

Fire Island

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Fire Island National Seashore
Long Island, New York



**“Thanks, but No Thanks”
Never Feed the Deer**



Coexisting With Wildlife

Deer-Smart Checklist

Nimble, elegant, wild and captivating. Or an infestation of “rats with hooves.” How you perceive the presence of deer on Fire Island may depend on where you live. Some people love these creatures, while others see them as nuisances and a threat to the island’s natural resources, especially as the white-tailed deer population has grown over the years.

The National Park Service has been cooperating with several universities, organizations and island communities conducting research to measure the deer population and determine whether a birth control vaccine can be a useful deer management tool at Fire Island. You can help play a critical role in the control of deer populations by your actions while you’re on the island.

Savvy Fire Islanders know and practice these easy guidelines to coexist with deer.

Don’t Feed Deer

Feeding deer causes two problems: overpopulation and aggression. When deer rely on people for food, they don’t need to forage. Then they have more energy to reproduce, leading to overpopulation. Deer that are fed lose their fear of humans and can become aggressive, posing a threat to people.

Build Deer-Smart

Deer get trapped in fences and drown in swimming pools. If you must build a fence, leave space for deer passage. Cover or drain your pool when you’re not home. Lattice work around the base of your home will prevent deer from seeking shelter in the unnatural habitat under houses.

Keep Trash Secure

Deer knock over trash cans while searching for food. This is unsanitary for people, and unhealthy for deer.

Residents and renters: Use straps to keep the lids on your trash cans at home.

Visitors: Take your sealed trash bags and containers off the island from designated carry-in/carry-out areas for proper disposal.

Control Your Pets

Deer defend themselves against attacking dogs by charging or fleeing. Avoid injury to your pet, yourself and others. Keep dogs on a six foot maximum leash. Never leave pets unattended. Always clean up after your pet and don’t leave out the pet’s uneaten food.

Plant Native Species

Discourage deer from grazing in your garden. Plant native species like highbush blueberry, shadblow and pitch pine. Deer prefer not to eat these plants.

Never Use Rodenticides

Deer may die from ingesting rat poisons. Rodenticide use is illegal within Fire Island National Seashore. Instead, use mechanical traps to control rodents.

For More Information:

Printed on Recycled Paper 8/15/05

www.nps.gov/fiis/deer.htm