

Support British deer with BDS

The British Deer Society (BDS) invites you to join our mission, guided by our commitment to ethics/welfare, science/research, and education/training. Together, we strive to ensure the well-being and fair treatment of British deer.

Who we are:

As a community of deer enthusiasts, the BDS is united in our mission to safeguard the welfare of deer, influencing policies and practices with decades of expertise and modern advancements in science and technology.

What we do:

Through research, education, and advocacy, we address critical issues like deer welfare, environmental impact, and sustainable deer management.

Why support us:

Support the BDS to ensure a UK where deer thrive in harmony with their environment. Your contribution will fund research that improves our understanding of deer in a changing world, provide education so more people can appreciate these amazing creatures, and support welfare initiatives to keep them thriving.

How to support us:

- **Membership:** Join our community and add your voice, speaking up for deer and staying informed with our quarterly magazine as well as regular news and updates from the Society, and connecting with fellow deer enthusiasts in your area.
- **Donations:** Every donation gift makes a significant impact on our efforts to speak up for deer.
- **Spread the word:** Follow us on social media @BritishDeerSociety and be an advocate for deer welfare and responsible deer management.

Join the BDS in preserving British deer and their habitats. Embrace our commitment – where passion meets purpose, and wildlife flourishes.



Photo: Ron Perkins

Discover Britain's diverse deer

Six deer species freely roam the British countryside, thriving in diverse habitats. Native and introduced, these adaptable creatures contribute significantly to Britain's biodiversity, embodying the essence of our captivating natural heritage.



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The British Deer Society

The Walled Garden, Burgate Manor, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, SP6 1EF

t: 01425 655434 e: info@bds.org.uk www.bds.org.uk



Visit www.bds.org.uk or scan the code to learn more about sika deer.

WILD DEER OF THE UK

Identifying SIKA DEER

Cervus nippon



Photo: Charlotte Syrett



the british deer society Together for Deer

www.bds.org.uk

What to look for

Size

Sika are a medium to large sized deer that stand at around 0.70 to 0.95m tall at the shoulder for males (stags) and 0.50 to 0.85m for females (hinds). When fully grown stags weigh between 40 to 70kg and hinds 30 to 40kgs or more.

Coat

Sika vary between a pale yellow/brown to red/brown coat with white spots during the summer, when they can sometimes be mistaken for fallow. The heavier winter coat is dark grey to black. There is often a distinct dark coloured dorsal stripe running the length of the back.

Rear

Sika have a shorter tail than the fallow and its black stripe is less distinct. There are very noticeable white glands on the hind legs of the deer, and they have a distinctive white rump bordered by black.

Head

The sika's head is small in comparison to the rest of the body. Their antlers are widely spaced and the angle of the forward point from the main antler beam is about 45°. Mature stags typically carry a maximum of 8 points on their antlers. Hinds do not have antlers.

Listen out for

Vocalisation

Sika are very vocal compared to some other deer. Stags make a rising and falling whistle during the rut as well as other vocalisations which include clacking noises, groaning, snorting and screams. Hinds tend to be quieter but utter a short, piercing squeak when suspicious or alarmed.

Look out for

Tracks and signs

The tracks of a sika are similar to those of a red deer, but they are slightly smaller in length (about 7cm) and narrower.



Photo: Ron Perkins



Lifestyle

Feeding

Sika both graze and browse. They prefer grasses and dwarf shrubs such as heather. They also occasionally eat tree shoots and bark. All deer do not have a top set of front incisors but instead have a hard pad that acts to tear vegetation rather than cut it.

Social organisation

Sika live in predominantly single sex groups for most of the year, only coming together during the breeding season and in winter when times are harder.

Breeding

Sika give birth mainly between May and July. They usually have a single calf (rarely twins). They mate from late September to November. Like fallow deer, sika stags can defend a small rutting territory from competitors but may also defend a harem of hinds if gathered together, like the red deer. They may also adopt a strategy of wandering in search of receptive females. The courting and mating of the sika can be dependent on the terrain and habitat of the individuals.

As sika are very closely related to red deer, there have been occurrences of hybridisation. Maintaining the genetic integrity of sika and red deer populations is an increasing concern.

Humans and deer

In parts of Britain sika have increased in number and expanded their range dramatically over recent years. Sika have been associated with significant economic damage to forestry, agricultural crops and also areas of high conservation value. Conversely, many landowners gain considerable revenue from the sale of stalking rights and venison production. Maintaining a balanced and sustainable population in high density areas is important both for the environment and the long-term welfare of the species.

Where to find them

Origins

Sika are also known as the Japanese deer after their place of origin. Their name is taken from *shika*, the Japanese word for deer. The UK population has its origins in escapes from parks and collections, as well as deliberate releases, since their first introductions here during the 19th century. Other subspecies of sika have been kept in deer parks, but UK wild sika are predominantly considered to be of the Japanese subspecies.

Population & distribution

Sika are rapidly increasing in the British countryside although their main strongholds can be patchy and sometimes isolated. In Scotland, sika ranges are expanding from west to east. They are also found in Northern Ireland.

Habitat

Sika deer prefer habitats based on acidic soils such as coniferous woodlands, heathlands, and moors.

Seasonal activity

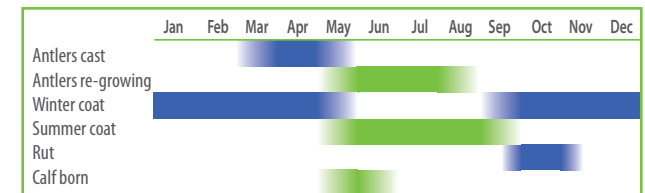


Photo: George Trebinski

