

NJMC NEWS RELEASE

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**New Jersey
Meadowlands
Commission**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NJMC Announces 2013 Pontoon Boat Cruise and Canoe Tour Season

Popular Guided Tours Run from June through September

LYNDHURST, N.J. – The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission’s (NJMC) greatly anticipated guided pontoon boat cruises and canoe tours of the Hackensack River launch in June, giving visitors a unique chance to view the spectacular natural beauty and wildlife of the Meadowlands up-close while learning about the history of the river and the region. The first boat cruise is on Tuesday, June 4, at 5:30 p.m., departing from River Barge Park in Carlstadt. The canoe season begins on Saturday, June 15, at 8:30 a.m., also at River Barge Park.

“The Meadowlands Commission’s pontoon boat cruises and canoe tours cannot be beat in giving visitors a new and remarkable view of the Meadowlands and an understanding of its natural history,” said Marcia Karrow, Executive Director of the NJMC. “These trips are truly a wonderful opportunity and, judging by the number of return visitors, an experience that you’ll want to relive again and again.”

The two-hour boat cruises are led by expert NJMC narrators who talk about the Hackensack River estuary’s amazing history. Guides also point out wildlife along the way. The Hackensack River is a great place to see many of the more than 280 bird species that make the Meadowlands their seasonal or year-round home, including 34 on New Jersey’s threatened, endangered and species of special concern lists.

Keep an eye on the shoreline for egrets, herons and sandpipers. Turn your gaze skyward and you might see peregrine falcons perched under bridges, ospreys searching for tasty snacks or, if you’re lucky, a bald eagle. Don’t forget your camera for these fantastic photo opportunities. The cruises head south from River Barge Park in Carlstadt and pass under historic lift bridges and drawbridges. The excursions also visit the river’s marshes, where muskrats, diamondback terrapins and fiddler crabs may be seen. No two cruises are alike, as each takes a slightly different path along the river, at different tides.

Canoe tours last three hours and focus on the river’s marshes, taking participants on a journey through a diverse array of vegetation and wildlife. Paddlers will learn the basics of salt marsh ecology and enjoy the magnificent scenery while rowing past wetlands down creeks.

Pontoon boat and canoe trips are for ages 10 and up. Canoes hold up to three people and it is preferred that at least one person has experience in canoeing. Requests for group pontoon boat and canoe trips are welcome. Due to the high popularity of these tours, early reservations are recommended. Canoe tours are \$15 per person and the suggested donation for pontoon boat rides is also \$15 per person.

All pontoon boat rides depart from River Barge Park. Canoe trips launch from River Barge Park, Mill Creek Point Park in Secaucus and Laurel Hill Park, also in Secaucus. For a complete schedule of trips and to download a registration form, visit <http://www.njmeadowlands.gov/environment/tours.html>. Registration forms are also available at the NJMC offices and Meadowlands Environment Center, both in DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst.

For more information, directions to launch points and to request group tours, call 201-460-4640. To learn more about the Meadowlands District's natural beauty and its vast array of outdoor activities that make the region an ideal recreational tourism destination, visit the NJMC's homepage, www.njmeadowlands.gov, and its nature blog, www.meadowblog.net.

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