

# White-tailed Deer

## *Odocoileus virginianus*

IUCN status: Least Concern

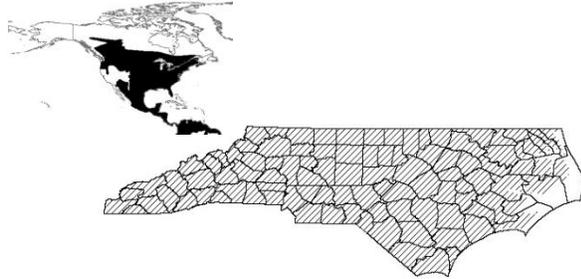


Figure 1: White-tailed deer range in North Carolina and North America



Figure 2: Female deer (doe) and baby (fawn) photographed via camera trap

**Description:** White-tailed deer get their name from the white fur on the underside and edges of their tail. This coloration acts as a warning signal to other deer that potential predators are in the close proximity. The deer have a reddish-brown coat that becomes more gray as they age. Young, also known as a fawn, have white spots that will fade after around 4 months of age. Male deer get antlers on their head that are also an indicator of their age. The larger the antler rack, the older the male deer is. During the winter months, the antlers are shed. Adult females usually weigh from 45 to 67 kg and males may weigh from 56 to 113 kg.

Young deer have long legs, short muzzles, and large ears. As deer age, their muzzle gets longer and eventually becomes longer than their ears. The chest and neck become fuller causing the legs to look more proportionate over time.

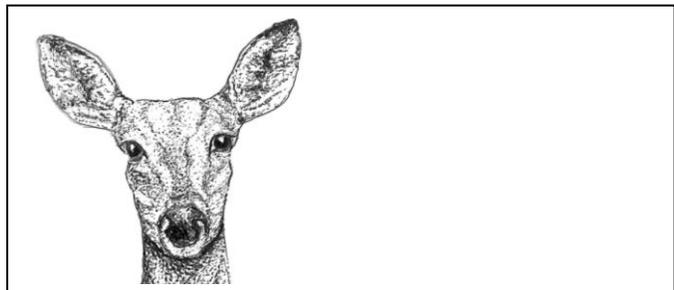
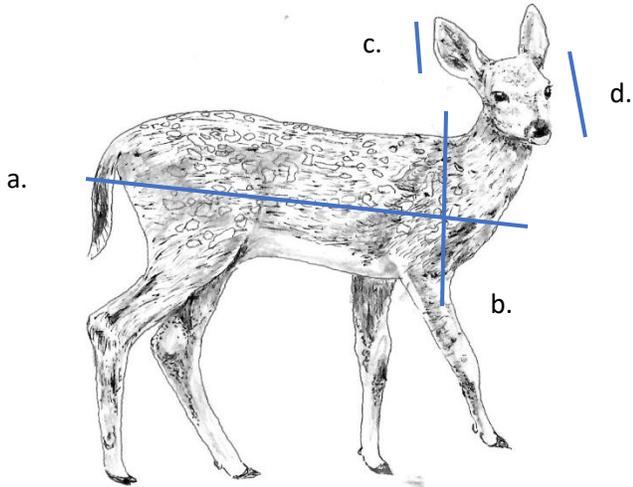


Figure 3: Female - doe

**Habitat:** Deer enjoy to live in areas with high amounts of fragmentation or areas with multiple types of habitat close to each other. They especially enjoy the edge of forests bordered by an open meadow or farm land. Generally, a single deer will live in a zone spanning more than a couple kilometers to try to get as much diversity in their diet as possible.

**Habits:** Deer are mostly active during the early morning and late evening. They tend to be more active in the evening than the day since they generally spend the day bedding down. Deer bed down during the day to avoid predators as well as potential hunters. Deer generally do not bed in the same area, but move around their home range. For the first 10 weeks of life, fawns will spend the majority of their time bedded and separated from their mothers. It is common to family groups of deer, especially females and young.

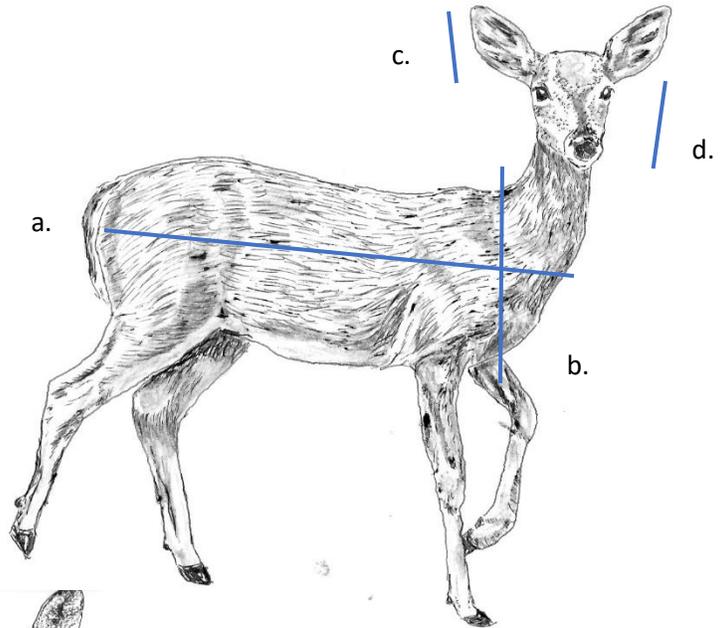
# Aging White-tailed Deer



a. Fawn's hind legs are taller than front legs thus giving the body a slope. The juvenile front legs are starting to become parallel and the adult has her front legs the same length as the back.

b. The fawn does not have a muscular chest. The Juvenile starts to build muscle and chest starts to get larger. Stomach is still larger than the chest for the juvenile. The adult female has a full chest that is larger than rib cage and stomach

c. Fawn ears are much bigger than the rest of the face. The juvenile's rostrum and ears are about the same length. Adult ears are much smaller than the rest of the face.



d. Fawns have very small rostrums (or muzzles). The snout is very close to the eyes. Juveniles have a slightly larger rostrum. Adult deer have large rostrums that continue to get larger with every year.

