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DEER FACTS... ROE DEER

There are 3 sub-species to this small to medium sized deer. These are the European Roe, the Siberian Roe and the Chinese Roe deer. As their names suggest, they are native across Europe, Southern Russia and China.

The European Roe deer is the smallest of the sub-species weighing approximately 17-23kg and reaching a height of 63-74cm. The Siberian and the Chinese Roe are slightly larger with a weight range of 43-50kg and a height of 71-85cm. The coloring is similar with their summer coats being a rich foxy red turning to a grey / fawn coat with yellow flecks in winter. They have a grayish face, a white chin and a white patch on the rump develops for the winter season.

Antlers grown by the bucks are short – up to 30cm and generally have between 3 and 5 tynes per side. The rear upper tyne of the Siberian and Chinese Roe has been known to terminate in a fork. The Roe deer is the only known deer that regrows its antlers in winter.

Woodlands and foresty areas are their preferred habitat but they are found in grassy fields. This happens especially in areas where there is an over population and there is a need to look further for feed. Browsers by nature, the Roe deer's diet includes various herbs, bilberries, bramble, ivy, coniferous tree shoots as well as their favorite – young, moist grasses and leaves.

The Roe deer are classified as crepuscular, meaning they are most active at dawn and dusk. They are fast and graceful animals with powerful legs and an astute sense of balance. This allows them to easily escape their slower predators.

The gestation period for the Roe Deer is 9 months (4 months of no embryonic growth and 5 months of foetal growth). Generally, a doe will have 1 or 2 offspring but occasionally a set of triplets can be born. The lifespan of bucks rarely exceeds 5 years and does 6-7 years. Heavy mortality in fawns can occur shortly after birth and during their first winter.

Roe deer can cross breed with hog deer.