

# White-tailed deer

## *Odocoileus virginianus*

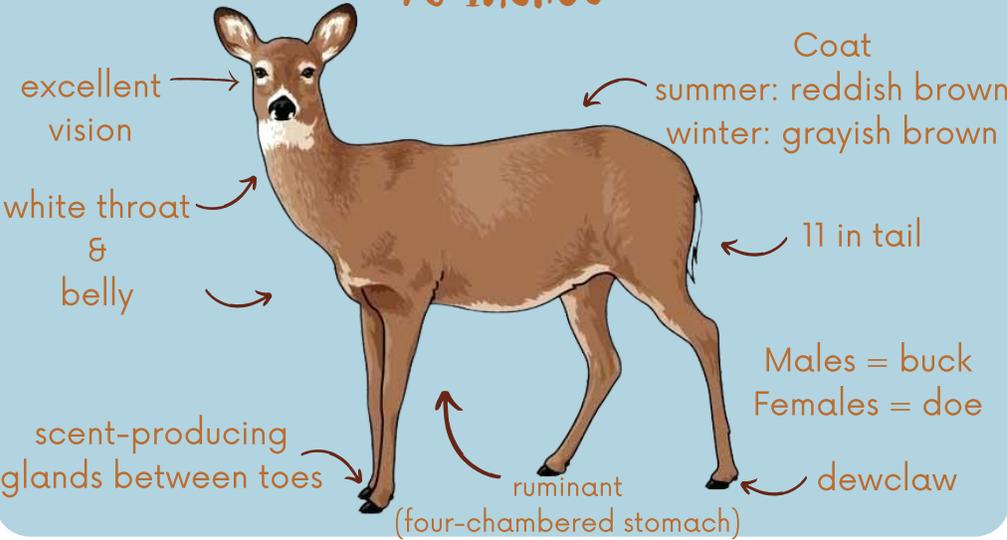
The white-tailed deer is one of the most populous mammals in Pennsylvania. They are found throughout most of the continental United States, southern Canada, Mexico, Central America and northern portions of South America as far south as Peru.

## Habitat

meadows, forested woodlots with northern hardwoods and mixed oaks, brushy areas and croplands



70 Inches



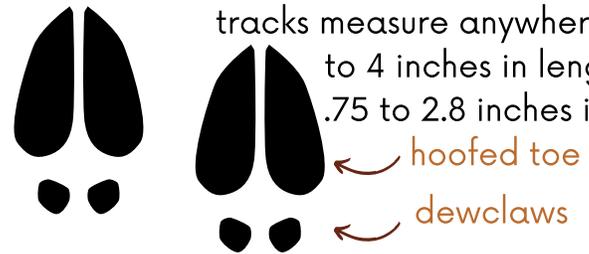
## Scat

Ovular, dark brown to black, firm, scattered in piles. Summer scat is more clumped together & moist. Winter scat is dry & dense.



## Tracks

Two hoofed toes that come to a point at the front of the track. Adult tracks measure anywhere from 1 to 4 inches in length, and .75 to 2.8 inches in width.



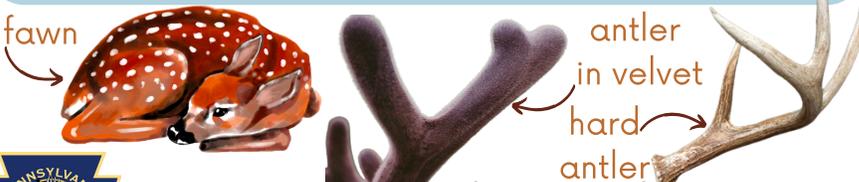
## Diet

- woody browse (buds, leaves, twigs)
- grain (corn, oats, soybeans)
- hard mast (acorns and nuts)
- broadleaf plants
- forbs
- grasses
- soft mast (apples, peaches, pears, persimmons, plums, etc.)



## Reproduction

Breeding begins in September and can last into late January, reaching its peak in mid-November. Females from high-quality habitat produce more fawns than those from poor-quality habitat. Adult females (2½ years and older) usually have twins, with 5% or less producing triplets. Fawns are born with reddish-brown coats dappled with white spots, which is excellent camouflage.



## Antler growth

A buck's first set of antlers begins to grow when it's about 10 months old. From this point forward, a buck will grow and shed a new set of antlers each year. If a yearling buck comes from an area with poor food conditions, his first set of antlers may be only "spikes" – antlers consisting of single main beams only. Antler growth is a complex process driven by hormones and photoperiod (day length). Antler tissue is the fastest growing tissue known to man, having the capacity to grow an inch or more per day. Annually, antler growth begins when the days are lengthening – between mid-March through mid-April. Antlers grow from the tip, are full of thousands of blood vessels, and are covered in velvet. As day length begins to decrease, testosterone production increases. This triggers the mineralization or hardening of the antlers, which takes about a month starting in mid-July and ending in mid-August. After the breeding season, testosterone levels drop off and antlers are shed in late winter or early spring. The process then starts all over again.

Visit [www.pgc.pa.gov](http://www.pgc.pa.gov) for more information on white-tailed deer in Pennsylvania

