

A Review of Road Crashes involving Animals In Tasmania


**A Review of
Road Crashes involving Animals
in Tasmania**



Traffic & Infrastructure Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources
August 2009

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1. Introduction

This Report examines road crashes involving animals in Tasmania.

The purpose of the Report is:

- to quantify the scale of the problem;
- to establish when crashes involving animals occur; and
- to identify the types of locations where crashes involving animals are most prevalent.

2. The Scale of the Problem

Details of all crashes reported to Tasmania Police are recorded on Traffic Accident Report forms that are then electronically stored on the Crash Data Manager computer system which is maintained by DIER.

The Traffic Accident Report categorises the severity of the crash based on the most severe injury that was received by any person involved in the crash. Crash categories are as follows:

- fatal - a person dies within 30 days of the crash;
- serious injury - a person is admitted to hospital for at least 24 hours;
- minor injury – a person is admitted to hospital for less than 24 hours;
- first aid – a person is treated at the scene; and
- property damage only.

During the five-year period (2004-2008) there were more than 34,000 reported crashes. Just over 9,000 of these were casualty crashes (fatal, serious injury, minor injury and first aid).

During this period there were 574 reported crashes involving vehicles colliding with animals. 80 of these were casualty crashes. It is considered that the vast majority of vehicle collisions with animals are not reported to the Police.

'Hit animal' crashes account for just under 1% of all casualty crashes and just under 2% of all reported property damage crashes. There were no crashes involving animals that resulted in the driver / rider being killed. There were 8 crashes that resulted in the driver / rider being seriously injured. Of these, 5 involved motorcyclists.

The table below contains details of the type of animal that was involved in the 80 'hit animal' casualty crashes.

Type of Animal	Number of casualty crashes
Wallaby / Kangaroo	31
Wombat	3
Possum	1
All Native Animals	35
Cow	21
Horse	5
Sheep	5
Pig	1
All Farm Animals	32
Dog	9
Type of animal not identified	4

Farm animals and native animals account for similar numbers of 'hit animal' casualty crashes. Farm animals tend to be larger than native animals and so collisions involving them are more likely to result in injury to the driver / rider. It is considered that native animals probably make up a larger proportion of 'hit animal' property damage crashes.

3. When Crashes involving Animals Occur

Chart 3.1 shows the percentage of crashes versus light conditions for all crashes and Chart 3.2 shows the corresponding information for 'hit animal' crashes only.

