



DEP NEWS RELEASE

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE URGES MOTORISTS TO BE ALERT TO DEER AS MATING SEASON GETS UNDER WAY AND DAYS GET SHORTER

(17/P95) TRENTON – The Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Fish and Wildlife is reminding motorists to be alert for white-tailed deer as days get shorter and deer become more active with mating season under way.



“Deer are involved in thousands of collisions with motor vehicles in New Jersey each year, with the highest number occurring during the fall mating season,” said Division of Fish and Wildlife Director Larry Herrighty. “We strongly urge all motorists to be particularly alert to the possibility of deer suddenly darting onto roadways and to be aware of some steps they can take to reduce the risk of serious injury to themselves or their passengers.”

Deer are apt to suddenly sprint onto roadways as bucks actively pursue does. This activity, known as the fall rut, is most pronounced in the very early morning and around sunset, when visibility can be difficult. Using caution becomes even more important when Daylight Saving Time ends November 5, causing commutes to align with periods when deer are most active and lighting conditions can be most difficult for motorists.

For motorists, low levels of light and sun glare can make it very difficult to see deer that are about to cross the road. In addition, multiple deer may cross the road at any given moment, usually in a single file.

The following tips can help motorists stay safe during deer mating season:

- If you see a deer, slow down and pay attention to possible sudden movement. If the deer is in the road and doesn’t move, don’t go around it. Wait for the deer to pass and the road is clear.
- Pay attention to “Deer Crossing” signs. Slow down when traveling through areas known to have a high concentration of deer so you will have ample time to stop if necessary.

- If you are traveling after dark, use high beams when there is no oncoming traffic or vehicles ahead. High beams will be reflected by the eyes of deer on or near roads. If you see one deer, be on guard: others may be in the area. Deer typically move in family groups at this time of year and cross roads single-file.
- Don't tailgate. Remember: the driver in front of you might have to stop suddenly to avoid hitting a deer.
- Always wear a seatbelt, as required by law. Drive at a safe and sensible speed, accounting for weather, available lighting, traffic, curves and other road conditions.
- If a collision appears inevitable, do not swerve to avoid impact. The deer may counter-maneuver suddenly. Brake appropriately, but stay in your lane. Collisions are more likely to become fatal when a driver swerves to avoid a deer and instead collides with oncoming traffic or a fixed structure along the road.
- Report any deer-vehicle collision to a local law enforcement agency immediately.
- Obey the state's hands-free device law or, better yet, avoid any distractions by refraining from using cellular devices while driving.



Motorists are encouraged to inform the Department of Transportation of dead deer they find along the state highway system, and can share information at: www.nj.gov/transportation/commuter/potholeform.shtm

Municipal and county governments are responsible for removal of dead deer from roads they maintain.

Peak rutting season for deer in New Jersey runs from late October, throughout November, and into mid-December in all areas of the state, beginning earliest in northern regions.

As a result of New Jersey's proactive deer management policies, the estimated population of deer in New Jersey, derived from a formula based on deer harvested in hunting seasons, is about 100,000, down from 204,000 in 1995.

This does not factor in high densities of deer inhabiting areas where hunting is not permitted. The DEP's Community-Based Deer Management Permit program is available to help municipalities control deer in areas where sport hunting is not a viable management tool.

For more information about white-tailed deer in New Jersey, visit: www.njfishandwildlife.com/deer.htm

For more information on the Community-Based Deer Management Program, visit: www.njfishandwildlife.com/cbdmp.htm

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