

Red Deer

Cervus elaphus

Mammal · Here all year · rut in Sep–Oct



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A large, long-legged deer, rich red-brown in summer and greyer in winter, with a pale rump patch and a short tail. Stags carry large branched antlers, cast and regrown every year. Red deer are animals of the Galloway hills, forest and open moorland rather than the town, and are the largest wild land mammal in Britain — a mature stag can weigh close to 200 kilograms.

BEHAVIOUR

For most of the year stags and hinds live in separate groups. In late September and October the rut begins: stags roar continuously, wallow in peat, and fight with locked antlers for control of a group of hinds, losing a great deal of condition in a few weeks. Calves are born in June. Antlers are cast in spring and regrown over the summer under a covering of velvet, which is then frayed off.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Deer (Cervidae)
SIZE	Shoulder height 105–135 cm · Britain's largest land mammal
UK STATUS	Native; common in Scotland, with close seasons set in law

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