



Oregon Sea Grant Extension
Sustainable Tourism &
Outdoor Recreation Program

Interpretative Fact Sheet Black-tailed & Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)



The following short article is from the [Oregon Coast 101 Species](#) collection used by the Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional (GORP) training program. These articles are intended to provide interesting facts you can share with your clientele and add value to your services.

An Interpretive Fact Sheet has been written about each species. We are currently uploading these blogs and creating the links.

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**Tourism and Business Development College of Business,
Oregon State University Extension - Oregon Sea Grant at**

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Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional Program

<https://www.GORPguide.org>

For more information about the GORP training program see:

<https://www.gorpguide.org/become-a-gorp-certified-guide>

Black-tailed & Mule Deer (Odocoileus hemionus)

 tourism.oregonstate.edu/black-tailed-mule-deer-odocoileus-hemionus/

By colliiek2

August 28, 2020

Black-tailed deer eat too much of my coastal garden

Healthy Black-tailed deer populations exist in western Oregon (and most likely my back yard). This 'edge adapted' species looks for forests with mixed age classes where it can hide in the dense forest cover during the day and eat everything in your garden in the morning or evening.



Photo courtesy of National Park Service

Identification

Black-tails are a subspecies of mule deer which are found across the Pacific Northwest, from California north into Alaska. A large male (a "buck") might stand three feet at the shoulder and weigh around 200 lbs. An adult female (a "doe") might weigh around 130 lbs.

Their tawny-brown coloring makes them difficult to spot. The wide, triangular tail with the white underside however is easy to spot as they gleefully bound into the forest after eating all of the flowers on the deck.

Adaptations

Deer communicate through touch, vision, sound, and scent which gives us humans some options for discouraging deer dining in our gardens. They are not as shy as one might think and have made themselves quite comfortable on our back deck, eating potted blueberries, petunias, and azaleas.

First off, they have excellent hearing and are not intimidated by barking humans. They know you are not a dog.

Domestic dogs are considered one of their predators. Other predators include coyotes, cougars, and humans.



Black-tailed buck, photo courtesy of National Park Service.

Male Blacktails have great vision and can spot other animals up to 2,000 feet away, even while chewing. The females do not seem to have that same capacity or are simply fascinated by a weird human running their direction and barking.

Black-tails are a popular game animal for hunters. Techniques used include: Spot and stalk, hunting blinds, still hunting, and rattling antlers. Scent control is very important when hunting these mammals.

Scent Deterrents

Scents can also help deter visitors. Deer naturally want to be able to smell their predators. Overwhelming smells can make that difficult to accomplish.

There are smell and taste deterrent sprays which help in the short term. Some strategies might also include hanging scented soaps, human hair, and diesel-soaked rags on or near affected plants. Many a neighbor has questioned why such things hang from our fruit trees and why the small stand seems to smell like a cheap boudoir certain times of the year.

Lastly, there are effective ways to deter damage. Check out the ***Manage Wildlife Conflicts in Your Home and Garden***

(<https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/pnw719/html>) for ideas on blocking access and deterrence and ***Living with Nuisance Wildlife***

(<https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/sites/catalog/files/project/pdf/ec1579.pdf>)

REFERENCES:

–Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (<https://myodfw.com/big-game-hunting/species/black-tailed-deer> and publications mentioned above)

–National Park Service, Olympic National Park

(<https://www.nps.gov/olym/learn/nature/black-tail-deer.htm>)