

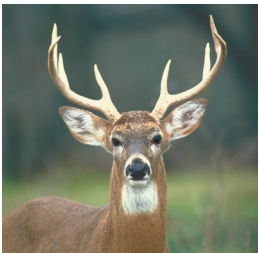
Wildlife Identification Guide

Antlers vs. Horns

Members of the deer family (which includes caribou, deer, elk, and moose) have antlers. Antlers are solid bone and are shed annually. They are one of the fastest growing natural materials in the world. Antlers grow from the tip while horns grow from the base. Except for caribou, only male deer have antlers.

Horns are found on bison, sheep, goats, and pronghorns. Unlike antlers, true horns are hollow and grow continuously. If broken, they do not grow back. They consist of a keratin sheath surrounding a core of bone. Female sheep have half-moon horns while rams have horns that are longer and heavier and curve around the sides of their heads. Female mountain goats have horns that are longer, straighter, and thinner than Billy goats. The horn sheath of a pronghorn has characteristics of both antlers and bones because it's made of keratin surrounding the bony core yet is shed annually.

White-Tailed Deer



Male Whitetail

Courtesy of Texas Parks & Wildlife

when raised off the rump. Antlers on male primarily consist of main beam with tines growing from it. Maximum antler size occurs between 5–7 years of age.



Reddish-brown to blue-gray or tan coloring; underside of tail is white, producing a “flag”



Female Whitetail

© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission

Habitat and Habits:

Range movements limited to one to three miles, depending on sex, age, and habitat. Herbivore. Lives up to 10 years. Male is polygamous with most whitetails in North America rutting in November. One to two spotted fawns typical.

How to Distinguish Adult White-Tailed Deer From Fawns*

Fawns

- Short, square bodies (look like a “briefcase” from a distance)
- Short necks and less muscle development
- Rarely have swaying backs or sagging bellies
- Ears appear large in comparison to head

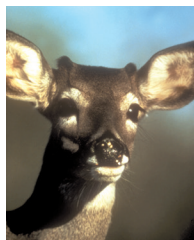
Adults

- Larger, rectangular-shaped bodies (look like a “suitcase” from a distance)
- Long necks



Courtesy of George Barnett

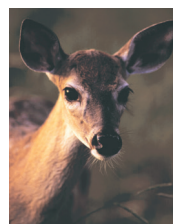
Briefcase Suitcase



Courtesy of Wyman Meinzer

How to Identify Buck Fawns*

- Presence of developing antlers
- Head appears more flat and less rounded between ears



Courtesy of George Barnett

How to Identify Doe Fawns*

- No developing antlers
- Head appears slightly rounded between ears

*Information courtesy of the Quality Deer Management Association: www.qdma.com

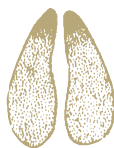
Pronghorn



Male Pronghorn

Courtesy of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

White-hoofed with reddish to tan coloring. Large white rump patch, short white tail; rump hair stands up when alerted or fleeing. Two broad white bands across neck. Male has large black jaw patch and larger, slightly curved horns with single prong growing forward.



White-hoofed with reddish to tan coloring. Large white rump patch, short white tail; rump hair stands up when alerted

Habitat and Habits: Lives in open prairies, plains, and brushlands. Herbivore. Lives up to 14 years. Male is polygamous; rut runs Aug.–Nov. Two grayish-brown fawns typical.



Female Pronghorn

© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission

Aug.–Nov. Two grayish-brown fawns typical.

Mule Deer



Male Mule Deer

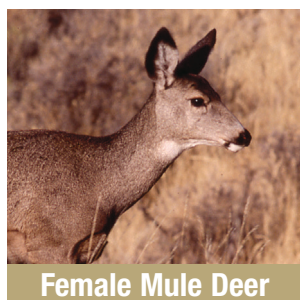
© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission

Reddish coloring in summer and blue-gray in winter. Cream-colored rump patch with black-tipped cream tail. Ears are larger than the white-tailed deer. Antlers branch equally.



Reddish coloring in summer and blue-gray

Habitat and Habits: Lives in forests, desert shrubs, thickets of shrubs or trees, grasslands, plains, foothills, and river bottoms. Herbivore.

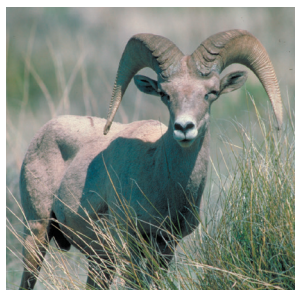


Female Mule Deer

© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission

Lives up to 16 years. Male is polygamous; rut runs Oct.–Dec. One to two spotted fawns typical.

Bighorn Sheep



Male Bighorn Sheep

Courtesy of Texas Parks & Wildlife

Dark brown to gray coloring; white rump patch with short darker tail. Two heavy, tapering, curled brown horns on male; smaller and less curled on female.



Dark brown to gray coloring; white rump patch with short darker tail. Two heavy,



Female Bighorn Sheep

© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission

Lives up to 15 years. Male is polygamous; rut runs Nov.–Dec.; males engage in battles, butting heads. One small brown lamb typical.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in rocky, mountainous terrain, preferring bluffs or steep slopes. Herbivore.

