

# Muntjac Deer

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## Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Muntiacus reevesi*

**AKA:** Chinese Muntjac, barking deer, Reeves' Muntjac

**Native to:** China

**Habitat:** Dense woodland and scrub with diverse vegetation

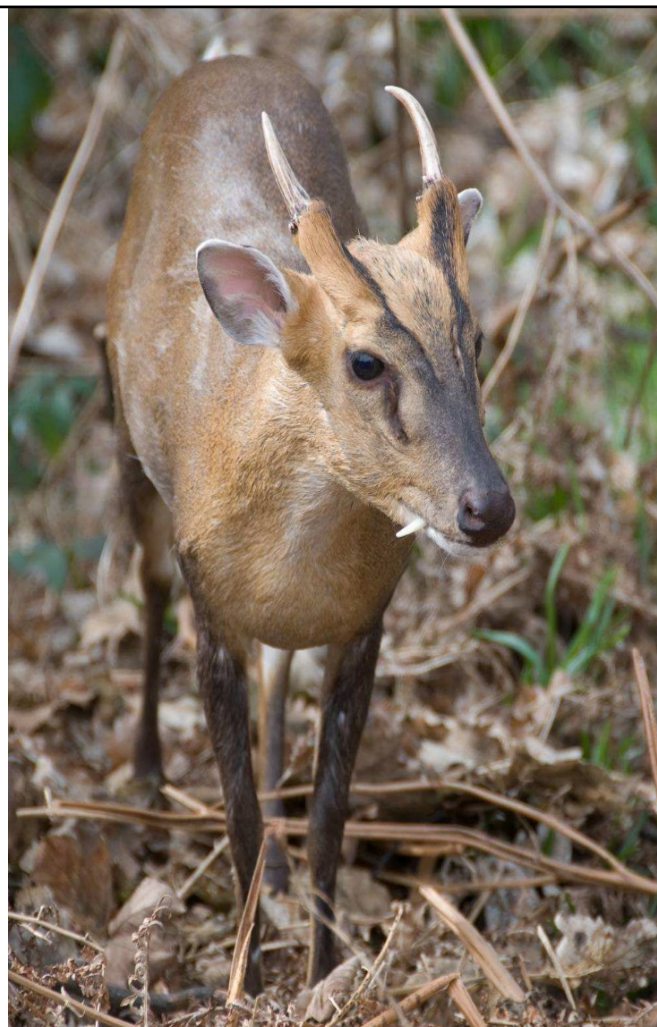
Muntjac are a small species of deer that measure approximately 50 cm at the shoulder in males and 47cm in females. They have a characteristic hunched appearance and are russet brown for most of the year. Males have small antlers, usually straight with no branching.

Muntjac deer are widespread throughout most of England and Wales, where it was introduced in the 1900s. Importing these species is the only viable pathway of introduction to the island of Ireland. Therefore, the main pathways will be through the main ports of entry (by sea or by air). Importation of this species maybe allowed under license but illegal smuggling is also a very real possibility.

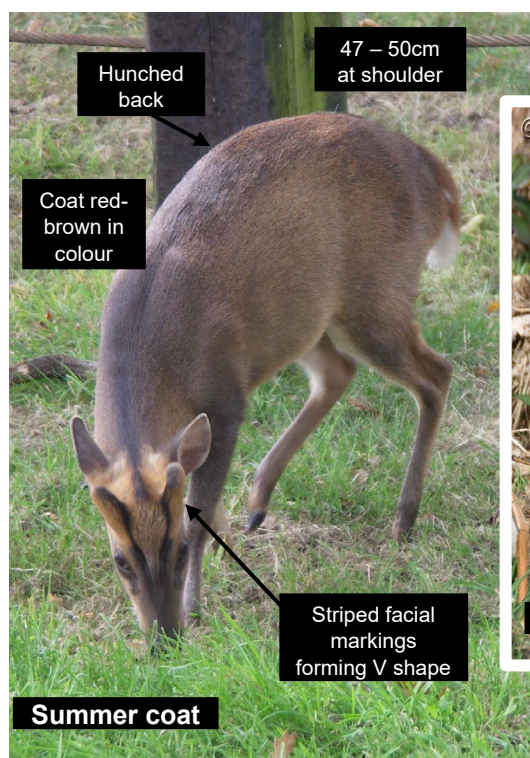
Although there are many anecdotal reports of Muntjac, monitoring programmes and verified sightings suggest that only a few individuals currently exist in Northern Ireland.

