

# DEER TRACKS

Tracks can be very useful in determining a variety of features about an individual or number of deer. Tracks can tell you;

- the sex of the deer.
- the direction the deer was travelling.
- the time of day the deer passed.
- the size and age of the animal.

By looking at the surrounding area you can often deduce some detailed information about a deer and its habits. Tracks pointed toward bedding areas were likely made in the morning and tracks pointing toward feeding areas were likely to be made in the afternoon. Important factors to consider when examining deer tracks are whether you are looking at walking or running tracks and the terrain on which the tracks are located. Walking tracks on flat ground will provide the most accurate picture of the animal that left them.



Figure 1. Hind: Single Hoof

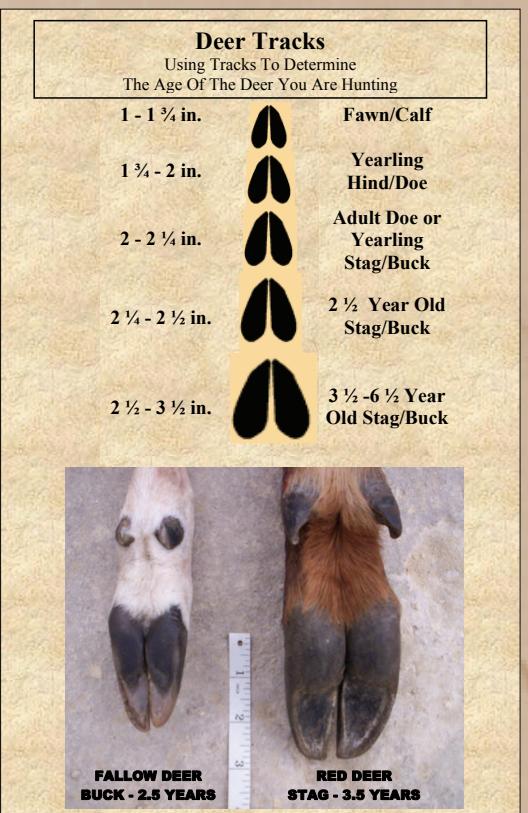
**Hinds and Does** (Figure 1) have a distinctive pattern noticeable when examining their tracks. When examining a doe's tracks on flat ground, the rear tracks will often contact the ground either directly on top or to the outside of the front track. The reason for this is because doe's and hind's tend to have a chest that is narrower than their hindquarters and hence the configuration of their tracks.



