

New Forest Fact File

WILDLIFE AND CONSERVATION

Deer and their management within the New Forest

The New Forest has always been renowned for its deer, particularly when royalty used it as a hunting ground. The meat of the chase is known as venison, which has a very distinctive taste and low levels of fat.

There are only two native species of deer within Britain, which are Roe (*Capreolus capreolus*) and red deer (*Cervus elaphus*). While the other three species found within the New Forest, Sika (*Cervus nippon*), Fallow (*Dama dama*), and muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesii*) have all been released or escaped.

Deer Terminology

SPECIES	MALE	FEMALE	YOUNG
RED	STAG	HIND	CALF
SIKA	STAG	HIND	CALF
FALLOW	BUCK	DOE	FAWN
ROE	BUCK	DOE	KID
MUNTJAC	BUCK	DOE	FAWN

Terminology	Meaning
Pelage	Coat
Slots	Track marks
Fewments	Deer droppings
Tine	Point on an antler
Rut	Breeding season
Small Deer	Herd of female fallow deer
Pearling	Raised bumps on a roe deer antlers
Coronet	Base of antler
Pedicle	Raised section on skull where the antlers grow from.
Speller	Points on a fallow deer's antler
Palmentation	Shape of fallow deer's antler
Brocket	Yearling Red/Sika stag



Forestry Commission

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Red Deer

Red deer are kept at a constant level of around 100 within the New Forest boundaries. The stags tend to move off the forest onto outlying farmland and private estates after the rut has finished at the end of October. The hinds usually remain in their highest concentrations around the central parts of the New Forest.

Red deer are the largest of all deer species found in Britain, and have a rich chestnut pelage in the summer months fading to a duller grey-brown in winter matching the vegetation. Calves are born with a spotted pelage, which fades with maturity.

Sika Deer

The sub species found South of Brockenhurst is the Japanese sika, which originated from the escapees belonging to Lord Montagu of 1902. Originally two escaped and were later joined by another pair, and so were the founders of today's current herd.

In contrast to other herds of sika found within Britain, the New Forest is considered to be of a clean bloodline with no intermixing of other subspecies, or hybridization with red. When sika hybridize with red they produce fertile offspring, which threatens the integrity of the red deer's bloodline. The deer management plan targets this issue by ensuring a boundary where sika have a set area in which they are accepted.

Fallow Deer

Fallow are thought to have been introduced into the New Forest by the Norman's, although suggestions have been made that the Romans also brought herds across. The likelihood is that the Norman's are responsible for their establishment.

Fallow within the New Forest are considered to be among the wildest of populations found throughout Britain. Although the wide variety of colors seen among some specimens are more recent additions from escapees of park stock.

The current stocking density of fallow deer are around

Fallow come in a variety of colors the most commonly recognized are:

White	A creamy off white color, often mistaken as albino.
Menil	Brightly spotted all year round.
Melanistic	Very dark Brown almost black.
Common	Spotted in summer, fading to a dull grey-brown in winter.



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Roe Deer

Roe deer are classed as solitary in habit compared to the larger species of deer, although they can be seen within family groups or pairs on occasions.

Roe deer rut in July, which is much earlier than the other species of deer found within Britain, although they have their young at the same time of year. The Gestation is not any longer, but they have what is known as delayed implantation where the fertilized embryo does not attach to the womb until a few months later.

There are approximately 350 roe deer within the New Forest boundaries, and are a native species. Roe have not appeared to have thrived in any great number compared to other habitats in the surrounding areas.

Muntjac

Occasionally spotted within the New Forest boundaries is the muntjac, which is the Reeves/Chinese subspecies. There is a no tolerance policy within the Deer Management plan for the New Forest for a range of reasons. The main reason being the competition towards the native roe deer. The muntjac has also proved to be highly successful with no set-breeding season, breeding at a faster rate than other deer species.



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