

FACTS ABOUT DEER THAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW

- * White-tailed deer, mule deer, black-tailed deer, elk, axis deer, fallow deer, and moose all belong in the Family Cervidae. This family of deer is characterized by an absence of a gall bladder, feet are actually four toed (dew claws count as toes), all have 32 teeth (except elk) and the males grow antlers.
- * There are 30 different subspecies of white-tailed deer in North, Central, and South America. White-tailed deer are also ungulates, which means they have a hooved foot as well as ruminants which means they have a four chambered stomach and chew their cud.
- * A deer's eyes are large and set on the sides of their head to give them a 310 degree field of vision. They also have a tapetum lucidum, which is a reflective layer of pigmented specialized epithelial cells in the back of their eyes which collects available light to allow deer to see better at night and is responsible for the "eye shine" present in many nocturnal animals.
- * Deer have pilo erector muscles in the skin that raise the hair coat, much like humans get "goose bumps". This is to increase air space for insulation and also used in behavioral posturing (primarily among bucks).
- * Deer deposit fat first in bone marrow, kidney and pelvic areas. Fat is deposited last over the ribs, brisket and tail head and deer lose fat in the reverse order.
- * Deer have seven glands -- the forehead gland, the preorbital gland (located in front of the eyes), the interdigital gland (located between the two larger hoofs), the metatarsal gland (located between the knee and foot along the inside of the rear legs), the tarsal gland (located along the inside of the hind legs just inside the knee area), the vomeronasal gland (located within the nostrils and upper palate of the mouth), and the pineal gland (located in the brain).
- * The four chambered stomach of a deer includes the reticulum, rumen omasum and abomasum. The reticulum is the first compartment of the stomach, a honeycomb looking thing that simply holds and collects swallowed material. The rumen is the fermentation vat with the large papilla (hair looking things) on the wall to increase absorptive and mixing surface area. The omasum absorbs fluids with its many folded pouches (which increase surface area and grinding ability) and the abomasum is considered the true stomach where glands produce acids which finally digest the contents. Beyond the stomach, the small intestines are where the primary nutrient absorption occurs and the fluids are finally absorbed in the large intestine.
- * The liver produces bile since there is no gall bladder and digests the fats and detoxifies any substances such as toxins that are eaten.
- * Deer are seasonally polyestrous, meaning they only cycle during certain times of the year and usually come into estrus (heat) on 28 day cycles.
- * Gestation period is 199-201 days.
- * Males are only fertile when they have hardened antlers, infertile the remainder of the year.

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