

rivers need to pay more attention to deer crossing Oklahoma roads while the animals are listening to other instincts this time of year, said Dwayne Elmore, Oklahoma State University Extension wildlife management specialist. Elmore provided some insight and tips for dealing with deer on the move: Oklahoma deer are not migratory, but they do move more within their territories during seasonal changes. When food supplies decrease, deer may explore closer to residential areas to supplement their diets. Deer are less cautious about crossing roads when rutting bucks are interested in mating and does are trying to evade them. Normally nocturnal, deer don't follow Daylight Saving adjustments and work schedules, so don't rely on driving routines. Unfortunately, not all deer can clear the road ahead of cars. Accidents do happen, and they can be costly in terms of property damage and life. According to Oklahoma Highway Safety Office statistics, there were 836 deer-related crashes on Oklahoma roads in 2020, including two fatalities. As of November this year, four people have died in deer-related crashes. Elmore suggested: If you see a deer, slow down. Do not swerve into other cars. If you hit an animal, pull to the side of the road when it's safe and make sure the vehicle isn't hazardous to drive. Use hazard lights and watch out for traffic. If an injured deer is clearly still alive, do not approach it or touch the animal. Call an Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation game warden for guidance. If a deer's body is a road hazard, call the Oklahoma Highway Patrol or local sheriff's office. "No one really wants to hit a deer, but it is not worth the risk of injuring yourself or other people," he said. Elmore addresses the topic of deer movement on the agricultural television program SUNUP.