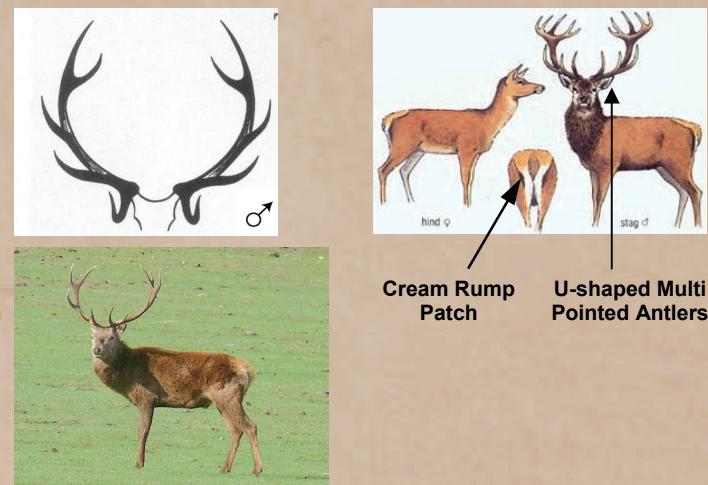
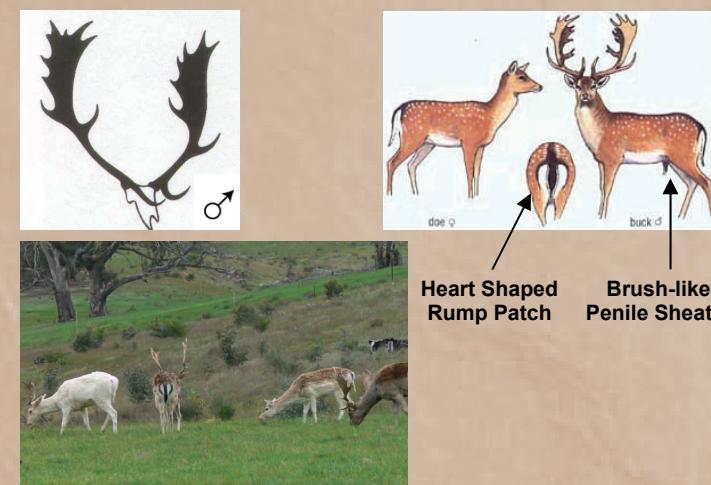
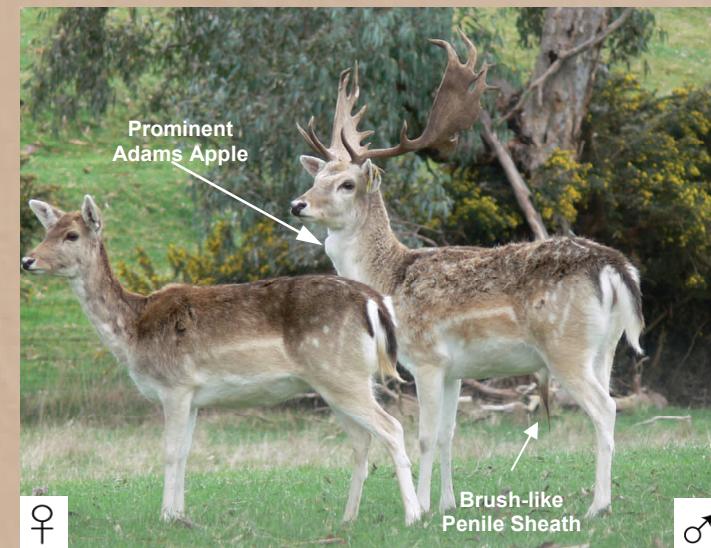
Figure 2. Stag: Single Hoof Print

## References

Huntingnet.com. 2005, *Deer Tracks* (online). available: <http://www.huntingnet.com>  
 Harrison, M. 1998, *Wild Deer of Australia*, Australian Deer Research Foundation Ltd, Melbourne.  
 Photos courtesy of: Troy Bowman & Adrian Harvey, Rural Solutions SA,  
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## Identification of Feral Deer in South Australia



### Fallow Deer, *Dama dama*

#### Key Identifying Features

Medium sized deer.  
 Has a very long tail.  
 Colour of coat can vary from black, white, common (grey-brown) and menil (light-brown).  
 Rump patch is white, black or brown bordered & heart-shaped.  
 Buck has a prominent 'Adam's Apple'.  
 Buck has a brush-like penile sheath.

**Buck:** up to 95cm at shoulder and 90kg.

**Doe:** up to 80cm at shoulder and 40kg.

When distinguishing between Fallow and Chital deer, notice Chital have a striking white upper throat and Fallow have a white heart shaped marking on its rump surrounded by a black or brown border.

The two most abundant species in South Australia are Fallow and Red deer.

