



Red Deer

Cervus elaphus

Quick facts

Order Cetartiodactyla

Conservation status

GB *Least concern*

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England *Least concern*

Scotland *Least concern*

Wales *Least concern*

Global *Least concern*

GB trend *Increasing*

Size Body up to 201 cm. Up to 140 cm at the shoulder. Males larger than females.

Weight Up to 190 kg

Life span Up to 20 years, rarely more than 16



**Mammal
SOCIETY**

The largest deer species in the UK, the red deer has a red-brown coat with no spots in adults. The antlers are usually branched, not palmate. They have a patchy distribution in England and Wales, but are common in the Scottish Highlands and Islands.

Habitat

Prefers forest and woodland habitats but has adapted successfully to open moors and hills; in Great Britain, it is now most commonly associated with upland open moorland.

Behaviour

Forms large herds in open habitats, tends to live in smaller groups or singly in woodland. The sexes tend to live apart for most of the year.

Diet & Feeding

A grazing herbivore. Grass and heather are particularly important. Browses for tree shoots etc when other food is limited in the winter.

Reproduction

Stags move to hinds' home ranges during the rut, from the end of September to November. A single calf (very rarely twins) is born mid-May to July. Hybridises with introduced sika deer.

Conservation & Threats

Grazing crops can cause conflict between red deer and farmers. Culls occur to control negative impacts on biodiversity; culls on Scottish deer estates where deer are fed during winter may be insufficient and have a positive impact on population change. Hybridisation with sika may mean that eventually, pure red deer may only be found on islands.

Range

