

## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

### URGES DRIVERS TO BE CAUTIOUS ON ROADWAYS AS DEER MATING SEASON BEGINS AND DAYS GET SHORTER

Motorists are reminded to drive with extra caution and watch for white-tailed deer as deer mating season gets under way and darkness arrives earlier, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife announced.

White-tailed deer become more active during mating season, also known as the fall rut. During this time of year deer are more apt to suddenly run onto roadways as bucks pursue does, risking the possibility of a collision with a vehicle. Increased deer activity is more likely to occur in the very early morning and around sunset when visibility can be difficult.

"Deer are involved in thousands of collisions with motor vehicles in New Jersey each year, with highest number occurring during the fall mating season," Division of Fish and Wildlife Director Larry Herrigley said. "We strongly urge all motorists to be especially 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."

Being cautious will become even more important when daylight saving time ends at 2 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 4, causing commutes to align with the periods when deer are most active and lighting conditions may be most difficult for driving.

Low levels of light and sun glare can make it very difficult for drivers 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.

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

The following tips can help motorists stay safe during the fall rut:

- \* 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, wait for the deer to pass and the road is clear. Do not try to maneuver around the deer.
- \* Pay attention to "Deer Crossing" signs. Slow down when traveling through areas known to have a high concentration of deer so you 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, assume that others may be in the area. Deer typically move in family groups during 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-manuever suddenly. Brake appropriately and 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 refrain 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](http://www.nj.gov/transportation/commuter/potholeform.shtm).

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

For more information about white-tailed deer in New Jersey, visit:

[www.njfishandwildlife.com/deer.htm](http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/deer.htm).

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

[www.njfishandwildlife.com/cbdmp.htm](http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/cbdmp.htm).