

Deer and Other Ruminants

Biological Classification Series

Grade Levels:

Grades 5-10

Subject Areas:

Science

Life Sciences

Biology

Synopsis:

Starting with members of the deer family and their characteristics, explains that ruminants are two-toed mammals that regurgitate their food from one of their stomachs for further chewing. Introduces ruminants such as deer, giraffes, ibex, izards, antelope, bison, and others, explaining that ruminants include 191 species distributed throughout the world. Briefly summarizes the signs of mating season, the organization of herds and how ruminants care for their young.

Learning Objectives: Students will:

Understand that ruminants are two-toed mammals that regurgitate their food.

Understand that there are 191 species of ruminants spread throughout the world.

Understand that some ruminants have horns that are permanent, while others have antlers that are shed annually.

Describe herd structure, the signs of the mating season, and how deer care for their young.

Understand the difference between wild and domesticated ruminants.

Vocabulary:

droppings, velvet, ruminants, incisors, regurgitated, cud, fawn, vulnerable, stags, roe deer, boar, two-toed, four-toed, secreted, Pyrenees Mountains, izards, offspring, fat reserves, ibex, mouflon, descended, domesticated, antelope, bison

Pre-Viewing Discussion:

Has anyone ever seen a deer? Where? What are the characteristics of the deer family?

What are baby deer called? How long do they stay with their mothers? What are two names for male deer (stag, buck)?

What other animals are similar to deer? What are the similarities?

Are deer found everywhere in the world?

Post-Viewing Discussion:

How long do baby deer stay with their mothers?

Do members of the deer family graze together?

If you were observing animal tracks in the snow, how would you tell that a ruminant had passed? How many toes do ruminants have?

What is a ruminant? Are there some domesticated ruminants? What are they?

If you saw an ibex, what part of the world would you likely be visiting?

Further Activities:

Find out which of the five major classification groups deer and other ruminants are in (i.e. Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family). Chart the relationships of animals in the largest to the smallest taxonomic groups around them. What characteristics make this group similar to and different from the other groups to which they are related? Then, pick one species from the program and determine its genus and species name, writing them in the proper scientific terminology. Find out why the genus and species name is written the way it is.

Make a chart or map showing ruminants located in North America, Europe, Africa or Asia, and the species found in each location.

Find out more about the four compartments or chambers of ruminants' stomachs. How and why does each work and why do ruminants have such a digestive system? Compare this digestive system to some other digestive systems in animals.

Investigate the differences between ibex and antelopes, or between antelope and deer.

Discover the relationship of mouflon sheep to domesticated sheep found in Europe and North America.

Using the Internet, discover if any species of ruminants are endangered. Present your findings to the class by bookmarking relevant web sites.

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Lebanon: Pierre and his Goats

Tanzania: Doipo and his Herd

Biological Movement series