

《Kangaroos pose a unique problem to driverless cars in Austr》

A uniquely Australian problem is set to baffle carmakers intent on bringing driverless car technology "down under," with kangaroos proving to be one of the biggest hurdles for manufacturers calibrating animal detection systems.

Kangaroos, endemic to Australia, are unique in the way that they move, bounding along thanks to hugely powerful hind legs, while staying balanced with an even larger tail.

As a result, the make up and movements of kangaroos are playing havoc with research and development (R&D) teams sent to Australia to further calibrate the animal detection systems in driverless car technology.



While moose are a huge road safety problem in Sweden, kangaroos also pose dangers to motorists in Australia. That's why Volvo Cars is developing a detection system to solve the kangaroo problem. /Volvo Photo

Volvo Australia's technical manager David Pickett told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on Saturday his company has been trying to solve the issue for 18 months.

He said the way a kangaroo moves completely bamboozles the system -- a problem they haven't had with other

animals around the world.

"We've noticed with the kangaroo being in mid-flight -- when it's in the air -- it actually looks like it's further away, then it lands and it looks closer," Pickett said on Saturday.



Unmarked and unsealed roads in regional Australia also present a challenge for driverless cars. /Volvo Photo

The team from Volvo has been testing the system at the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve near the nation's capital, Canberra, for almost two years, but has been unable to perfect the way the system recognizes and acts on a kangaroo's presence.

"First we have to start identifying the 'roo'. We identify what a human looks like by how a human walks, because it's not only the one type of human - you've got short people, tall people, people wearing coats. The same applies to a roo," Pickett told the ABC.

"If you look at a roo sitting at the side of a road, standing at the side of a road, in motion, all these shapes are actually different."



Volvo engineers are incorporating technology in driverless cars to avoid kangaroos. /Volvo Photo

While the hurdle is not expected to delay the eventual roll-out of such technology, it does need to be solved, considering statistics have shown that Australian drivers collide with kangaroos at least 16,000 times per year.

Australia is home to around 35 million kangaroos and they are considered a pest in many parts of the country.

(Source: Xinhua)