



Fallow Deer at a glance...

Height - Up to 1m at shoulder

Breeding - One fawn produced during May-June each year

Origin- Introduced by the Normans to parks and estates from France in 11th Century and then escaped into the wild

Diet- Grass, crops, herbs, shrubs and acorns.

Habits - Found in groups or herds, often sheltering in woods and feeding out on fields. Can cause significant localised damage to farm crops, woodland shrubs and ground flora.

What damage can they do?

Bark stripping - this occurs when deer shave off tree bark with their lower teeth for food. The broad parallel teeth-marks are often clearly visible, running more or less vertically. Excessive stripping can eventually kill the tree.

Browsing - nibbling of the buds and shoots of newly formed growth for food. Tree seedlings, coppice regrowth and herbaceous plants and flowers like primulas, violets and rosette plants are eaten. The lack of ground and lower vegetation has a knock-on effect in that the loss of cover prevents ground nesting birds breeding, insects decline and tree seedlings cannot develop into the next crop of new trees.

Fraying - is caused by male deer rubbing their antlers (and facial scent glands) against tree stems and foliage as a form of sexual aggression or territory marking.

Fraying can cause significant damage on valuable specimen trees and small areas of young woodland. Fallow and muntjac bucks are also known to thrash plastic tree shelters to pieces.



Effects on the deer themselves

Where populations have become too great for the habitat to sustain and food supply becomes limited, the deer themselves can suffer. Mortality increases both as a result of starvation and the increased risk of disease and breeding success decreases, weakening the herd.

While this may be seen as a natural way of balancing the population, deer populations are increasing at such a rapid rate that it is estimated that the number in the UK will double in the next 10 years. Man has removed natural predators and provided lots of new woodlands for the deer to thrive in. No-one likes to think of animals suffering because of lack of food and therefore it is necessary to manage the population before it becomes too large.

Another effect is the increase in the number of road accidents involving deer - particularly when herding species like fallow look for new sources of food, the risk of a collision is very real and has an impact on both deer and people.



Deer are beautiful wild creatures and one of the highlights of a visit to the countryside is to catch a glimpse of these elusive, shy creatures.

Deer numbers are rapidly increasing and with no natural predators and they are thriving in our local woodlands. However, in too great a number deer can be very destructive to trees and other habitats especially in Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) such as Dinmore Woods SSSI.

The Dinmore & Canon Pyon Deer Management Group wants to see a sustainable deer population in the area but recognises that management of the herd is essential for the well being of both the deer and their habitat.

Which species are present?

There are four main species of deer in the UK - Red, Fallow, Roe and Muntjac. Only fallow are found in any significant numbers in the wild in central Herefordshire although there is evidence that Roe and Muntjac are present in very small numbers.

Damage caused by deer

Left - a woodland with very little natural regeneration.

Middle - trees damaged by rutting

Top middle - a deer rubs the velvet from his antlers

Above - trees stripped of bark

The
Dinmore & Canon Pyon
Deer Management
Group

The Dinmore & Canon Pyon Deer Management Group consists of landowners working together to gather information about and monitor the deer population in the area and to manage them collectively, with specialist input and advice, thus ensuring a healthy, sustainable population.

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This leaflet looks at the deer and gives information about their management.

With appropriate management, it is possible to achieve that necessary balance between healthy deer and healthy habitats, enabling people to see them in their natural state - if they are lucky.



FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACTS:

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www.deercollisions.co.uk Tel. 01842 890798

www.english-nature.org.uk Tel. 01531 638500

www.forestry.gov.uk Tel. 01673 842644

www.basc.org.uk Tel. 01889 565050

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Management of
Deer
in Herefordshire

