

White-tailed deer



The white-tailed deer is an iconic species in Wisconsin for both hunting and wildlife viewing. Increasingly more deer live in urban areas as human populations expand into rural areas and as deer populations grow. Although deer may provide enjoyable wildlife viewing opportunities, high deer numbers in urban areas can result in human-deer conflicts. Deer browsing can destroy gardens and ornamental landscaping and high deer numbers can result in conflict with pets and increased deer-vehicle collisions. Without adequate harvest and other natural mortality factors, urban areas can act as sanctuaries for deer. However, urban issues can be managed through local management techniques.

Do Not Feed Wildlife

- It is illegal to feed deer in parts of Wisconsin. Please visit dnr.wi.gov and search “deer baiting” for details and regulations on feeding deer.
- Hang bird feeders at least 8 feet off the ground. A pulley system can make lowering the feeder convenient for easy refilling
- During winter DO NOT feed deer pure corn or pure hay diets. Deer digestive systems physically change in winter to account for low food supplies and lack the microorganisms necessary for digesting high starch and fiber foods.

Protect Your Pet

- It is illegal to allow your dog to chase deer. Deer can act unpredictably, and threatened deer can injure pets. Keep pets on a leash and supervise them when outside.

Discourage Deer

- Deer can feed on most plants although not all are preferred. Use unpalatable species when landscaping around homes and offices. Plastic netting or wire cages can be used to prevent browsing on individual plantings.
- Taste and odor repellents and scare devices (e.g., lights and noises) can be effective for preventing deer browse although their effectiveness can vary based on environmental conditions and the number of deer in an area. Some deer may become accustomed to these tactics.
- Exclusion fencing is the best means to keep deer from an area. A snow fence or other high fencing can be effective for excluding deer from small plantings or gardens. Fencing 8 feet high will completely exclude deer although shorter fences, outward slanted fences, and electrified fences can provide adequate protection in most cases. Check local fencing ordinances before beginning constructions.



Quick Facts

- Similar to cows, deer have a four chambered stomach and prefer to eat green herbaceous plants. However, when there is not enough of their preferred foods, they can have a negative impact on the surrounding habitat, including landscaping plants, as pictured above.
- Deer are most active at dusk and dawn, and during their breeding season in fall. Motorists should be particularly attentive for deer during these times.
- Deer can give birth as young as 1.5 years old. Most healthy adult female deer will become pregnant and produce 2–3 fawns annually. Deer populations can double in size every 2 to 3 years.
- Urban archery hunting can be a cost effective method of removing nuisance deer within areas that do not allow hunting with firearms. Check with your local government and local DNR biologist for regulations.

For more information, visit our webpage:

dnr.wi.gov

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Urban Wildlife Factsheet: White-tailed Deer

