



DEER

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-DEER CONFLICTS:

- **Do not feed wildlife.** This increases the chance that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.
- **Do not move "abandoned" fawns.** Mothers feed babies only twice a day—at dawn and dusk. Fawns found alone are typically not orphans.
- **Do not approach or attempt to pet deer.** They seem friendly, but are wild! Deer bites can cause injury and carry disease. Though rare, rutting bucks may charge approaching humans.
- **A leashed dog is a safer dog.** When out for a walk, keep your pet leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.
- **Remain deer aware while driving.** Slow down and remain vigilant, particularly at dusk and dawn.
- **Keep them out of your garden.** A well constructed fence is the most effective way to protect your plants.

BENEFITS OF DEER

Deer are considered a keystone species, meaning their existence in an ecosystem directly impacts the lives of other plants and animals. At a sustainable population, deer increase biodiversity and encourage new plant growth.

Their scat adds nutrients to the soil, and their grazing allows more sunlight to reach the forest floor so smaller plants can grow. They also serve as an important food source for larger predators, like bobcats.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Deer are members of the Cervidae family. They are common throughout the continental United States. They can be found in several habitats, but prefer forests, thickets, prairies and savannas. They are commonly found in urban areas in parks and open spaces.
- Deer are herbivores, meaning they eat only plants. They are browsers, and feed primarily on foliage of grasses, sedges, forbs, shrubs and trees,
- Deer are social creatures and typically live in herds. The does and fawns herd together in social groups. Young males form groups called stag herds, which split up during mating season. Bucks sometimes form loose groups, but typically prefer a solitary existence as they get older.
- Deer are primarily crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk) and nocturnal (active at night).