

## Reindeers

The **reindeer** is a majestic animal that inhabits the frozen arctic tundra. It has adapted remarkably to a harsh, barren **habitat** where food is scarce much of the year. It is an excellent swimmer. Aided by a thick coat that traps air and gives good buoyancy in the water, it can easily swim across wide rivers.

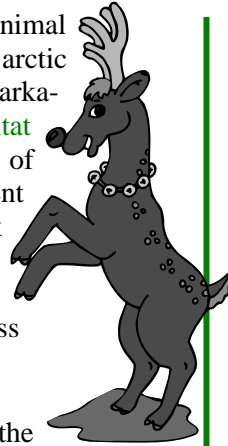
### HABITS:

The reindeer inhabits the bleak **arctic** plain or **tundra**, and the surrounding forest and mountain areas. Within this harsh and freezing-cold environment, reindeer live together in herds. The smallest **herd** may contain 20 animals, while the largest may contain thousands. The herd is almost constantly on the move.

### BREEDING:

The reindeer mates sometime between August and November, depending on location, but mostly in October. This is known as the **rutting** season, and the male becomes very aggressive, fighting with other males as he **competes** to win control of a harem of 5 to 15 females. As the time approaches to give birth, the female leaves the herd and chooses a secluded spot. She usually returns to the same spot each year to calve, or bear

young. The **calf** is born between late May and early June, when the herd is at the summer grazing grounds. It weighs 11 - 20 pounds and can stand within minutes after being born. It suckles until it is five to six months old. Unlike many baby deer, the reindeer **fawn's** coat is not marked with camouflaging spots. Because they are born in early summer, the calves have enough time to



feed and grow strong before the Fall **migration**, when predators are most likely to attack. The calf's antlers begin to grow when the animal is a year old.

### FOOD & FEEDING:

The reindeer is a plant eater and **eats** a wide variety of vegetation. The mainstay of its diet are the lichens and tough grass that grows on the tundra. In the spring, the reindeer will graze the newly sprouted shoots of grass and shrubs. The green leaves of birches and willows are eaten at the summer grazing grounds. During the harsh winter months, the reindeer has a difficult time finding enough to eat. It will dig holes in the snow several feet deep to get to the **lichens** and moss underneath. At the same time, it feeds on the **twigs** of any shrubs it finds under or above the snow.

### REINDEER & MAN

The reindeer is a valuable and important animal to the nomadic tribes of the arctic regions, especially the Lapps. It is the only deer that can be **domesticated**. It provides butter, meat, cheese, clothing, and transportation. Its antlers and bones are used to make tools and utensils, and the tough sinews in its legs are used to make thread. The reindeer's range has decreased dramatically due to extensive **hunting** and the destruction of its natural habitat by man. The building of hydro electric power plants has caused rivers to be diverted and large dams to be constructed in **Canada** and Siberia. The alteration of the natural landscape obstructs reindeer migration routes and causes thousands to drown.

**SIZE:**  
Length: 48-86 inches  
Weight: 200-600 lbs

### BREEDING:

**Mating:** August to November  
**Number of young:** Usually 1

### Lifestyle:

**Habit:** Herds may number thousands  
**Diet:** Lichens, **mosses**, grasses  
**Lifespan:** 12-15 years  
**Number of young:** Usually 1 per year

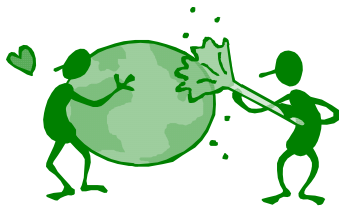


# Nuts About Nature

Compliments of the  
Fayette County SWCD

## WORD FIND

On the front page of this newsletter there are twenty, green bold words. Search for those words in our Conservation Word Find at the right.



I U O A S X D E T A C I T S E M O D  
M A T I N G M R O P D H R F A U R W  
S N E H C I L O T A V B A N G H V B  
O P H M D S A L S X Q W T B O Z B B  
W V V K H G N P B S N L J A I E S A  
L I F E S P A N S S E N O R Z T H R  
D E G K T G L E O R L S S D T B A C  
V Z A I A C T E S M A I B N F N C T  
G O D C E E H U J W P X R U W L G I  
K N C B P H N M V Z T D U T S N A C  
R V I M Q I F O G B R Z T V Y P X C  
E K O T K T X K I E W K T S G I W T  
E C H O N Q U J H T A W I F R X X N  
D T Y H G U F X L D A P N S A S I K  
N T L T L R H Q A L Q R G P T T E W  
I N V Y X M U N V E H F G K Z M X T  
E C S P R F A T N C T D O I O Y Z B  
R I F V U C J R D E T B N R M L R U



## DID YOU KNOW?

- The reindeer is the only species of deer in which the female has horns-perhaps to help her compete for scarce food supplies.
- A day-old reindeer calf can outrun a man.
- Male reindeer have inflatable pouches of skin under their throats. This amplifies the roar during the rutting season.