

VARIETIES OF DEER IN THE OREGON FORESTS

The two species of deer common in Oregon are the mule deer in the eastern part and the Columbian black-tailed deer ranging from the Columbia River to the California line and up to the east slope of the Cascade Mountains, where it overlaps the range of the mule deer.

With the opening of the Oregon deer season today and extending to October 25th, it is important for hunters to know that there are a few white-tailed deer still remaining in Oregon and it is against the law to kill these. A limited number remains on both sides of the Cascade Mountains.

The white-tailed deer, ranging in the headwaters of the Deschutes River, is a sub-species of the common Virginia deer of the eastern states. The one west of the Cascades is a distinct species and is called the Oregon white-tailed deer. The foothill region of the North Umpqua has been set aside as a State Game Refuge for the protection of this species.

The first specimen known to science was killed near Oregon City during the early part of the last century. The Oregon white-tailed deer, according to old residents, was at one time common in the foothills near Beaverton and in the oak timber through the Willamette Valley.

The white-tail is intermediate in size between the mule and Columbian black-tail. The tail is bushy and wedge-shaped, is snow white on the underneath and on the edges and is held high and sways from side to side when the animal is running. The antlers rise from the forehead, then drop suddenly forward with the beam almost horizontal. From the beam, three long, sharp tines or points

rise perpendicularly.

The mule deer is the largest of the three and can be told from the others by the large ears and the short white tail with a black tip. The winter color is steel-gray changing to gray-brown in summer. Although many sportsmen hunt the forested country of eastern Oregon for these deer, their numbers seem to hold up fairly well, which must be attributed largely to the closed season on does, the enforcement of the laws, the killing of predatory animals and the state game refuges.

The Columbian black-tail is the smallest deer in Oregon and about the same color as the Oregon white-tail. The tail is wider than that of the mule deer with the outer surface black all over and a white under side and tip.

The rutting season of all these deer is during October and November, and one or two fawns are born in April and May. The young are spotted at birth and remain so until the hair is shed in the fall. The antlers of all the bucks are shed during January, February or March.