

DEER

BENEFITS OF DEER

Deer are considered a keystone species in the ecosystem due to the significant impact they have on the lives of other plants and animals. When present in a sustainable population, they enhance biodiversity and stimulate new plant growth. Additionally, their waste enriches the soil with nutrients, and their grazing activities enable more sunlight to reach the ground, facilitating the growth of smaller plants.

Deer also serve as an important food source for larger predators, such as bobcats. Overall, the presence of deer in an ecosystem contributes significantly to its balance and stability.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Deer, which belong to the Cervidae family, are widespread in the continental United States and inhabit various environments such as forests, thickets, prairies, and savannas. They can also be found in urban areas such as parks and open spaces.
- As herbivores, deer feed only on plants and are known to browse on the foliage of grasses, sedges, forbs, shrubs, and trees.
- Deer are social animals and typically live in herds. Female deer (does) and fawns often herd together in social groups, while young males form stag herds that usually break up during mating season. Bucks may form loose groups but often prefer a solitary existence as they age.
- Deer are most active at dawn and dusk (crepuscular) and during the night (nocturnal).

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-DEER CONFLICTS:

- **Refrain from feeding wildlife** to avoid them losing their natural fear of humans.
- **Leave "abandoned" fawns alone** as mothers typically only feed them twice a day at dawn and dusk. Fawns found alone are usually not orphans.
- **Do not attempt to pet deer** as they are wild and can cause injury or carry diseases. Rutting bucks may also charge at humans.
- **Keep your pet leashed** during walks to decrease the likelihood of negative encounters with wildlife.
- **Be cautious while driving** and remain deer aware, especially during dusk and dawn.
- **Protect your garden** by constructing a fence.



City of

Saginaw