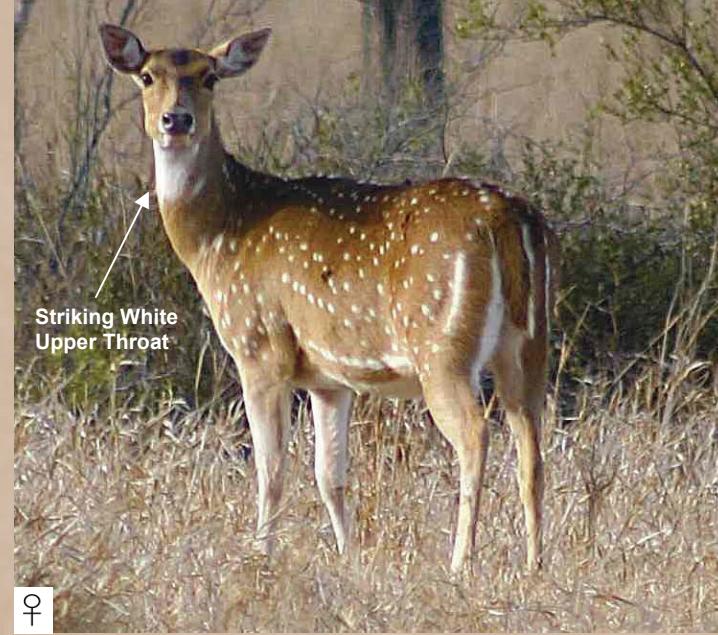
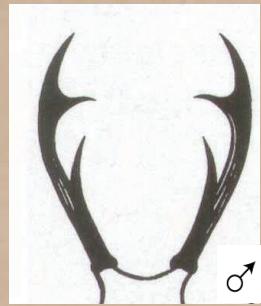
### Red Deer, *Cervus elaphus*

#### Key Identifying Features

Second largest of Australia's deer species.  
 Has a very short tail.  
 Red-brown coat with cream underbelly.  
 Cream rump patch, extends onto back.  
 U-shaped, multi-pointed complex antlers.

**Stag:** up to 120cm at shoulder and between 135 and 160kg.

**Hind:** up to 90cm at shoulder and 95kg.



## Chital Deer, *Axis axis*

### **Key Identifying Features**

Reddish to chestnut brown coat with white spots.  
Striking white upper throat.  
Tail noticeably long.  
Dark brown/black muzzle.

**Stag:** up to 85cm at shoulder and 80kg.

**Hind:** up to 70cm at shoulder and 40kg.

## Hog Deer, *Axis porcinus*

### **Key Identifying Features**

Smallest of the six deer species in Australia (about sheep size).  
Coat ranges from dark brown to rich reddish-brown.  
Upward sloping back to a high rump.  
Often has uniform light spots from shoulders to rump. White tipped tail.

**Stag:** up to 70cm at shoulder and 50kg.

**Hind:** up to 61cm at shoulder and 30kg.

### **Legislation**

Declared Animal Class For Deer: 17

Declared Animal Category For Deer: 3

**The following sections of the NRM Act (2004) are applicable throughout South Australia**

- 179 Relates to it being an offence to deliberately release certain animals or plants.
- 181 Relates to the requirement for a landholder to control certain animals or plants.
- 182 Relates to the requirement for a landholder to take action to destroy or control certain animals or plants. Prescribed measures for control are found in the NRM Regulations (2005) which include a requirement for farmed deer to be kept securely with appropriate fencing.

Detailed information about the relevant provisions of the NRM Act (2004) and associated NRM (General) Regulations 2005 can be obtained online at:  
<http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/index.aspx>



## Rusa Deer, *Cervus timorensis*

### **Key Identifying Features**

Coarse grey to greyish-brown coat with light chest and throat.  
Line of dark hair runs down the chest and between the forelegs.  
Very vocal compared to closely related Sambar deer.  
Long tufts of light hair from inner ears.

**Stag:** up to 110cm at shoulder and 135kg.

**Hind:** up to 95 cm at shoulder and 60kg.



## Sambar Deer, *Cervus unicolor*

### **Key Identifying Features**

Largest of Australia's deer.  
Uniform light or dark brown, greyish or black coat sometimes fading to a light buff colour under chin, between forelegs and under body.  
Prominent bat-like ears with pale inner.

**Stag:** up to 130cm at shoulder and over 300kg (about Jersey heifer size).

**Hind:** up to 115cm at shoulder and 230kg.

### **Impacts**

- Damage to native vegetation.
- Increase soil erosion.
- Inhibit seed production and seedling recruitment.
- Reduce biodiversity by impacting vegetation and habitats such as mallee fowl mounds.
- Economic impacts include damage to fences and pastures whilst reducing the productivity of livestock due to heavy competition for resources.
- Potential source of endemic and exotic diseases.
- Deer are a potential traffic hazard.
- Males can be extremely aggressive during the rut (breeding season), presenting a threat to public safety for bushwalkers, campers and landholders alike.