

Muntjac Deer

Species Description

Scientific name: *Muntiacus reevesi*

AKA: Chinese Muntjac, barking deer, Reeves' Muntjac, Carw Mwntjac (Welsh)

Native to: China

Habitat: Dense woodland and scrub with diverse vegetation

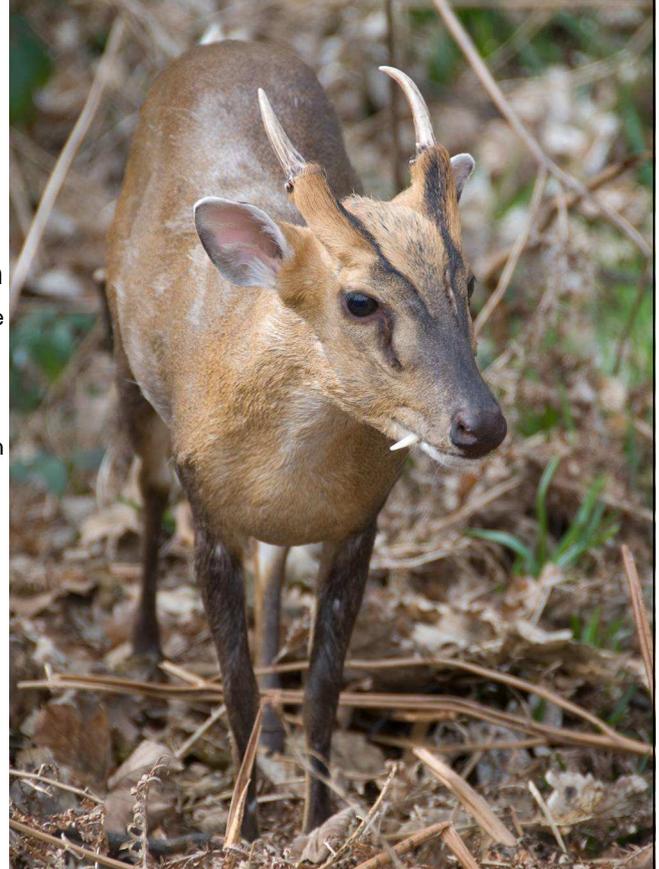
Muntjac are the smallest deer found in the UK, measuring approximately 50 cm at the shoulder in males and 47cm in females. Their upperparts are usually reddish/grey-brown, whilst the underparts are buff, with white on the inside of the thigh and chin. The faces of both males and females bear distinctive markings. Their rumps are uniform in colour with no white except underneath the tail. Male muntjac deer have short antlers and tusks. The antlers curve backwards and in older animals they terminate in a hooked point.

Introduced to deer parks in the 1900s, for example to Woburn Park in Bedfordshire in 1901, it became established in the wild following escapes, releases and translocations as well as natural spread. Now located throughout most of southern Britain and as far north as Yorkshire.

Where population density is high muntjac can have a serious impact on woodlands, particularly on various plant shoots and ground flora, as well as garden plants, and some field and market-garden crops. They also pose a threat to road users through collision.

Muntjac deer is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England, Wales and Scotland. As such, it is an offence to release or allow the escape of this species into the wild.

For details of legislation go to www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation.



Key ID Features

Single, sharp barks repeated at short intervals, and often for long intervals whilst they are breeding. Dog-like appearance.



Summer coat

Winter coat

Identification throughout the year

Summer coat: rich red-brown coat, with buff-coloured belly fur.

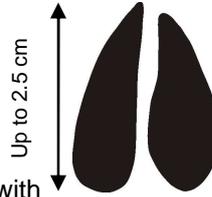
Winter coat: greyer-brown, with forelegs almost black on front, particularly in males.

Antlers are cast in May, growing during the summer through to autumn.

Field Signs

Tracks are smaller than other deer species in Britain and could be confused with other juvenile deer.

Droppings are black, shiny and striated - may be nearly spherical or cylindrical but generally pointed at one end.

