

# Advice for New Forest drivers

- **Be ready to stop** – animals can step out even when they've seen you approaching
- **Drive slowly, especially at night** – there is a pool of darkness behind the headlights of approaching cars - an animal may be standing in it
- **Give animals grazing by the side of the road a wide berth** – cross to the other side of the road and be prepared to STOP if there is on-coming traffic
- **Grazing animals on both sides of the road? Take extra care** – they may cross to join their friends
- **One animal by the roadside means there are others close by** – be aware
- **Bends and tops of hills need more care** – animals may be standing in the road just out of sight
- **Reflective collars worn by some ponies may help you see them in the dark** - but be aware that not all ponies and few cows have them
- **Deer can easily jump the fences alongside roads** like the A337, A31 and A35 – and when there is one deer more will usually follow

# Be aware at all times

- Expect the unexpected
- There are 11,000 grazing animals that have the right to cross, stand on or walk along the unfenced roads. They may run into the road without warning: always be on the lookout for them
- The speed limit on the unfenced roads in the Forest is never more than 40 mph and in some areas it is lower
- The animals have no more road sense than a young child. Pass them as you would a two year old child
- Animals can also be hidden by vegetation. The Forestry Commission carries out an extensive programme of roadside vegetation clearance every year, but bushes grow quickly!
- Don't rely on there being clear visibility. Many accidents happen when drivers can see well, but don't slow down when passing animals on the roadside. You should always be able to react and stop



### ***In Spring ...***

**The sap is rising and stallions may chase mares** – both may cross the road without warning and at speed

### ***In Summer ...***

**Foals are unpredictable** – if they get separated from their mothers they can - without warning - gallop across the road to get back to them. Animals often congregate on the road under trees or bridges for shade, and young animals may lie on the tarmac

### ***In Autumn ...***

**Pigs are often found on the verges and tarmac.** They have been turned out to eat the acorns. A pig is small and less easy to see. Ponies also like acorns (even though they are poisonous to them) and they may also be found in the road hoovering them up. Many ponies are fitted with reflective collars when they are caught on the drifts (round ups) – but some are not caught - and some are good at losing them!

### ***In Winter ...***

**The low light and bad weather can make visibility poor. Oncoming headlights easily blind you.** If everyone slowed down when driving at night and oncoming vehicles approach, there would be a significant reduction in the number of accidents





## ... and remember

- The faster you are travelling, the greater the damage will be to the animal, your car and your passengers - start your journey early so you don't have to hurry
- Breaking the speed limit will only save you a few minutes on your journey: an accident will make you very, very late
- Please be patient. Banging the side of your car with your hand usually moves them on. 'Nudging' an animal with your vehicle is unacceptable and illegal
- **Always be animal aware**



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OPEN YOUR EYES

This leaflet has been produced by the Shared Forest project, managed by the commoners to increase public awareness of our animals and the commoning heritage of the New Forest

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