

Reptile Roadkill

Drivers rage against reptiles.

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Some drivers intentionally hit reptiles on the road, three Canadian researchers found.

Suspicious that reptile road kill isn't always accidental, they collected data for four months along a busy causeway in southern Ontario. Among the props were a small plastic snapping turtle, a rubber eastern fox snake and a disposable white cup (to check reactions to inanimate objects). After analyzing data from 1,900 vehicles, the researchers determined 2.7 percent of drivers, the majority of them men, go out of their way to hit road-bound reptiles.

The fake snake fared the worst. Drivers were 1.9 times more likely to hit it than the cup.

In comparison, the fake turtle was 1.4 times more likely to be hit than the cup.

Besides driver animosity or indifference, the researchers observed some travelers stop to rescue the reptiles before realizing they were fakes.