Lives up to 15 years. Male is polygamous;

Woodland Caribou



Male Woodland Caribou

© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission

Dark brown with whitish neck, underside, rump, and above each hoof. All males and more than half of females have semi-palmated antlers with a prominent vertical tine over nose. Females' antlers are smaller.



Dark brown with whitish neck,



Female Woodland Caribou

© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission

Lives up to 10–12 years. Male is polygamous; rut is late Sept. Grayish-brown fawns.

Habitat and Habits: Found in boreal coniferous forests, alpine tundra, and muskegs (peat bogs). Herbivore.

Moose



Male Moose

© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission

Dark brown with grayish legs. Large overhanging snout; dewlap on throat. Antlers on male are massive, palmate, and flat.



Dark brown with grayish legs. Large overhanging snout; dewlap on throat. Antlers on male are massive, palmate, and flat.



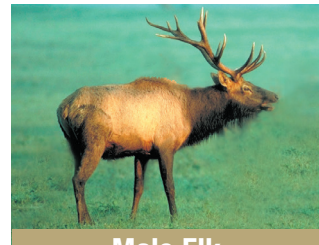
Female Moose

© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission

rut runs Sept.–Oct. Usually one calf; light reddish-brown with dark stripe down back.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in forests with lakes and swamps. Herbivore. Lives up to 20 years. Male is polygamous;

Elk



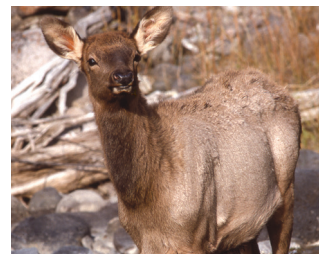
Male Elk

Courtesy of Texas Parks & Wildlife

Dark brown to tan coloring; yellowish rump patch and tail. Large, spreading antlers on male.



Dark brown to tan coloring;



Female Elk

© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission

to 15 years. Male is polygamous; rut runs Sept.–Nov. Usually one calf; spotted until three months of age.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in mountain pastures in summer and on wooded slopes in winter. Herbivore. Lives up

Mountain Lion (Cougar)



© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission

Large, tan-gray cat with long, brownish-tipped tail.

Habitat and Habits: Lives mainly in rugged mountains and sometimes in forests and swamplands. Carnivore. Lives up to 18 years. Makes a food “cache” out of uneaten prey. Mainly nocturnal; dens found in caves, rock crevices, and other concealed locations. Two spotted cubs can be born throughout year.



Black Bear



© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission

Color varies from black to cinnamon in West and black in East; face always brown; usually a small white patch on chest. Male much larger than female.

Habitat and Habits: Lives primarily in forest and swamps in East; in forest and wooded mountains in West. Omnivore. Lives up to 30 years. Nocturnal; usually solitary, except mother with cubs. Mates Jun.–Jul. Typically two cubs, born in winter.

Hunters must take extra precautions when hunting in areas where there are bears. For more information, visit this website:
<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/livingWithWildlife/beBearAware/default.html>



Feral Hog



Courtesy of Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission

A medium-sized, hoofed mammal; descendent of the domestic hog. Varies greatly in color but most often black. Upper tusks curl up and out along sides of mouth. Wild hogs may be infected with swine brucellosis, which can be transmitted to people who come in contact with infected blood.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in forested mountainous areas, brushlands, dry ridges, and swamps. Omnivore. Lives up to 10–15 years. Travels in groups. Three to twelve young born anytime during the year.



Coyote



Courtesy of Texas Parks & Wildlife

Medium-sized to large with gray to reddish-gray fur, more tan on legs, feet, and ears; dark-tipped tail; whitish belly and throat.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in prairies, open woodlands, shrublands, and variety of habitats. Carnivore. Lives up to 8–10 years. Mainly nocturnal but can be active anytime. Five to ten pups born Apr.–May.



Red Fox



© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission

Medium-sized, reddish-yellow; can range from darker to lighter; bushy tail with white tip; usually dark legs and paws.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in mixed woodlands, farmland, and open country. Carnivore. Lives up to 10 years. Three to seven young born Apr.–May.



Wild Turkey



Courtesy of Texas Parks & Wildlife

Large, long-legged bird; dark and iridescent body; featherless, reddish head.

Male larger and more iridescent than female. Wild turkeys are native to North America and there are five subspecies: Eastern, Osceola (Florida), Rio Grande, Merriam's, and Gould's.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in open woodlands, brush country, thickets of shrubs or trees, river bottoms, and hardwoods. Lives up to 12 years. Polygamous males. Mating call is a gobble; normal calls are clucks, putts, and purrs. Nests in depressions; 6–20 whitish eggs.



