

November - Week 2

Deer Diary

The White-tailed deer can be found living in a variety of habitats across the state of Minnesota. In autumn, deer behavior changes as they enter breeding season. At this time there is also renewed attention and interaction between people and deer. Many Minnesotans venture into the woodlands and across farmlands to harvest a deer. From mid-September through December the archery season is open. Firearm season is mostly reserved for the month of November. Harvesting helps keep the deer population in balance within their various ecosystems. In addition to food, deer also provide products made from their bones, antlers, and hides.

White-tailed deer mating season begins in November and lasts until early December. Male deer, known as bucks, create antler rubs on small trees and they scrape the ground with their hooves. Bucks mark and scent prominent points in their territory to fend off other males and to attract females to mate. During this timeframe both bucks and does, the females, spend much of their days feeding to build up fat reserves for the upcoming winter. They can oftentimes be seen in fields, gardens, and roadsides where the last green growth is still available. Notice droppings in their favorite feeding spots.

This week, venture outside to look for deer and their signs, possibly including tracks in a fresh snowfall. Sightings may be as close as your yard or your garden. If you are going out in a place where hunters may be, make sure to don bright colors, such as blaze orange for safety. Hunters will be doing so as well.

Create a Deer Diary journal page that highlights your experience searching for tracks, droppings, buck rubs and scrapes. What do you notice? Do you see a deer, or several deer? Are you seeing bucks, does, or both? Do you hear a buck snort before it crashes through the underbrush? Sketch a picture of a deer in your local landscape. If you'd prefer a different perspective, write a diary entry from the deer's perspective. There are many deer stories out there, 'capture' one in words and pictures in your journal!

