

ENVIRONMENT: Bird feeders popular choice

Hoover Park Drive deer could be looking for food or mate

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The rural invasion is upon us, urban Stouffville.

First, it was coyotes on suburban streets.

This week, a deer was spotted running across Hoover Park Drive.

Tuesday around 5 p.m., a driver saw a deer cross in front of their vehicle and head into a ravine, they said in a call to The Sun-Tribune newsroom.

Between late October until about January, deer are in the rut, which is otherwise known as mating season.

That may be one reason for the deer being in an unusual location.

Other reasons may be there is a lack of natural food sources in the rural areas, which can result in deer resorting to foraging on planted vegetation, according to Jolanta Kowalski, senior media relations officer for the Ministry of Natural Resources.

"Even where natural foods are available, deer sometimes show a preference for planted vegetation," she said.

Other reasons for the urban appearance of the deer is they are munching off bird feeders. People may also be intentionally feeding the deer, which encourages them to come into urban areas, said Ms

Kowalski, who also noted urban areas have expanded into what has been traditionally deer habitat.

Because deer are mating and more concerned with finding a partner than looking both ways before they cross the road, wild animal/vehicle collisions are at their highest during the month of November, according to the Ontario Ministry of Transportation's website.

On average, there is a vehicle/wild animal collision every 38 minutes, according to the MTO site.

In 2007, 13,954 collisions were reported, according to the MTO site.

Most crashes take place on two-lane rural roads and in good weather, according to the MTO.

DRIVING TIPS

Tips to reduce your risk of colliding with wildlife include scanning the road from shoulder to shoulder and using high beams at night.

Brake firmly if an animal is standing on or crossing the road. Never assume the animal will move out of your way.

Avoid driving during dusk and dawn as this is when most vehicle/wildlife collisions occur.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Watch for Wildlife

For more information, go to www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/wildlife.shtml



SUN-TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Two deer try to find breakfast in a harvested corn field along Hwy. 48 north of Ballantrae in wintry weather in 2007. Deer are often spotted in rural areas, but this week's sighting in Stouffville was unusual.

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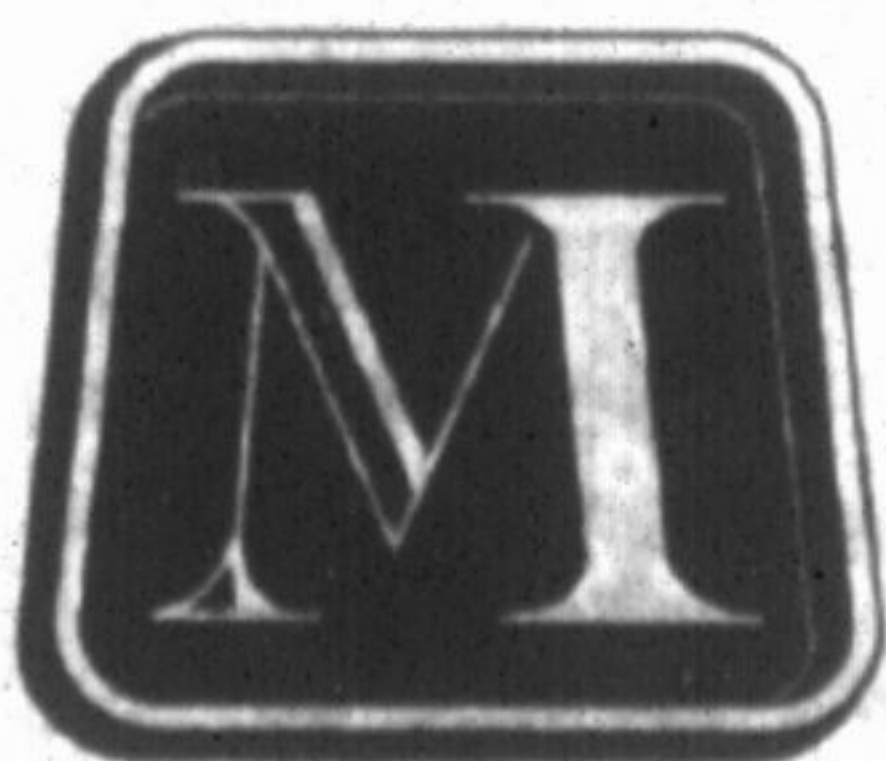
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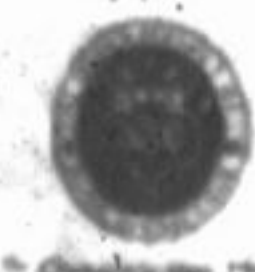


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