



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fire Island National Seashore 120 Laurel Street
Patchogue, NY 11772

631 687-4750 phone
631 289-4898 fax

Fire Island National Seashore News Release

Release date: Immediate

Contact(s): Paula Valentine

Phone number: 631- 687- 4759

Date: September 25, 2009

Release code: 09- 18

National Park Service Conducts Fall Deer Darting Program on Fire Island

Patchogue, New York— On September 17, 2009, Fire Island National Seashore began another season of a long- standing deer immunocontraceptive research project on Fire Island, to help determine if deer populations on the island can be kept in check by injecting female deer (does) with a birth control vaccine. Darting of the does is conducted on both National Park Service (NPS) lands and in several Fire Island communities which are within the boundaries of Fire Island National Seashore. Park resource management staff and volunteers completed darting in Fire Island Pines and Cherry Grove last week, and have begun darting from Ocean Bay Park through Cornielle Estates and from Atlantique to Kismet. This year's darting will end before October 1.

“The chance to see deer on Fire Island is a positive experience for most visitors to Fire Island National Seashore,” stated Superintendent Chris Soller, “but the increasing population of deer on Fire Island and their impact on other resources has been a concern of park managers for years.” Since 1993, Fire Island National Seashore in cooperation with the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) has been treating female white- tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) with the immunocontraceptive vaccine *porcine zona pellucida* (PZP), to determine if this can be a humane alternative for controlling the population of deer on Fire Island. Qualified staff or “darters” administer the PZP vaccine remotely through the use of a dart. The dart also marks each doe with a nontoxic marker dye, to distinguish treated from untreated animals, then ejects itself from the deer. All darts must be recovered and accounted for, and the safety of people on the island is of utmost concern. Baiting stations have been used to provide the best opportunity for darters to successfully administer treatment. Within the boundaries of the park, the National Park Service has the authority to manage wildlife, even on private properties, and works cooperatively with the State of New York on many issues.

For more information about this project or natural resource management issues at Fire Island National Seashore, contact Chief of Resources Management Michael Bilecki at 631- 687- 4760. To learn more about deer in Fire Island National Seashore, see the park's web site: www.nps.gov/fiis/naturescience/deer.htm. For more information about Fire Island National Seashore, visit the park's home page at www.nps.gov/fiis.

###

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.