Eastern Fox Squirrel



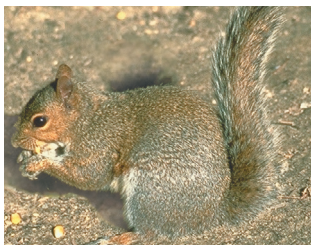
Courtesy of Texas Parks & Wildlife



Larger, rusty-yellowish with orange-red underside; bushy tail tipped with darker hairs.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in open woodlands, river bottoms, and pine forests with interspersed clearings. Herbivore. Lives up to 10 years. Two to five young born in Jan. and May.

Eastern Gray Squirrel



Courtesy of Ryan Hagerty/U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



Medium-sized with inner yellowish-rusty and gray or white-tipped hairs; lighter underside; bushy tail with varying dark hairs tipped white or yellow.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in forests, river bottoms, pine forests interspersed with hardwoods, and clearings. Herbivore. Lives up to 15 years. Two to five young per litter.

Red Squirrel



© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission



Smallest of tree squirrels in its range. Yellowish or reddish back and whitish belly; bushy tail.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in pine, spruce, or mixed hardwood forests. Nests in tree cavities or branches. Herbivore. Lives up to 10 years. Three to seven young born Mar.–Apr.

Virginia Opossum



Courtesy of Ed McCrea/U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



Small- to medium-sized with gray to dark gray fur; whitish face and small ears; rat-like tail.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in woodlands, water, and farming areas. Omnivore. Lives up to three years. Nocturnal. Up to 14 young per litter several times a year. Young remain in mother's pouch for several months.

Mink



© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission



Medium-sized with dark brown fur and white chin patch; tail slightly bushy.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in stream, pond, and lake habitats. Carnivore. Polygamous. Four to ten young born Jan.–Mar.

Common Muskrat



© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission



Small-sized with brown to grayish-brown fur and grayish underside; black, scaly tail; partially webbed hind feet.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in marshes, ponds, and streams. Omnivore, feeding on aquatic vegetation, frogs, and small fish. Two to six young per litter; 2–3 litters per year.

American Beaver



© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission



Medium-sized, brown rodent; naked tail, scaly and paddle-shaped. Large, chestnut-colored front teeth; webbed short feet for swimming.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in streams, ponds, or lakes. Constructs houses of sticks, logs, and mud or burrows in banks; builds dams serving as habitat. Lives up to 11 years. Two to four kits born Apr.–Jul.

Black-Tailed Jackrabbit



Courtesy of Texas Parks & Wildlife

Medium-sized; grayish-brown fur with large black-tipped ears and black streak on top of short tail.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in prairies, shrublands, and semi-arid deserts. Herbivore. Lives up to 5–6 years. Two to four young per litter.



Eastern Cottontail Rabbit



Courtesy of William Janus/U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Small-sized with brownish-gray fur with cottontail; large ears but not as large as jackrabbit.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in heavy brush in forests, farmlands, thickets of shrubs or trees, swamplands, and weed patches. Herbivore. Lives up to 3–4 years. Four to seven young per litter; 3–4 litters per year.



Striped Skunk



Courtesy of Texas Parks & Wildlife

Medium-sized with black fur and white stripes from head to tail.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in semi-open prairies, thickets of shrubs or trees, and mixed woods near water. Omnivore. Mostly nocturnal. Five to six young born in May.



Prairie Dog



Courtesy of Texas Parks & Wildlife

Small-sized with tan to reddish fur; small ears and light-colored underside; black-tipped short tail.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in dry upland prairies in colonies or “towns” of burrows. Herbivore mostly but may eat some insects. Lives up to 7–8 years. Three to five young born Mar.–Apr.



Common Raccoon



Courtesy of Texas Parks & Wildlife

Medium-sized with dark and light mixed fur and distinctive black mask across white face. Small- to medium-sized ears; ringed tail.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in woods near cliffs and water. Omnivore. Lives up to 7–10 years. Nocturnal. Two to seven young born Apr.–May.



American Badger



Courtesy of Texas Parks & Wildlife

Medium-sized with short black legs and yellowish-gray hair. White stripe over head to nose; white cheeks; black patch in front of each ear. Long front claws for digging.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in open grasslands, deserts, and thickets of shrubs and trees. Carnivore, feeding mainly on small rodents. Lives up to 12 years. Two to five young born Feb.–May; one litter per year.



Porcupine



© Tom J. Ulrich, used with permission

or in brushy areas. Herbivore; likes salt. Lives up to 7–8 years. Primarily nocturnal. Mates in fall; one young born May–Jun.



Large rodent, size of small dog; chunky body with short legs. Color varies from black or brown in East and yellowish in West. Sharp spines on rump and tail.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in forests

Dusky (Blue) Grouse



Courtesy of Khanh Tran

Male is gray with orange-yellow or red comb over eye; yellow skin on neck; gray band at end of dark tail. Female is brown with dark tail.

Habitat and Habits: Lives in coastal rain forest and just below mountain timberline. Makes a “whoop, whoop, whoop, whoop” call. Nests in shelter of stumps or rocks; 5–10 cream-colored eggs with brown spots.

Lives in coastal rain forest and just below mountain timberline. Makes a “whoop, whoop, whoop, whoop” call. Nests in shelter of stumps or rocks; 5–10 cream-colored eggs with brown spots.