



This is the second in a yearlong series about *Acton WildAware*. WildAware is a program sponsored by the Town of Acton Natural Resources Department that began in September, 2015 and will continue through summer, 2016. The purpose of WildAware is to educate the community about the existence and habits of wild creatures with whom we share our land, water and air. The goal is increased community awareness of shared habitats in order to protect and conserve our wild and native brethren. Contact 978-929-6634 or NR@ACTON-MA.GOV with questions.

Common Wildlife Road Crossings in Acton

- Main and High Streets-intersection
- Great Road and Main Street intersection, especially across Great Road at Conant Brook and Veteran's Field
- Nagog Hill Road at Conant Brook culvert under the road
- Main Street and Brook Street at Nashoba Brook
- Great Road at the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (just west of Davis Road) where Nashoba Brook flows under Great Road
- Mass Ave. near Boxborough town line
- Elm Street at Douglas School
- Mass Ave. at Knowlton Drive where Fort Pond Brook flows under Mass Ave.
- Lawsbrook Road and School Street intersection where Fort Pond Brook flows under the road
- Newtown Road where Conant Brook flows under the road
- Mass Ave. at Guggins Brook conservation land near Birch Ridge Road
- Martin Street at Jones Field where Fort Pond Brook flows under Martin Street and Maple Street
- Pope Road near Camp Acton conservation land where Spencer Brook flows under Pope Road
- Strawberry Hill Road and Pope Road intersection

In addition to this list of common wildlife crossings over well traveled roadways in Acton, residents may be aware of other wildlife travel corridors crossing neighborhood roads. It's important to be **WildAware** and drive slowly there.

Some wildlife crossings are more obvious than others. For example, as you are traveling you may see forest habitat on either side of the road, or catch a glimpse of a stream running under the road through a culvert.

At other crossings such as at the intersection of Route 27 and Great Road/2A, it is not as

apparent that both the Nashoba and Nagog Brooks flow under these roadways. As animals seek water, food and shelter and establish territories along these waterways, they cross the roadways. Their inability to navigate vehicle traffic causes them to appear on roadways quickly, without warning. Deer and squirrels are two of the most often animals encountered by drivers. The Acton Highway Department reports that they respond to roadkill reports along Main Street most frequently.

Deer usually seek out forest-edge habitats and have adapted easily to the fragmented forests of Acton. According to Mass Wildlife, deer densities are often higher in suburban areas than in rural areas because of the abundance of supplemental foods, including landscaping plants. Deer are crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk) in spring, summer, and autumn. Deer may also be active at other times of the day, especially during the breeding season in late fall. In Massachusetts, breeding takes place between late October and early December. At this time, bucks are more active throughout the day than usual. Rutting bucks often chase does (female deer) across roads without hesitation, so drivers should be extra cautious during the late fall.

Like deer, Gray squirrels are crepuscular. Gray Squirrels may be especially active in fall, when nuts are available, because squirrels cache food items to sustain them through the winter. This urgency to collect acorns and other nuts leads to them running across roadways while they search for new food sources and places to hide them.

More information about living with deer, squirrels and other wildlife animals is available on the Mass Wildlife website, by searching: Mass Wildlife Wildlife Fact Sheets Library.

Look for continued monthly educational articles in the Beacon; our Facebook WildAware page linked to other community Facebook pages; Instagram for folks to post local wildlife photos; Acton TV video (coming soon!). Participate! Slow down at wildlife crossings; send us wildlife photos for WildAware posters in local libraries; participate in our 17 hour “bioblitz” event in June 2016; come to a WildAware party at NARA next summer 2016.