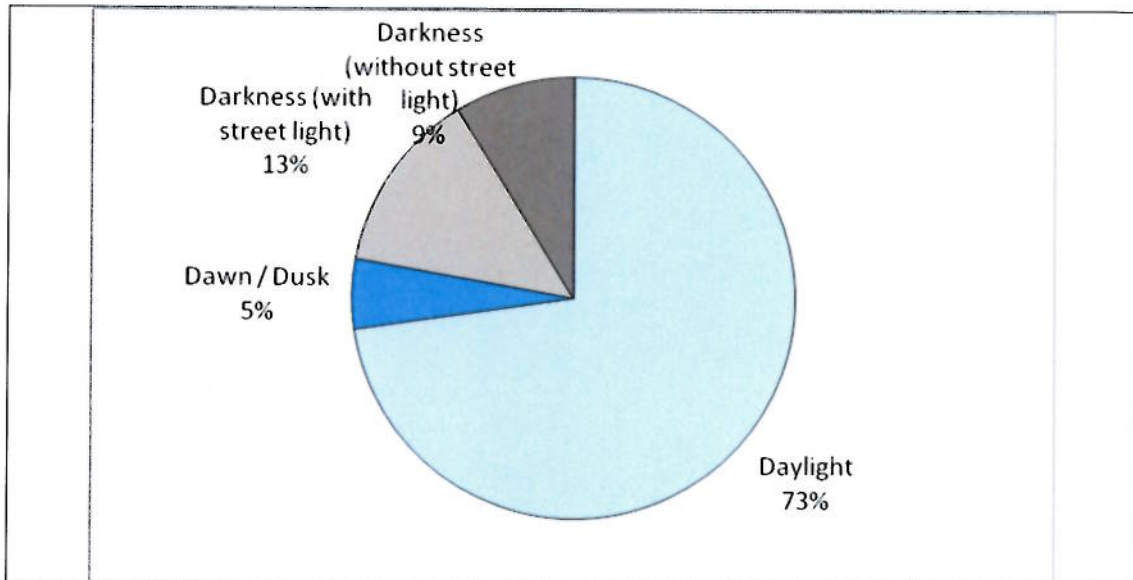


Chart 3.1 – Percentage of crashes versus light conditions – all crashes

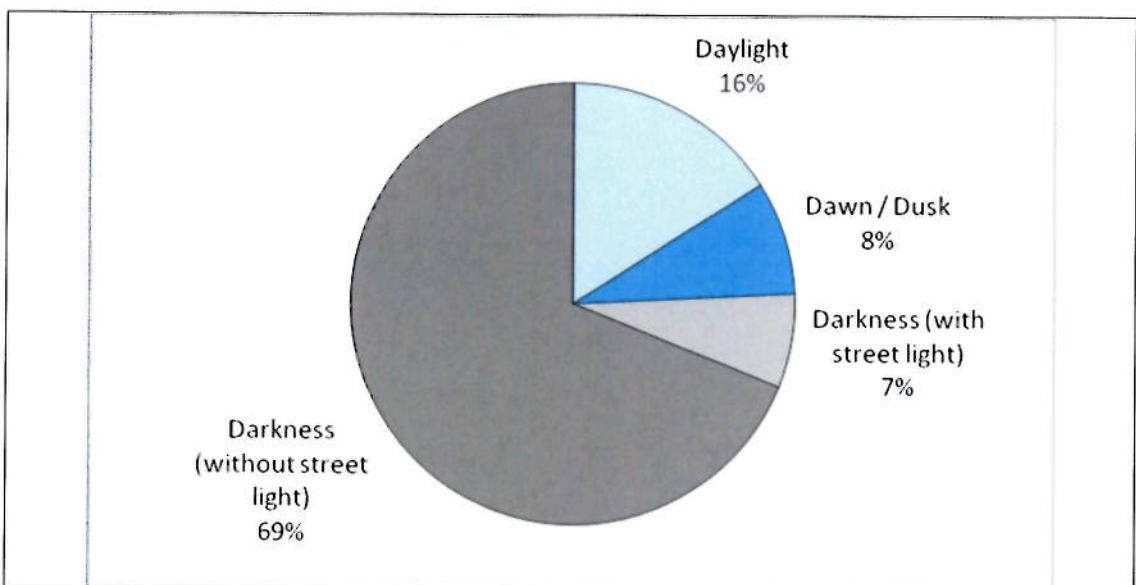


Chart 3.2 – Percentage of crashes versus light conditions – 'hit animal' crashes only

The two charts contrast strongly, with the pattern effectively reversed – around three-quarters of all crashes occur in daylight, while more than three-quarters of crashes involving animals occur during the hours of darkness.

Chart 3.3 shows the percentage of crashes by time of day for all crashes, and Chart 3.4 shows the corresponding information for ‘hit animal’ crashes only.

