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Contact: Darlene Yuhas (609) 984-1795
Elaine Makatura (609) 292-2994

MOTORISTS ADVISED TO BE ALERT FOR DEER, SLOW DOWN

(09/P26) TRENTON - Department of Environmental Protection Acting Commissioner Mark N. Mauriello today urged motorists to drive very carefully this season when deer are particularly active and more likely to be darting into roadways.

"It's breeding season for white-tailed deer right now, and motorists should be on the lookout," Commissioner Mauriello said. "Deer can be seen crossing roadways at any time of day, but typically they are most active during the morning and in the evening. Motorists can minimize the risk of accidents with deer by being alert and slowing down."

The DEP recommends motorists take the following precautions:

- * Drive with caution when traveling through areas known to have large deer populations, particularly along sections of roadways posted as deer crossings.
- * Slow down when you see deer on the roadside, and be alert for sudden movement. Remember that deer move in groups, so if you see one deer crossing the road, others might follow.
- * Use high beams after dark when there is no oncoming traffic. High beams illuminate the eyes of deer on or near a roadway, giving motorists more time to react.
- * Do not tailgate. Remember, the motorist in front of you might have to stop suddenly to avoid hitting a deer.
- * Always wear a seat belt as required by state law, and drive at a safe speed for road and weather conditions.
- * Do not swerve if it appears you are going to hit a deer. Brake firmly, and stay in your lane. Motorists who swerve to avoid deer increase the likelihood of colliding with oncoming traffic or roadside obstacles.
- * Keep in mind that deer are unpredictable. They may stop in the middle of the road while crossing or turn around and return to the roadside. If a deer remains in the road, do not try to go around it. Stop and wait until the road is clear.
- * Report any deer-vehicle collisions to a local law enforcement agency immediately.

For more information about deer in New Jersey, visit the DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife Web site at www.njfishandwildlife.com.

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