

FAQ



DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM – April 2008

The Monmouth County Park System has established a program for managing the deer population within the county parks. This FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions sheet - answers basic questions concerning the Park System's Deer Management Program. Detailed program information may be found at www.monmouthcountyparks.com

What is the problem with deer in the County Parks?

The Park System, as the third largest landowner and manager in the county, is responsible for resource protection within the County parks. Responsible land stewardship and resource protection require that wildlife and its habitat be managed for the benefit of **all** animals and plants. The dominance or behavior of a species that threatens the well being of others requires active intervention. The State's deer population and its consumption of native plant materials that are vital both to a healthy forest and as food and shelter to birds and small mammals, constitutes a problem requiring active intervention.

Why does the deer population need to be controlled?

The state deer population is estimated to be increasing by 40% annually. Deer consume ground cover and shrubs, affecting birds and other animals that rely on vegetation. Ultimately, deer, a single species, can have an effect on 700 to 800 native plant and animal species.

What options are available to the County Park System?

There are a variety of deer management options, each with advantages, disadvantages, and associated costs. Unfortunately, non-lethal options are still experimental or not practical for managing free-ranging deer herds within the 14,000-acre, 38 location Monmouth County Park System. Hunting is the most practical management option for the Park System. If, and when, any successful, safe, and cost-effective non-lethal management methods, including reproductive controls, are developed and permitted by law for use on free ranging deer populations, the Park System will consider including these methods in the management program.

Where is hunting allowed in the Park System?

Beginning in 2004, the Park System opened portions of park areas for the hunting of white tailed deer. Two categories of areas have been established. The hunting areas and permitted seasons described below are as recommended for 2008/2009 in the Deer Management Program Annual Report and are contingent upon approval by the Monmouth County Board of Recreation Commissioners. Hunting dates will be finalized upon release of the State Fish & Wildlife calendar for 2008/2009.

Category 1: defined as those areas that, within the portions designated for hunting, are largely undeveloped with limited public use. In 2008/2009 eleven *Category 1* areas will be open for bow only hunting during the seasons established by the State of NJ. In keeping with common practice in NJ State Parks and elsewhere, trails within *Category 1* areas will remain open during the established bow hunting dates. The *Category 1* areas are Big Brook Park, Charleston Springs Golf Course, Crosswicks Creek Greenway, Howell Park Golf Course, Huber Woods Park, Manasquan Reservoir (Bear Swamp Tract), Perrineville Lake Park, Shark River Park, Tatum Park, Turkey Swamp Park, and the Yellow Brook Tract

Category 2: defined as those areas with regular public visitation that are closed to outdoor public use during the time they are available to hunting. These areas are open for a portion of the shotgun, muzzleloader, and/or bow season when public visitation is at its lowest, typically December and January. The 2008/2009 *Category 2* areas will include portions of Clayton Park, Hartshorne Woods Park, the Ramanessin Section of Holmdel Park and Thompson Park

What does this mean to the park visitor and neighbor?

In recommending the areas to be hunted, staff tried to balance the objective of reducing the deer population with consideration for the park users and neighbors. Any hunting in the Monmouth County Park System will be in accordance with all NJ Fish & Wildlife regulations. In addition to the NJ Fish & Wildlife requirements, all hunters are required to obtain a permit from the Park System and provide proof that they have passed a hunter education program course. Only licensed hunters over the age of 18 may be issued a permit. NJ Fish & Wildlife prohibits hunting from taking place within 450 feet of a building or structure or on Sundays. As an added precaution, the Park System requires that all hunting be from elevated tree stands. The perimeters of areas open for hunting are marked and informational signage is posted at parking areas and trail access points.

How does the Park System assess the program?

Throughout the year County Park Rangers and other field staff observe and monitor the impact of deer on the forests, fields, meadows, and other landscapes within the county parks. Techniques include aerial population counts, spotlight population counts, deer exclosure studies, and forest health studies. At the close of the hunting season, hunters provide information about the parks that were hunted and the numbers of deer harvested. Park neighbors are also surveyed regarding their experiences with the program. All the information is compiled and reviewed by Park staff. The staff then makes recommendations to modify the deer management program. The program recommended by the Park System staff is the most efficient and effective means currently available for reducing the deer population at designated county park locations.

Where can I find out more about the Park System's Deer Management Program?

Copies of the 2008/2009 Deer Management Annual Report (April 2008) may be downloaded from the Park System's website at www.monmouthcountyparks.com. Copies are also available at the Park System Headquarters in Thompson Park, Lincroft. The Report was mailed to all public libraries in Monmouth County. Copies of the report may be mailed to you as well. The Deer Management Plan for 2008/2009 will be presented and reviewed at the Board of Recreation Commissioners meeting Monday, April 21, 2008. The meeting will be held at the Tatum Park Red Hill Activity Center, 251 Red Hill Road, Middletown, NJ, beginning at 7pm. The public is invited.

If you are unable to attend the meeting, questions or comments regarding the Park System's Deer Management Program should be directed to the Park System by telephone at 732-842-4000, ext. 4237, by email at wildlife@monmouthcountyparks.com or by mail at Monmouth County Park System, Attn: Public Information Office, 805 Newman Springs Road, Lincroft, NJ 07738. Public comments will be accepted through Monday, April 21, 2008.

Information about hunting in New Jersey's is available in the [NJ Fish & Wildlife Digest](#). The booklet provides the details specific to zones and regulations. Copies are available at most sportsmen's stores. You can also access the NJ Fish & Wildlife website and review the current rules and regulations at www.njfishandwildlife.com; the telephone for general information is 609-292-2965.