Where population density is high Muntjac can have a serious impact on woodlands, particularly on various plant shoots and ground flora, as well as garden plants, and some field and market-garden crops. They also pose a threat to road users through collision.

**Under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 it is offence to intentionally keep; breed; transport to, from or within Northern Ireland, use or exchange Muntjac; or to release it into the environment.**



## Key ID Features



Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>, iRecord app or Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting>



# Identification throughout the year

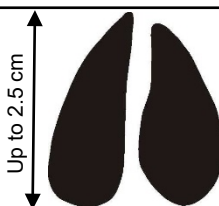
**Summer coat:** rich red-brown coat, with buff-coloured belly fur.

**Winter coat:** greyer-brown, with forelegs almost black on front, particularly in males. Antlers are cast in May, growing during the summer through to autumn.

## Field Signs

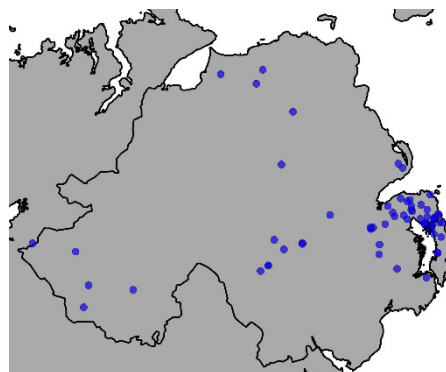
Tracks are smaller than other deer species in Britain and could be confused with other juvenile deer. Droppings are black, shiny and striated - may be nearly spherical or cylindrical but generally pointed at one end.

During territorial disputes males will paw at the ground with their forefeet creating scrapes visible in the ground vegetation and exposing bare soil. Fraying of bark on trees, caused by scraping antlers, is easily mistaken for fraying caused by roe deer but usually occurs at a lower level (10-40 cm above ground level).



## Distribution

A few individuals are likely to be responsible for many reports in Northern Ireland



Source: NBN atlas Northern Ireland  
<https://northernireland-species.nbnatlas.org/species/NHMSYS0000080204>  
 Check website for current distribution.

## Similar Species

**Roe Deer**



White patch not clearly outlined in black, short tail

**Chinese Water Deer**



No white patch, short stumpy tail

**Muntjac Deer**



Dark rump, white underside to tail

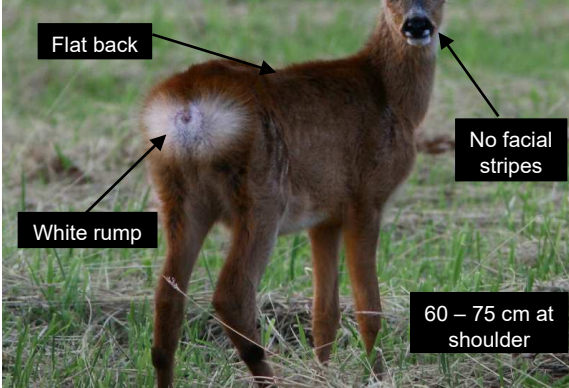
Approximately to scale

Muntjac could be confused with Alsatian dogs due to their similar size and dark facial markings, especially when seen from a distance or within woodland understorey.

**Roe Deer**

Invasive non-native (*Capreolus capreolus*)

Female



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**Chinese Water Deer**

Invasive non-native (*Hydropotes inermis*)

No antlers

No dark facial markings

Black beady eyes

50 -60 cm at shoulder

Straight or concave back

Paler reddish-brown colour

Hind quarters higher than shoulders

## References and further reading:

Sargent, G and Morris, O (2003) "How to Find and Identify Mammals." The Mammal Society  
 MacDonald, D and Barrett, P (1993) "Mammals of Britain and Europe." Collins  
 Harris, S and Yalden, D W (eds) (2008) "Mammals of the British Isles." The Mammal Society  
 Sample, G (2006) "Field Guide to Wildlife Sounds of Britain and Ireland." Collins  
 Ward, A I (2005) "Expanding ranges of wild and feral deer in Great Britain" Mammal Review 35(2) 165-173  
 Photos from: GBNNSS, Lindsay Farmer, Max Wade, Philip Ames, Taco Meeuwsen.

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Adapted for Northern Ireland  
 Environment Agency 2020