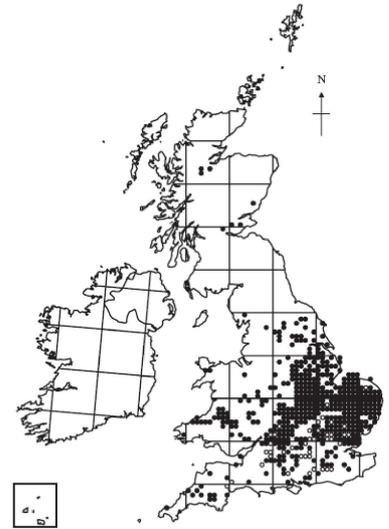


During territorial disputes males will paw at the ground with their forefeet creating scrapes visible in the ground vegetation and exposing bare soil. Fraying of bark on trees, caused by scraping antlers, is easily mistaken for fraying caused by roe deer but usually occurs at a lower level (10-40 cm above ground level).

Distribution

Well established over much of England, particularly the Midlands and southern half.

Source: Alastair I. Ward, Mammal Review



Similar Species

Roe Deer



White patch not clearly outlined in black, short tail

Chinese Water Deer



No white patch, short stumpy tail

Muntjac Deer

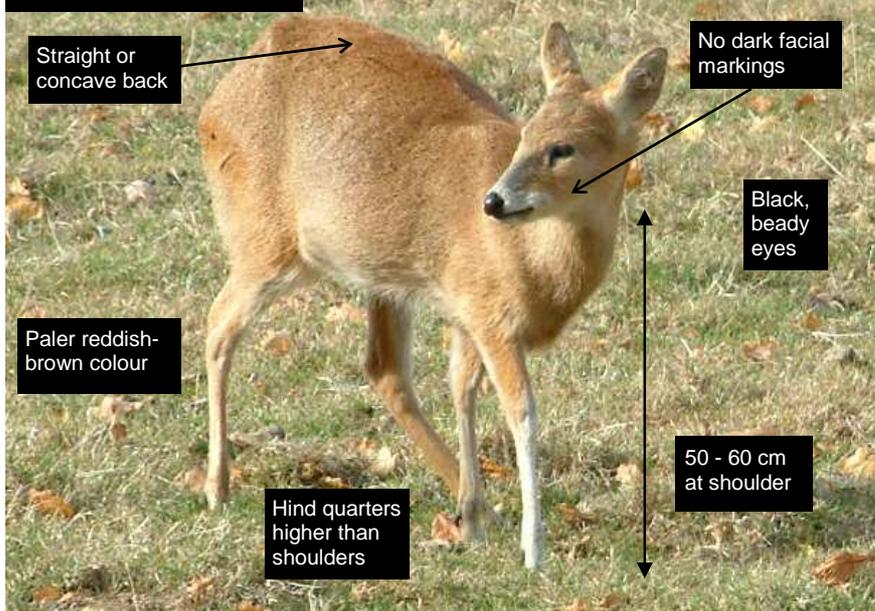


Dark rump, white underside to tail

Approximately to scale

Muntjac could be confused with Alsatian dogs due to their similar size and dark facial markings, especially when seen from a distance or within woodland understorey.

Chinese Water Deer
Non-native
(*Hydropotes inermis*)



No antlers

Straight or concave back

No dark facial markings

Black, beady eyes

Paler reddish-brown colour

50 - 60 cm at shoulder

Hind quarters higher than shoulders

Roe Deer

Native
(*Capreolus capreolus*)

Female



Flat back

No facial stripes

White rump

60 - 75 cm at shoulder

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References and further reading:

Sargent, G and Morris, O (2003) "How to Find and Identify Mammals." The Mammal Society

MacDonald, D and Barrett, P (1993) "Mammals of Britain and Europe." Collins

Harris, S and Yalden, D W (eds) (2008) "Mammals of the British Isles." The Mammal Society

Sample, G (2006) "Field Guide to Wildlife Sounds of Britain and Ireland." Collins

Ward, A I (2005) "Expanding ranges of wild and feral deer in Great Britain" Mammal Review 35(2) 165-173