D Number of collisions per year between 1996 and November 2005

(Note: December 2005 collision data was not available at time of press).

Source: Road Health-University Wildlife Collision Mitigation Research Team. 2006. Using Collision Data, GPS Technology and Expert Opinion to Develop Strategic Countermeasure Recommendations for Reducing Animal-Vehicle Collisions in Northern British Columbia. Unpublished report. Prince George, BC, BC. 145 p.

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