

9/20/78

Natural History Notes



MIKE DOMBECK grew up in the Moose Lake area and graduated from Hayward High School and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. He has a B.S. degree in Biology and an M.S. degree in Aquatic Biology. He has taught Zoology at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and is currently a fisheries biologist with the U.S. Forest Service, living in Munising, Michigan. Mike has also been an area fishing guide since his high school days.



THE CELEBRITY OF THE FOREST

The white-tailed deer is always a celebrated sight whether you are seeing this animal for the first time or see them every day. The stately white-tail prances through the brush with springy exuberance. It gallops by, alternating three or four graceful bounds with a leap high into the air. You may see the antlered crest of a buck proudly held high and his bushy white tail waving and flashing conspicuously. The sight surpassed by none, however, is that of a doe and her spotted fawns joyfully frolicking in a meadow. This animal is easily the Number One sight in the state.

The white-tail is also a favorite among hunters, being the most widely hunted big game animal in the country. Well over 100,000 white-tails are harvested annually by hunters in Wisconsin. Deer hunting for the archer or marksman is a real challenge. This elusive animal has a keen sense of smell and very sharp ears. Usually the deer is aware of the hunter long before the hunter is aware of the deer. The successful hunter must be very skillful and have luck on his side. A trophy buck is indeed a reward. Venison provides for excellent eating and the hide provides a very high grade soft leather when tanned.

The range of the white-tail extends from Hudson's Bay west to the Rocky Mountains and south to the southern states. White-tails are closely related to nine other species of deer, including the mule deer and the black-tail. The white-tail was not a common animal here in northwestern Wisconsin until the logging and burning era began. It is

basically a forest edge animal and the virgin pine forest provided little undercover and browse. As the forests were cut and land cleared, the deer population increased and peaked in the early to mid 1900's. It has remained fairly abundant since that time.

A doe will produce from one to three fawns, rarely four, each spring. The breeding season, called the rut, takes place in the fall and peaks in November. Conception is followed by a gestation period of about 196 days. Fawns are usually born in May and early June; however, births have been observed as late as August. The chances of a fawn surviving its first winter are lessened if it is born comparatively late because it has less time to grow and develop its strength.

White-tailed deer undergo two complete pelage or coat changes yearly. The reddish summer coat is shed in September and is replaced by the grayish winter coat. The core of deer hair is hollow. This air space provides added insulation against the cold winters. The antlers of the buck are grown and shed annually. The velvet skin covering the developing antlers provides a rich supply of blood. When the antlers are developed the velvet dries and peels off. During this period buck-rubbings or hookings are common on brush and trees. By mid-October the velvet is usually rubbed off and the antlers are polished. The antlers are the adornment of the buck during the rut and are shed with the onset of the cold winter temperature.

The white-tail deer, Wisconsin's official state animal, is one of the most beautiful creatures we have. But please be careful when driving in areas frequented by deer. These animals are no match for a car and many are killed each year in accidents. It is your responsibility to drive carefully and preserve one of our most precious natural resources.



Koerpel Funeral Home
GEORGE A. KOERPEL
Funeral Director
OUR 31ST YEAR OF
SERVICE TO THE AREA
Phone 715/634-2263
HAYWARD, WISCONSIN

On Main Street - Downtown Hayward
 Scheer's *Open Evenings to 9:00 p.m.*
Sundays to 3:00 p.m.
NORTHWOODS SPORTS
 Dick Scheer • Phone 634-8550

- FISHING TACKLE • FISH LOCATORS
- REEL PARTS & BULK LINE
- ELECTRIC TROLLING MOTORS
- CYPRESS GARDEN SKIS & ACCESSORIES
- GUNS - AMMUNITION
- RELOADING SUPPLIES • ARCHERY

The Largest Display of Mepps and Mr. Twister Baits in the North
One Stop Shopping for the Sportsman