

Sika Deer

Cervus nippon

Mammal · Here all year · rut in Sep–Nov



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A medium-sized deer, chestnut with white spots in summer and dark, almost black-brown in winter, with a distinctive white rump patch bordered black and a pale 'furrowed brow' marking on the forehead. Sika were introduced to Britain from Japan and East Asia in the nineteenth century and have established themselves in the forests of south-west Scotland, including parts of Dumfries and Galloway.

BEHAVIOUR

Sika favour dense conifer plantation and are more secretive than red deer, feeding at the woodland edge at dusk. The rutting call is remarkable — a series of drawn-out, eerie whistles quite unlike a red deer's roar. Their conservation significance here is genetic: sika and red deer hybridise readily and produce fertile offspring, so the introduced species threatens the genetic integrity of native red deer.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Deer (Cervidae)
SIZE	Shoulder height 70-95 cm
UK STATUS	Introduced; hybridises with native red deer, and illegal to release

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