



## What is the Value of Our Natural Environment?

From the scenic hills of the Highlands to the sandy coastline of southern Cape May, New Jersey is blessed with a wealth of precious natural resources and unique landscapes. Our beaches, forests, wetlands and other natural resources provide countless benefits to the public. But despite their importance, it is often difficult to quantify the significance of our natural resources and the immense value they provide to our state.

The DEP undertook a two-year study to quantify the value of these resources in an effort to understand and communicate their worth by estimating the dollar value of the services and goods produced by New Jersey's natural environment. The DEP released this study, titled "Valuing New Jersey's Natural Capital," in April of this year.

The study, a collaborative effort with the University of Vermont, looked at both goods and services offered by New Jersey's natural capital, the natural environment that provides benefits to society. Goods are commodities that can be bought and sold like timber and fish. The economically valuable services provided by our ecosystems include waste treatment, plant and animal habitat, and water supply. Many of the benefits provided by natural capital come from ecological systems or ecosystems, a dynamic complex of plant, animal and microorganism communities and their nonliving environment, all interacting as a functional unit.

The study calculated that the services provided by New Jersey's ecosystems are worth, at a minimum, \$8.6 billion to \$19.8 billion per year and provides benefits of at least \$288 billion to \$660 billion.

To read the full study, visit [www.nj.gov/dep/dsr/naturalcap/](http://www.nj.gov/dep/dsr/naturalcap/)



*Some of New Jersey's unique landscapes: Highpoint State Park, Montague, Sussex County; Barnegat Bay Lighthouse, Barnegat, Ocean County; and the Great Falls, Paterson, Passaic County.*