



CARIBOU

Rangifer tarandus



The caribou is also known as the reindeer, especially in those areas of Europe and Asia where the species has been domesticated for centuries. There are several subspecies of caribou. These subspecies differ in size, coloration, and extent of antler growth according to their geographic location and habitat. For example, northern populations tend to be pale because they are typically in a more snowy environment. Southern populations tend to have smaller antlers because they typically live in more wooded habitats. The hairs of caribou are hollow, which allows them to trap heat close to the body. The hooves are large and concave to support the animals in snow and soft tundra. The large hooves also help to make caribou strong swimmers.

SPECIES QUICK FACTS

SIZE

Caribou are between five and seven feet in length, with a shoulder height of up to four feet.

WEIGHT

The average weight of a caribou is about 400 pounds, although weights of 700 pounds are not uncommon.

FOOD HABITS

Caribou are grazing herbivores that eat grasses, sedges, mosses, and lichens.

HABITAT

The caribou is found in arctic tundra and in subarctic boreal forests.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The caribou is found in the far northern areas of North America, Europe, and Asia.

FUN FACT

The caribou is the only member of the deer family in which both the males and females grow antlers.

