

Dartmoor ponies painted reflective blue to cut road accidents



- 1 DARTMOOR ponies are to be painted blue to stop them being hit by cars. Reflective blue stripes are being painted on the animals to cut the number of accidents. A number of privately-owned ponies on the moor have been painted and reflective beads are to be added at a later stage. The trial is being funded by the Dartmoor Livestock Protection Society (DLPS) and will be expanded if successful. The charity helps ponies, sheep and cattle.
- 2 It said today over 60 animals have been killed in road accidents on Dartmoor so far this year, adding to the 60 deaths reported last year. 33-1, many more have sustained injuries on the road and have disappeared onto the moors to die, 33-2 these may not have been reported. “I would like to stress that the injuries they suffer are horrific,” said Karla McKechnie, livestock protection officer for DLPS. “Until you’ve witnessed a road traffic accident on livestock, you can’t imagine how horrendous it is. I’ve found many ponies and sheep with broken limbs on the road.”
- 3 The charity was inspired by a project to paint the antlers of deer in Finland. Herders have been spraying their reindeer with reflective paint since early 2014, according to a report by Finnish national broadcaster YLE. The special spray was tested on reindeer fur and antlers to see how it held up in different weather conditions, with the aim being to prevent accidents on the road, particularly in dark conditions. The spray was tested on fur but it was found to be most effective when applied to their antlers because “they are seen from every side”, says Anne Ollila, chairwoman of the Reindeer Herders Association. 4000 reindeer die in traffic accidents every year in Finland and most incidents occur in the dark months of November and December.

- 4 The DLPS asked a local manufacturer to come up with a similar plan as a long-term solution to “horrific” injuries sustained by the animals at night time. Karla says the only problem is that ponies shed their coats twice a year and they are waiting to see if the paint stays on for “three months or more”. The ponies have had them on for two weeks so far.

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