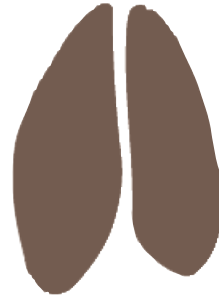


7a

Deer

Mule deer are common in Yellowstone, living throughout the park in almost all habitats; white-tailed deer are uncommon, restricted to streamside areas of the northern range.



Mule deer and white-tailed deer can be told apart by their coloration, antler shape, tail, behavior, and where they live. All species of deer use their hearing, smell, and sight to detect predators such as coyotes or cougars. They probably smell or hear the approaching predator first; then may raise their heads high and stare hard, rotating ears forward to hear better. If a deer hears or sees movement, it flees.

Mule deer *Odocoileus hemionus*

Number in Yellowstone

Summer: 2,300–2,500

Winter: less than 100

Where to see

- Summer: throughout the park.
- Winter: North Entrance area.

Behavior and Size

- Male (buck): 150–250 pounds; female (doe): 100–175 pounds; 3½ feet at the shoulder.
- Summer coat: reddish; winter coat: gray-brown; white rump patch with black-tipped tail; brown patch on forehead; large ears.

- Males grow antlers from April or May until August or September; shed them in late winter and spring.
- Mating season (rut) in November and December; fawns born late May to early August.
- Lives in brushy areas, coniferous forests, grasslands.
- Bounding gait, when four feet leave the ground, enables it to move more quickly through shrubs and rock fields.
- Eats shrubs, forbs, grasses; conifers in spring.
- Predators include wolf, coyote, cougar, bear.

White-tailed Deer *O. virginianus*

Number in Yellowstone

Scarce

Where to see

Along streams and rivers in northern part of the park.

Behavior and Size

- Adults 150–250 pounds; 3½ feet at the shoulder.
- Summer coat: red-brown; winter coat: gray-brown; throat and inside ears with

whitish patches; belly, inner thighs, and underside of tail white.

- Waves tail like a white flag when fleeing.
- Males grow antlers from May until August; shed them in early to late spring.
- Mating season (rut) peaks in November; fawns born usually in late May or June.
- Eats shrubs, forbs, grasses; conifers in spring.
- Predators include wolf, coyote, cougar, bear.