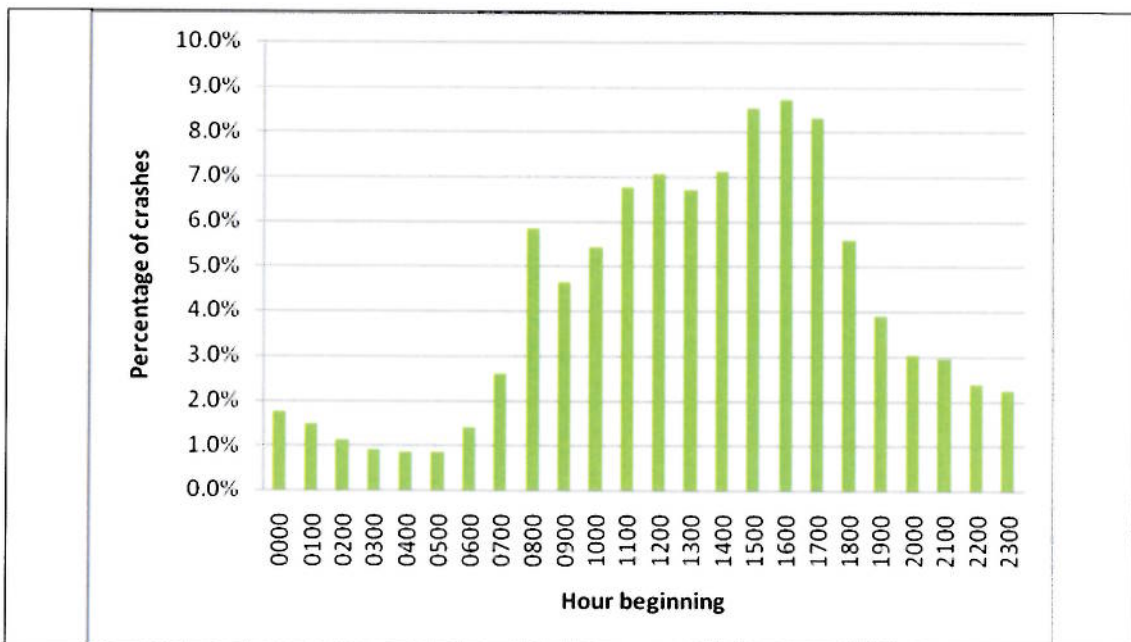


Chart 3.3 – Percentage of crashes versus time of day – all crashes

