

THREE KINDS OF DEER IN OREGON

ODOCOILEUS HEMIONUS HEMIONUS IS A MULE DEER—WHITE TAIL DEER ALMOST EXTINCT—INSTRUCTIVE ARTICLE FROM STATE COMMISSIONER'S PUBLICATION.

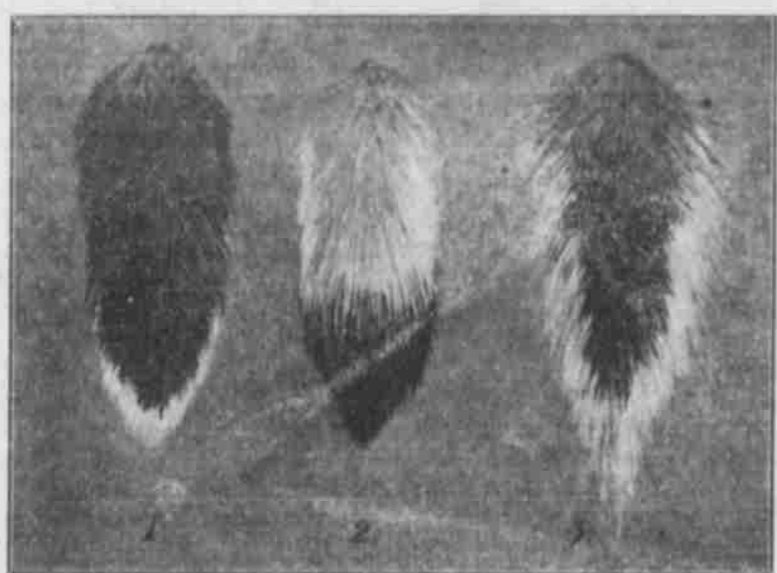
The August issue of "The Oregon Sportsman," issued monthly under the direction of the State Fish and Game Commission by William L. Finley, contains an interesting article dealing with the deer of Oregon, which is especially timely just now. The author is Stanley G. Jewett. Through the courtesy of Mr. Finley, The Bulletin is able to reprint



Buck and Doe Oregon White-tailed Deer.



Typical Horns of Three Species of Deer. 1. Mule Deer. 2. Columbian Black-tailed Deer. 3. White-tailed Deer.



Tails of Three Species of Deer. 1. Columbian Black-tailed Deer. 2. Mule Deer. 3. White-tailed Deer.



Female Columbia Black-tailed Deer.

White-tailed deer on both sides of the Cascade mountains.

The White-tailed deer east of the Cascades is a sub-species of the common Virginia deer of the eastern states, while the one west of the Cascades is a distinct species which we will call the Oregon White-tailed deer. The first specimen known to science was killed near Oregon City during the early part of the last century. These two latter varieties are now extremely rare within the State of Oregon.

The White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus leucurus* and *Odocoileus virginianus macrourus*) are intermediate in size between the other two. The tail is bushy and wedge-shaped, is snow white underneath and on the edges, is held high and away 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 White-tailed deer, according to old residents, was formerly common throughout the Willamette valley foothills. Mrs. H. G. Davis, of Portland, informs me that this deer was very common in the foothills about Beaverton, in Washington county, during the years from 1850 to 1875. Mr. Henry Thompson, of Sweet Home, Linn county, under date of October 27th, 1913, says:

"There used to be a few of them in the river bottom here about two miles above town, but I haven't seen or heard of them for several years."

Mr. W. H. Baker, the Portland taxidermist, tells me he mounted several heads of White-tailed deer some years ago, but has none the past few seasons. He says those he mounted were killed in the Willamette valley.

There are still a few of these deer along the North Umpqua river, in Douglas county, and in the Davis lake region of Crook county. Reports concerning the occurrence of this deer have come from other sections, but there is no doubt they are extremely rare at the present time. Every effort should be made to protect the few remaining White-tailed deer in Oregon or the species may soon become extinct.

The Mule deer is the largest of the three and can be told from the others by the large ears, short white tail with a black tip, and the "Y" on the large antlers. The winter color is steel gray, changing to gray-brown in summer.

In Oregon the Mule deer is found only east of the summit of the Cascade mountains. They were formerly abundant over the entire eastern portion of the state but are now restricted to the more mountainous sections. In the northeastern part of the state, and in Crook, Lake and Klamath counties, they are still fairly plentiful. In southern Harney and Malheur counties, only a small remnant of this noble game animal remains. In this section are the Steins mountains, an ideal range for this species, but several years ago hide hunters slaughtered them by the thousands until now only a few remain. Through the efforts of the State Game Warden, this range of mountains was set aside as a state game refuge by the last legislature and it is to be hoped that the Mule deer in this section will be left alone by hunters until their numbers are increased and they spread out over the surrounding country. If this range is to be of any value in future as a game refuge, there should be some grazing restrictions. At present the entire range is being ruined by the unrestricted grazing of large herds of sheep. Two other reserves were created last year, in which the primary object was to protect Mule deer—one in Crook and Lake counties, and another in the Blue mountains, including parts of Baker and Wallawa counties. On this latter reserve are found, in addition to the goodly number of Mule deer, several head of elk and mountain sheep. The Mule deer ranges over more open country than other deer in localities where they are undisturbed.

The Columbian Black-tailed deer is the smallest deer in Oregon, and about the same color as the Oregon White-tail. The antlers of the old bucks have the "Y" much the same as the Mule deer; the tail is wider, with the outer surface black all over and with a white underside and tip.

In the western part of the state we have this species. It is found from the Columbia river to the California line and east to the east slope of the Cascade mountains, where its range overlaps that of the Mule deer. These deer inhabit the dense forests, especially of the Coast range, and seldom feed in the open country. They are known to eat the leaves of the evergreen trees as well as to browse on deciduous foliage.

The Black-tailed deer is common throughout its range, except in the more thickly settled parts of the Willamette valley. Large numbers are killed annually by sportsmen, especially in the southern counties. In the northern part of the state quite a number are killed in the Cascades south of Bonneville and along the lower Columbia.

According to reliable information, the live weight of a Black-tailed buck occasionally reaches 250 pounds. The Mule deer is much larger and sometimes weighs 350 pounds.

The "rutting" season of all these deer is during October and November and one or two, occasionally three young are born in April and May. The young are spotted at birth and remain so until the hair is shed in the fall.

We have very little data on the exact time of the shedding of antlers of these deer in Oregon. A two-year old Black-tailed buck from Roguo river shed his antlers at the State Game Farm on January 23rd. On the other hand, a large buck at Oakridge, in the Cascades, was still carrying his antlers on February 28th. From information furnished by hunters, it would appear that the deer all shed their antlers during January, February and March. A large White-tailed buck, which

was shot for the collection of game animals for the Fish and Game Commission, had shed his antlers about a week previous to January 29th. The horns had healed over with a tough, brown skin, but the new antlers had not started to develop.

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the article herewith, together with illustrations.
 By STANLEY G. JEWETT.
 There are two species of deer that are common in Oregon; the Mule

deer (*Odocoileus hemionus hemionus*) in the eastern part and the Columbian Black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus columbianus*) in the western part. In addition to these we have a few