

Whitetail Deer

(Informational Signage found at the Cortland Water Works)

General Information

The whitetail deer is one of the best-known and easily recognized large mammals and can be found throughout North America. The white tail is one of five members of the deer family. The others are moose, elk, mule deer, and caribou. Deer weigh from 100 to 350 lb. Mature males are generally larger than the females. The whitetail is a hoofed animal, with each foot ending in a cloven or two piece hoof. A deer's hoof is divided in two and spreads like two fingers to make it easier to walk in mud. Deer use their hooves to dig through snow to find nuts and acorns.

Fur coats help deer survive cold weather. Hollow brown hairs trap air and act like insulation. A thick layer of underfur adds extra warmth. Snow, wind, and water cannot penetrate these hairs to the skin, so deer stay warm and dry.

The male deer (also known as a buck) usually weighs from 130 to 300 pounds but, in rare cases, bucks in excess of 375 pounds have been recorded. The female (doe) usually weighs from 90 to 200 pounds. Length ranges from 62 to 87 inches, including the tail, and the shoulder height is 32 to 40 inches. The young deer (known as fawns) have white spots on a reddish-brown coat that help to camouflage the fawn on the sun-dappled forest floor where it spends much of its time hiding from predators.

Habitat and Diet

Whitetail deer occupy a variety of habitats from forest to fields and swamps. They are most common where a variety of habitats are found, providing them with all their seasonal needs. In Spring they enjoy tender buds, young leaves and grasses. In the summer they enjoy leaves, brush and a wide variety of plants. Towards fall they seek out hardier foods to get ready for winter, such as acorns and hazelnuts. In Winter they eat mainly younger twigs and branches and bark from trees. During the winter, the whitetail deer gather together in herds. Their combined trampling keeps the snowpack down within an enclosed area and thus enables them to search for food. Such areas are known as "yards".

Deer are herbivores, cud-chewing plant eaters. Whitetails feed on a large variety of plant material such as tender young buds, grasses, clover, leaves, twigs, stems, brush, shrubs, shoots, legumes, acorns, hazelnuts, and wild fruits such as apples, grapes and berries. Deer will feed on man's agricultural crops such as corn, soybeans, hay, alfalfa, green beans, peas and other garden vegetables. Deer can cause considerable damage to fruit trees. Deer also enjoy munching on flowers, which is why they can sometimes be found in neighborhood yards. Their special stomach allows them to eat some things that humans cannot, such as mushrooms that are poisonous to humans and red sumac. Deer are attracted to salt and mineral blocks, but they also get minerals from decaying wood and mineral enriched Earth.

Behavior

Whitetail deer are extremely cautious and wary animals with highly developed senses of sight, smell, and hearing. When threatened with danger, they will often attempt to quietly sneak away. If seriously frightened however, a whitetail deer will often utter a loud, snorting or blowing sound, and then quickly run away while raising the tail upwards like a flag, exposing the white underneath as a visual alarm to other deer nearby. This is even noted in fawns, and usually the deer is a doe that shows the flag. They also grunt and bleat.





White-tailed deer communicate in many different ways using sounds, scent, body language, and marking. All whitetail deer are capable of producing audible noises, unique to each animal. Fawns release a high pitch squeal, known as a bleat, to call out to their mothers. Does also bleat. Grunting produces a low, guttural sound that will attract the attention of any other deer in the area. Both does and bucks snort, a sound that often signals danger. As well as snorting, bucks also grunt at a pitch that gets lower with maturity. Bucks are unique in their grunt-snort-wheeze pattern that often shows aggression and hostility.

Deer Antlers

For several months of the year, male whitetail deer, known as bucks, are easily recognized by the presence of antlers on their head, what's the female does black. In spring or early summer, typically March or April, the new antlers begin to form on the whitetail deer, each growing out from a pedicel, a bony stock situated on the frontal bone of the skull. Deer antlers are among the fastest growing tissues known in the animal kingdom. Antlers are live tissue, composed of bone. Growing at an Average of 1 to 2 inches per week during development. During growth, they are covered with hairy skin, called velvet, a living tissue, which contains many blood vessels for the nourishment of the growing bone tissue. Antlers have a constant blood and nerve supply, which is inside the velvet antler covering, while growing.

During development, the deer's antlers are very delicate. This is the time when most antler damage or breakage occurs. When the antlers have reached the size and shape characteristics for the particular species, the blood circulation in the velvet is stopped, The velvet dies, and the buck then rubs off the dead skin against branches, saplings, trees, shrubs, stumps and rocks, revealing the handsome antlers. The antlers are carried well into the winter, typically January or February, when they decay at the base and fall off, leaving only the hair covered pedicels. Mice and squirrels often eat the fallen antlers, called sheds, for the nutritious minerals. A new pair of antlers will start growing again in the spring.