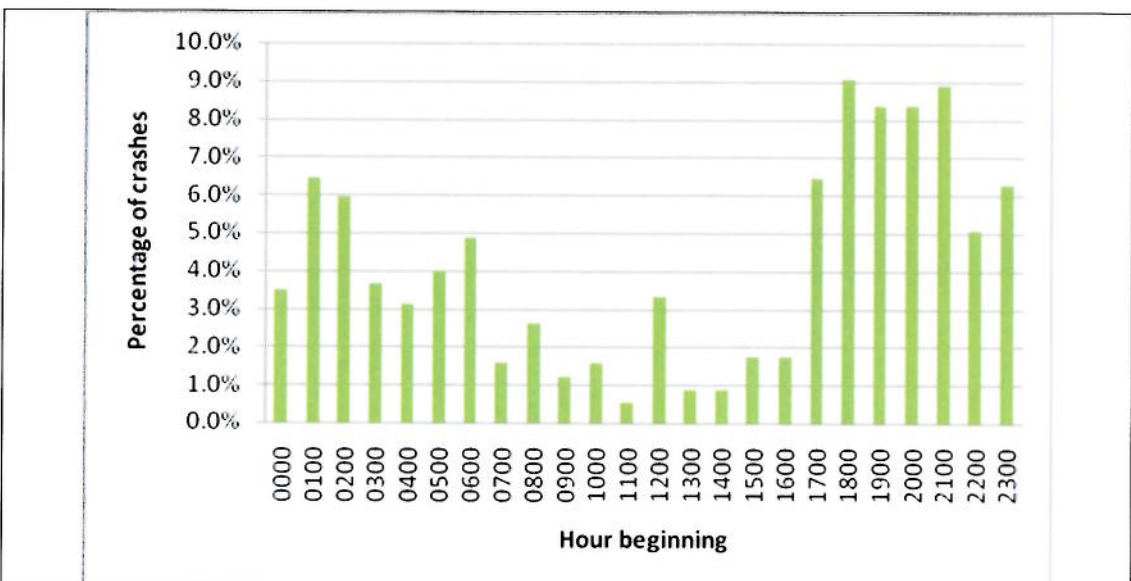
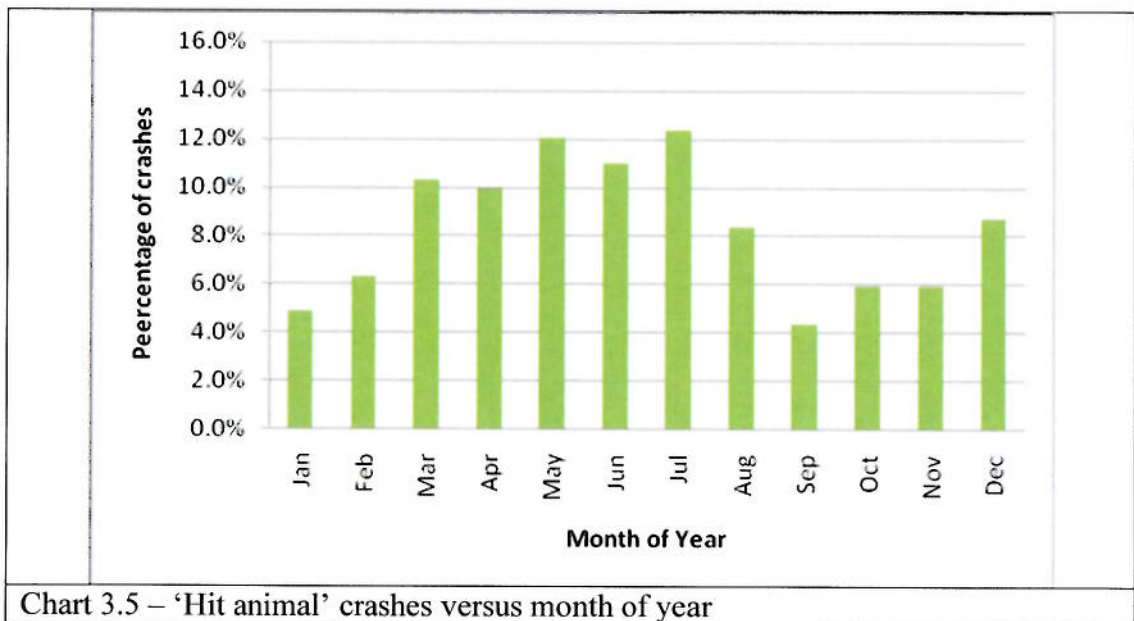


