

NEWS



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GET A TASTE OF THE GREAT OUTDOORS WITH FUN ACTIVITIES THIS MONTH AT NEW JERSEY'S PARKS AND FORESTS

(11/P71) TRENTON – New Jersey delivers a great diversity of outdoors experiences in a small package – camping, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, hunting, and even rock-hunting, to name a few.

There's no better time than now, Great Outdoors Month, to get a taste of some of the many outdoors adventures New Jersey has to offer – and to get started on a lifetime of appreciation for the outdoors.

New Jersey boasts more than 750,000 acres of State Forests, Parks, Natural Areas and Wildlife Management Areas that offer a wealth of outdoor recreation opportunities. While these places make great destinations any time of year, the Department of Environmental Protection urges residents and visitors to take part in the many special events being held at many parks and forest this month during the state's "Get Outdoors, New Jersey!" campaign, held in conjunction with Great Outdoors Month.

"Being outdoors and exploring nature improves our health, our well-being and our outlook on life," Commissioner Bob Martin said. "Great Outdoors Month calls attention to the benefits of being active and having fun in the outdoors. The activities being held throughout the month will introduce everyone, especially families with children, to the many different ways to have fun and learn in the outdoors."

"Whether you have a sense of adventure or simply want to commune with nature, travel off the beaten path and discover New Jersey's hidden ecological wonders," noted Grace Hanlon, Executive Director of the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism. "New Jersey has a diverse landscape that offers an ecosystem of breathtaking beauty. Enjoy a peaceful, exhilarating or rewarding adventure when you explore New Jersey's great outdoors."

Just some of the activities you can sample this month: search for snakes, tadpoles, frogs and turtles on a Reptile Safari at Cape May Point State Park; discover the birds of Barnegat Bay at Island Beach State Park; learn how to use GPS to find hidden "treasures" at Kittatinny Valley State Park; and delve into stream ecology through the little critters that live in a brook at Double Trouble State Park.

The DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife also will host Free Fishing Days statewide on June 11 and 12. No license will be needed for freshwater fishing on these days. Licenses are normally required for those ages 16 or older.

“Fishing has never been better in New Jersey, and this is a great opportunity to get hooked on a great sport,” said Amy Cradic, Assistant Commissioner of the DEP’s Division of Natural and Historic Resources. “These Free Fishing Days and all of the other programs available throughout the month will educate, lead to a healthier lifestyle, and create a lifetime of memories. This is a great opportunity to get hooked on all that New Jersey’s outdoors has to offer.”

For more information and a calendar of events, visit www.getoutdoors.nj.gov

Other DEP-sponsored events coming up this weekend tie into the theme of getting outdoors by focusing on the importance of ecology.

Trail Exploration Day on Saturday will feature a series of special outdoor events, including a look at river critters, bluebirds, wildlife habitats, and swamp life, to be held at the DEP’s Forest Resource Education Center in Jackson. More information can be found at: <http://www.njforestrycenter.org/>

Also Saturday, Tree Farm Day and International Years of Forests will be celebrated at Batsto Village in Wharton State Forest from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with a number of family-oriented activities, including hikes and wildlife programs. Free canoes will be available. The event is free. There is a \$5 per vehicle parking fee. For more information, go to www.celebrateforests.nj.gov

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