



## “Doe a deer...”

Part one of two

Until last month a herd of six White-Tailed Deer visited my cabin twice a day for the past eight months. They stopped by in the morning as they headed to the Seabolt's Farm nearby to feed on their corn supply. Then they would return in the evening when they headed back to the deep woods. They are truly one of the most beautiful sights that our area has to offer. So, of course with my love and admiration for wildlife, I had to learn more about them.

-The White-Tailed Deer inhabit most of southern Canada and the entire mainland United States except two or three states in the west, (*do you know which states?*)

-They can be viewed from most anywhere you travel in this area.

-Their range reaches throughout Central America to Bolivia.

-They are members of the “Cervidae” Family which also includes moose, elk, and caribou. All have slender legs. Most are brown or gray in color, with white spots characterizing the young, like Bambi, known as a fawn. The White-Tailed and its cousin the Mule Deer are the only members of this family found in the North American deserts.

Antlers (solid horns) distinguish most of the three dozen species of the deer family from the other hoofed mammals. Unlike most other hoofed mammals, which have permanent, hollow horns, only the male deer (buck) grow antlers, which they shed each year. The White-tailed Deer have forward curving antlers with a

number of points (*tines*) branching from the main trunk known as the *beam*. White-tail deer have good eyesight and acute hearing, but depend mainly on their sense of smell to detect danger. The bucks shed their antlers from January to March and then they grow out again in April or May. White-tail deer have numerous scent glands on their legs for interspecies communication and secretions become especially strong during the mating season known as the *rutting season*.

-White-tail deer wave their tails characteristically from side to side when they are startled.

-White-tail deer may run at speeds of up to forty miles per hour through tangled terrain in a forest.

-White-tail deer are good swimmers and often enter large streams and lakes to escape predators.

-Antlers do not serve as weapons against predators, but are used during the mating season, when the males fight to breed with females.

White-tail deer are the most nervous and shy of our deer. “White-tailed Deer” refers to the white underside of the tail, which is held visibly erect like a flag when the animal is alarmed or running. The adult White-tailed Deer has a

about one hundred and twenty five pounds. White-tail deer are not especially vocal, although young fawns *bleat* on occasion. Injured deer utter a startlingly loud “*blatt*” or “*bawl*”. Whistles or snorts of disturbed White-tails are the most commonly heard sounds.

Deer are extremely cautious animals with keen senses of smell and hearing. White-tailed deer can run as fast as forty miles per hour and are good swimmers.

The basic social unit is a female and her fawns, although does have been observed to graze together in herds of up to hundreds of individuals. In the deserts, deer often migrate from higher summertime elevations to warmer climates where more food is available. When a number gather together trampling down the snow in an area, it is known as a “deer yard.” Except for the mating season, bucks and does remain apart. Bucks generally live alone or in small groups with other bucks, while does live alone or with their fawns and female yearlings.

Deer generally prefer open woodland, but are often found on the fringes of urban areas and in farming country. But desert species occur in most habitats within ten miles of a water source. They often enter human inhabited areas

and feast on flowers and grass as well as regularly drinking from the humans’ abundant water supply. Some deer have also taken to eating garbage and plastic which is not at all good for them. Recently a number of deer had to be sac-

rificed at the Grand Canyon after having eaten human trash which stopped up their digestive systems and caused them to be unable to process food.

**Part Two Contents:**  
*Human's hunting and feeding Deer, recent news reports of conflicts between wildlife and humans, and a Wildlife Quiz*



bright, reddish brown summer coat and a duller grayish brown winter coat. White fur is located in a band behind the nose, in circles around the eyes, inside the ears, over the chin and throat, on the upper insides of the legs and beneath the tail. The fawns have reddish coats with white spots.

The adult does are smaller than the adult bucks, with an average weight of