Chart 3.4 – Percentage of crashes versus time of day – ‘hit animal’ crashes only

To a large extent, Chart 3.3 reflects traffic volumes. The highest volumes occur during the day, with peaks at the beginning and end of the working day, and there are fairly low volumes during the night.

The corresponding information for crashes involving animals contrasts strongly. The great majority of these occur during the evening and night. The proportion of crashes between midnight and dawn is particularly high when one considers how little traffic there is during this period.

Chart 3.5 shows the percentage of 'hit animal' crashes plotted against the month of the year.



It can be seen that there is significant monthly variation which contrasts with the pattern for all crashes which is fairly constant throughout the year.

The higher number of 'hit animal' crashes during the March to July period may reflect the shorter hours of daylight and the corresponding increase in traffic travelling during the hours of darkness.

4. Where Crashes involving Animals Occur

Chart 4.1 shows the percentage of ‘hit animal’ crashes plotted against the speed zone which they occurred in.

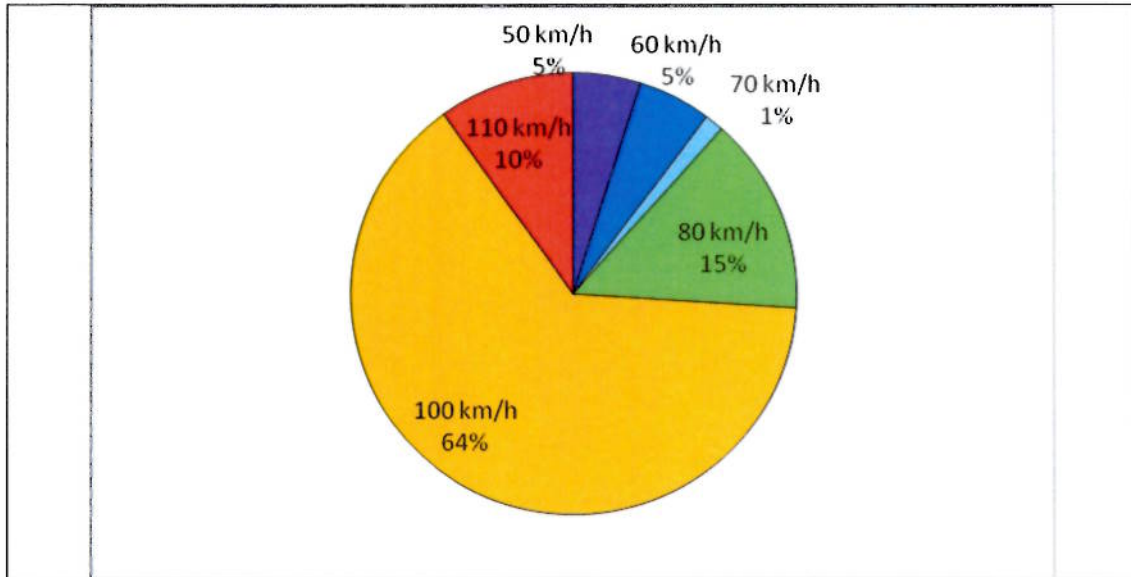


Chart 4.1 – ‘Hit animal’ crashes versus speed zone

Three-quarters of crashes involving animals occur on high speed roads.

Chart 4.2 shows the number of ‘hit animal’ crashes plotted against municipality.

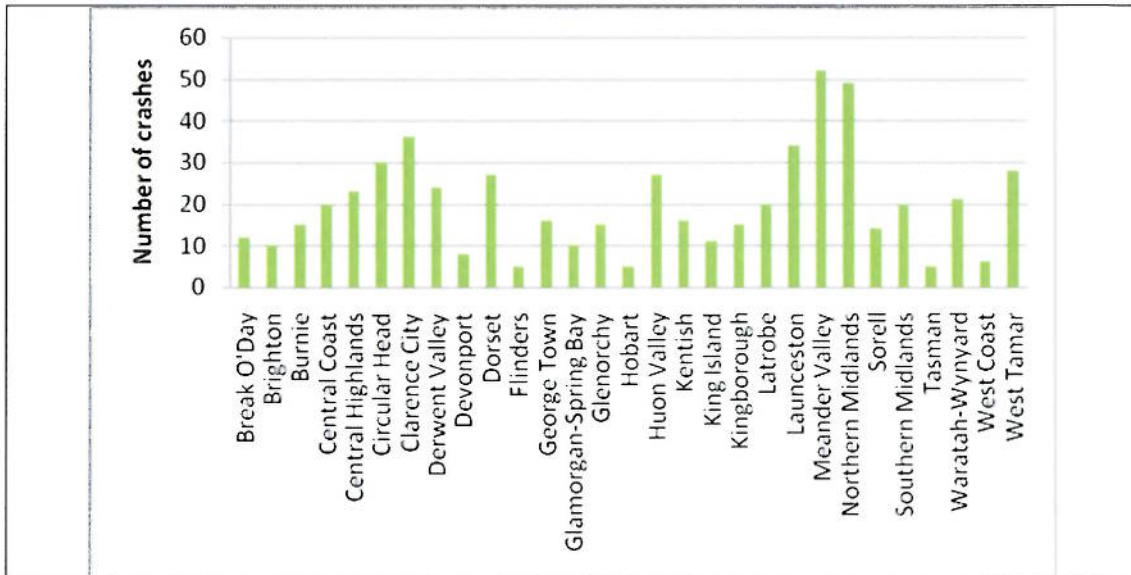


Chart 4.2 – ‘Hit animal’ crashes versus municipality

Meander Valley and Northern Midlands are the two Council areas with the greatest number of crashes involving animals.

Most crashes involving animals are widely dispersed across the Tasmanian road network. Table 4.1 lists the sections of road in Tasmania that have had more than three 'hit animal' crashes in the last five years (2004-2008).

Ref	Location	Number of crashes during the last five years
1	Bass Highway, in the vicinity of Hadspen	6
2	East Derwent Highway, near Risdon Vale	5
3	Acton Road, Acton	4

5. Discussion

Crashes involving animals are an animal welfare issue and some tourists are disturbed by the amount of roadkill they see on Tasmanian roads. However, they do not represent a significant road safety problem – crashes involving animals account for just under 1% of all casualty crashes.

More than three-quarters of crashes involving animals occur during the hours of darkness, and the highest number of crashes occurring during the March to July period. Three-quarters of ‘hit animal’ crashes occur on high speed roads (100 or 110 km/h).

Three sections of road have been identified where there have been more than three crashes involving animals in the last five years. These sections of road will be reviewed and wildlife warning signs will be installed if they have not already been provided.



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