



# DEP NEWS RELEASE

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

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## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### DEP'S DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REMINDS MOTORISTS TO BE ALERT FOR DEER AS FALL RUTTING SEASON BEGINS

**(15/P90) TRENTON** – The Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife reminds motorists to be alert for white-tailed deer with the arrival of the fall breeding season, a time of year when deer may unexpectedly dart onto roads and cause accidents.

Motorists are urged to be especially attentive during morning and evening commutes when visibility may be poor. Deer are involved in thousands of collisions in New Jersey every year, with as many as half coming during the fall mating season, known as the rutting season. An adult male deer can weigh 150 pounds or more.

“At this time of year, deer can suddenly run onto any type of roadway, from busy highways to country roads,” said Division of Fish and Wildlife Director David Chanda. “A moment of inattentiveness behind the wheel at the wrong time can lead to serious consequences.”



DEP Photo/Craig Lemon

During rutting season, deer are most active in the very early morning hours and around sunset, when visibility conditions can be very difficult. This is when bucks are most actively pursuing does. Exercising caution will become even more important when daylight saving time ends Nov. 1, causing commutes to align with periods when deer are most active.

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

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

Motorists are encouraged to alert the Department of Transportation of dead deer they find along the state highway system. DOT has made it easy and convenient for residents to do so online at <http://www.nj.gov/transportation/commuter/potholeform.shtm>

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

The following tips are offered to help motorists stay safe:

- If you spot a deer, slow down and pay attention to possible sudden movement. If the deer 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. 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, taking into account weather, available lighting, traffic, curves and other road conditions.
- If a collision appears inevitable, do not swerve to avoid impact. The deer may counter-manuever 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.

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 111,000, down from 204,000 in 1995.

This does not factor in deer inhabiting areas where hunting is not permitted. The DEP's Community Based Deer Management 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:

<http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/deer.htm>

For more information on the Community Based Deer Management Program, visit:

<http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/cbdmp.htm>

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