Informational Signage found at the Cortland Water Works:

<p>White Tail Deer</p> <p>The whitetail deer is one of the best known and easily recognized large mammals and can be found throughout North America. The whitetail is one of five members of the deer family. The others are moose, elk, mule deer, and caribou. Deer weigh from 100 to 350 pounds. Mature males are generally larger than the females. The whitetail is a hooved animal, with each foot ending in a cloven or two-toed hoof. A deer's hoof is divided in two and spreads like two fingers to make it easier to walk in mud. Deer use their hooves to dig through snow in field runs and across.</p> <p>Four coats help deer survive cold weather. Hollow brown hairs trap air and act like insulation. A thick layer of underfur adds extra warmth. Snow, wind, and water cannot penetrate these hairs to the skin, so deer stay warm and dry.</p> <p>The male deer (also known as a buck) usually weighs from 110 to 300 pounds but, in rare cases, bucks in excess of 375 pounds have been recorded. The female (doe) usually weighs from 90 to 200 pounds. Length ranges from 62 to 87 inches, including the tail, and the shoulder height is 32 to 40 inches. The young deer (fawns or fawns) have white spots (signs) which help them to camouflage the fawn on the sun dappled forest floor where it spends much of its time hiding from predators.</p> 	<p>Habitat and Diet</p> <p>Whitetail deer occupy a variety of habitats from forests to fields and swamps. They are most common where a variety of habitats are found, providing them with all their seasonal needs. In spring they enjoy tender buds, young leaves and grasses. In the summer they enjoy leaves, brush and a wide variety of plants. Towards fall they seek out harder foods to get ready for winter, such as acorns and hazel nuts. In winter they eat mainly younger twigs and branches, and bark from trees. During winter, the whitetail deer gather together in herds. Their combined warmth keeps the same packed close within an enclosed area and this enables them to search for food. Such areas are known as "yards".</p> <p>Deer are herbivores, eat-chewing plant eaters. Whitetails feed on a large variety of plant materials such as tender young buds, grasses, clover leaves, tree twigs, stems, brush, shrubs, shoots, legumes, acorns, hazel nuts, and wild fruits such as apples, grapes and berries. Deer will feed on man's cultivated crops, such as corn, soybeans, hay, alfalfa, green beans, peas and other garden vegetables. Deer can cause considerable damage to fruit trees. They also enjoy monitoring on flowers, which is why they can sometimes be found in neighborhood yards. Their special stomach allows them to eat some things that humans cannot, such as mushrooms that are poisonous to humans and Red Squirrels. They are attracted to salt & mineral blocks, but they also get minerals from decaying wood and mineral enriched earth.</p> 	<p>Behavior</p> <p>Whitetail deer are extremely cautious and wary animals with highly developed senses of sight, smell, and hearing. When threatened with danger, they will often attempt to quietly sneak away. If seriously frightened however, a whitetail deer will often utter a loud, snorting or blowing sound, and then quickly run away while raising the tail upwards like a flag, exposing the white underneath as a visual alarm to other deer nearby. This is even noted in fawns, and usually the deer is a doe that shows the flag. They also grunt and bleat.</p> <p>White-tailed deer communicate in many different ways using sounds, scent, body language, and marking. All white-tailed deer are capable of producing audible noises, unique to each animal. Fawns release a high-pitched squeal, known as a bleat, to call out to their mothers. Does also bleat. Grunting produces a low, guttural sound that will attract the attention of any other deer in the area. Both does and bucks snort, a sound that often signals danger. As well as snorting, bucks also grunt at a pitch that gets lower with maturity. Bucks are unique in their grunt-snort-wheeze pattern that often shows aggression and hostility.</p> 	<p>Deer Antlers</p> <p>For several months of the year, male whitetail deer, known as bucks, are easily recognized by the presence of antlers on their head, which the females (does) lack. In spring or early summer, typically March or April, the new antlers begin to form on the whitetail deer, each growing out from a pedicel, a bony stock situated on the frontal bone of the skull. Deer antlers are among the fastest growing tissues known in the animal kingdom. Antlers are live tissue, composed of bone. Growing at an average of 1 to 2 inches per week during development. During growth, they are covered with hairy skin, called velvet, a living tissue, which contains many blood vessels for the nourishment of the growing bone tissue. Antlers have a constant blood and nerve supply, which is inside the velvet antler covering, while growing. During development, the deer's antlers are very delicate. This is the time when most antler damage or breakage occurs. When the antlers have reached the size and shape characteristics for the particular species, the blood circulation in the velvet is stopped, the velvet dies, and the buck then rubs off the dead skin against branches, saplings, trees, shrubs, stumps and rocks, revealing the handsome antlers. The antlers are carried well into winter, typically January or February, when they decay at the base and fall off, leaving only the hair-covered pedicels. Mice and squirrels often eat the fallen antlers, called sheds, for the nutritious minerals. A new pair of antlers will start growing again in the spring.</p> 
---	--	--	---