



Deer

Fallow Deer (Dama dama)



Color

The summer coat is generally light to dark reddish-brown, with white spots on sides and hips. They have a distinct white chest and belly, and there is a black line extending down the back to the tip of the tail. The tail and black borderline appear as a black “T” on rump. The tail is white on the underside. During the winter, the coat turns darker, becoming dull grayish-brown and spots become faint.

Shape

Fallow deer have a stocky body with a short head, ears, and legs.

Antlers

Young bucks have knobs or spikes. Bucks two- to three-years-old have antlers similar to those of white-tailed deer, but with some flattening. Older bucks have distinctly flattened or palmated antlers.

Running Gait

When excited, fallow deer sometimes run stiff-legged, appearing to bounce on all four legs.

White-tailed Deer (Odocoileus virginianus)



Color

The summer coat is reddish brown. Only young fawns have white spots. Adults have a white belly, and there is white around the nostrils and throat. Unlike the fallow deer, white-tailed deer do not have a black line down their backs. However, they may have a dark brown line on their tails. The tail is white on the underside, and when the deer is startled may rise. The winter coat of the white-tailed deer is grayish-brown.

Shape

The white-tailed deer is slender with an elongated head, long ears, and long legs.

Antlers

Young bucks may have spikes or forked antlers. Older bucks have antlers that consist of main beams extending out and forward, with vertical tines extending from the main beams.

Running Gait

White-tailed deer run in graceful leaps.

Fallow Deer

Fallow deer were originally native to Asia Minor, Macedonia, and the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. They were prized for their high-quality venison and thrived in captivity. As a result, they are one of the most widely distributed species of deer in the world. Fallow deer were introduced here by the Hillman Land Company around 1918. The fallow deer herd in Land Between The Lakes (LBL) is probably the oldest established population of fallow deer in the United States.

Fallow deer are smaller than native white-tailed deer, and somewhat shorter and stockier in appearance. Their color varies more than that of any other deer species, ranging from solid white to almost black. Those with coloration similar to that of white-tailed deer usually can be distinguished by the spotted coat and distinct black tail. Fallow deer prefer a grass diet, but they also eat a wide variety of herbs, shrubs, and fruits.

The peak of breeding season for fallow deer occurs in October, and the mating grunt, or bellowing, of a rutting buck can be heard up to a half-mile away. Unlike the more prolific white-tailed deer, fallow does rarely breed before 2 1/2 years old and produce only a single fawn per year. Fallow bucks 4 1/2 years or older display impressively large, palmated antlers. The antlers are shed each spring and then eaten by deer and rodents for the minerals they contain.

Most fallow deer at LBL are located in the Environmental Education Area. They can be seen at any time of the day, but the most consistent time to view them is late afternoon and evening. They can often be seen in the wildlife viewing area below the Nature Station, along Bugg Spring Road, and in the fields along Mulberry Flat Road near Lake Barkley. Captive fallow and white-tailed deer can be viewed at the Nature Station.

White-tailed Deer

White-tailed deer historically ranged from the Northwest Territories of Canada to central South America. The term "whitetail" refers to the color that is seen when the deer becomes alarmed and raises its tail, revealing the white underside. When a doe flees danger, it is easy for her fawns to locate and follow this bouncing white trademark.

The white-tailed deer's ability to browse a diverse array of foods and to reside in a variety of habitats allows the deer to survive and thrive where other wildlife are unable to adapt. Grasses, fruits, nuts, mushrooms, and portions of trees and shrubs make up a white-tailed deer's diet. When available during the winter, acorns are a particular favorite.

The white-tailed deer breeding season, or "rut," usually peaks in early November. Some does begin breeding at six months, but most begin at 1 1/2 years of age. One fawn is produced during the first pregnancy, but twins are common in subsequent years (occasionally triplets). The fawns remain in hiding and will not begin to accompany their mother in daily activity until about two months of age.

White-tailed deer can be seen throughout LBL and are most active in the early morning and evening hours. Captive white-tailed and fallow deer can be viewed at the Nature Station.

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