



NJDOT NEWS



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NJDOT, DEP remind drivers to be extra cautious as deer mating season begins, daylight hours get shorter

(Trenton) – As deer mating season is approaching and daylight savings is underway, the New Jersey Department of Transportation and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Fish and Wildlife are reminding motorists to drive with extra caution and watch for white-tailed deer.

Deer are more likely to suddenly run onto roadways during this time of year – known as the fall rut – as bucks pursue does, risking the possibility of colliding with a vehicle. Increased deer activity is more likely to occur in the early morning and around sunset, when visibility may be difficult.

“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,” Division of Fish and Wildlife Director Dave Golden said. “We urge all drivers to be especially alert to the possibility of deer suddenly darting onto roadways and to be aware of things they can do to reduce the risk of a collision and possible serious injury to themselves or their passengers.”

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

Being extra vigilant for deer will become even more important when daylight saving time ends at 2 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 1. Many commutes will then align with the periods when deer are most active, and lighting conditions may be the most difficult for driving.

Reduced lighting as well as 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 moment, usually in single file.

These tips can help motorists stay safe during the fall rut:

- Slow down if you see a deer and watch for possible sudden movement. If the deer is in the road and doesn’t move, wait for the deer to cross and the road is clear. Do not try to drive around the deer.
- Watch for “Deer Crossing” signs. Slow down when traveling through areas known to have a high concentration of deer so you have enough time to stop, if necessary.
- Use high beams after dark if 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.
- Don’t tailgate. The driver ahead might have to stop suddenly to avoid colliding with a deer.
- Always wear a seatbelt, as required by law. Drive at a safe and sensible speed, factoring for weather, available lighting, traffic, curves and other road conditions.

- Do not swerve to avoid impact if a collision appears inevitable. 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.

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

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