

Neighborhood Wildlife Stewards

Teaching our Highlands neighbors how to live safely with wildlife and keep the wildlife wild.

Black-Tailed Deer



Black-tailed deer

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There are two subspecies of black-tailed deer in Washington:

- The Columbian black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*) live in brushy, logged lands and coniferous forests from the Pacific Ocean to the crest of the Cascades.
- The larger Rocky Mountain mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus hemionus*) live in eastern Washington, as can the two subspecies of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus idahoensis* and *Odocoileus virginianus leucurus*).

Black-tailed deer prefer wooded suburban areas, where they can quickly escape to the woods if threatened. They prefer to eat the growing tips of trees and shrubs. In late winter and spring they eat grass, cover, and plants.

Fencing is the best way to prevent our resident deer from damaging the ornamental plants in your garden, if permitted in your neighborhood. Repellents, scare tactics, netting, and tree guards are less effective. Landscaping with deer-resistant plants is an attractive alternative, although there are few plants that deer will not eat when food is scarce. A list of deer-resistant plants can be found on the WDFW Web site listed below.

In the fall and early winter, the older male bucks can be identified by their impressive antlers, which are used to establish hierarchies. Deer breed during a rutting season late fall and the males then shed their antlers in the winter. The females typically give birth to one or two fawns in late spring.

Deer can live longer than ten years but most only live for a maximum of five years. Deer are preyed on by the predator wildlife or domestic dogs. Deer deaths are also due to hunting, vehicles, accidents, and disease.

Most deer sightings are at near dawn and dusk, when they are most active. You should drive carefully during these times to avoid deer collisions. It's important never to approach a deer

closely. If you encounter a solitary fawn, leave it alone. Its mother is typically nearby and will take care of it after you leave the area.

- If you see an injured fawn or a healthy fawn whose mother hasn't returned in 24 hours, call PAWS (425-787-2500 X817).
- If you see a dead or injured deer, call 360-705-7850. (For bears or cougars call 1-800-7850.)
- If you hit a deer with your vehicle, call 9-1-1.

Wildlife Viewing Sites

There 90 wildlife-viewing sites in Washington. The closest site is Gold Creek Pond, located one mile north of Hyak, at Exit 54 on I-90. In addition to black-tailed deer, you can view waterfowl, wading birds, and Rocky Mountain elk. The Forest Service has constructed a paved, barrier-free interpretive trail around the fifteen-acre pond. The site is open year-round for day use. In the winter, you can purchase Sno-Park passes at REI or Joe's.

For additional information about black-tailed deer, see:

- Living with Wildlife: Deer
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/living/deer.htm>
- Mule Deer / Black-tailed Deer, *Odocoileus hemionus*
<http://www.washington.edu/burkemuseum/collections/mammalogy/mamwash/odhe.html>
- PAWS
<http://www.paws.org/wildlife/injured/>
- Wildlife Viewing Guide
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/outreach/viewing/viewguid.htm>

If you care about the welfare of the wildlife in our area, want to learn more about living safely with the wildlife, and would enjoy meeting your neighbors, join us for our monthly meetings.

February's topic: Bald Eagles

Time and place: 7:00 p.m. on February 10 at Blakely Hall

March's topic: Deer

Time and place: 7:00 p.m. on March 5 at Blakely Hall

Written by:

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