



RED DEER

Cervus elaphus



Red Deer are social animals; they live in summer herds containing as many as 400 individuals. These herds are matriarchal and are dominated by a single cow. Seasonal migrations occur elevationally; they are found at higher elevations during the summer and at lower elevations during the winter. As the fall mating season approaches, the bulls form harems, which they defend with their large size and aggressive nature. In spring, the sexes separate. Females leave to give birth, while bulls form their own separate summer herds. Bulls are only territorial during the mating season.



SPECIES QUICK FACTS

SIZE

Red Deer are 3 to 5 feet tall at the shoulder with a length of 5 to 9 feet.

WEIGHT

The weight of a Red Deer can range from 375 to 1100 pounds.

FOOD HABITS

Red Deer are browsers that feed on grasses, sedges, and forbs in the summer and woody growth in the winter. Favorites of the elk include dandelions, violets, clover, and the occasional mushroom.

HABITAT

Red Deer prefer open woodlands and avoid dense unbroken forests.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The Red Deer historically ranged throughout much of the northern hemisphere, including northern Africa. Today, it is confined, at least in Eurasia, to protected areas.

FUN FACT

The Red Deer is the same species that we call an Elk in North America.