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MDC Encourages Motorists to Give Turtles a Brake!

MAY 15TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) encourages motorists to give turtles crossing roads a brake. Turtles are struck by cars throughout warmer months, but are at special risk this time of year because they are on the move. Young males make up most of the travelers as they search for territories of their own and for female turtles. Comfort is also a factor. Like other reptiles, turtles are cold-blooded so basking on warm asphalt feels good on cool spring days.

MDC encourages motorists to slow down when they see a turtle in the road and check to be sure they can safely steer around it. If helping a turtle cross a road, keep human safety as the number-one concern. Check for traffic and move the turtle across the road in the direction it is traveling.

The three-toed box turtle is a species often seen crossing roads in Missouri. Primarily a woodland species, it is found everywhere but the extreme northern part of the state. The ornate box turtle is also a common traveler and is found in all but the southeastern corner of the state. It is more adapted to grasslands and is most common in western Missouri.

Shown in the photo is Elvis, a 3 toed-box turtle owned by Jessica Loflin.

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