



Class: *Mammalia*
 Order: *Artiodactyla*
 Family: *Cervidae*
 Subfamily: *Cervinae*
 Species: *Elaphurus*
 Genus: *davidianus*

Male: buck, stag, hart
 Female: doe, hind, roe
 Young: fawn, calf, kid
 Group: herd

Description:

The Père David's deer has a reddish-tawny colored summer coat with a dark dorsal stripe and a dark gray winter coat. It has a long tail that ends with a tuft of hair. They have large eyes and short pointed ears. The male deer have branched antlers with the longest branches near the base. They can have 2 sets of antlers in the same year! They have long legs and also long hooves that are spread apart to provide better support on soft soil.

Size:

The adults weigh between 330 and 440 pounds. They can reach about 5 feet in length, but the tail can add an additional 20 inches.

Life Span:

They can stand between 4 feet and 5.5 feet at the shoulder.

Diet:

Père David's deer usually live between 18-22 years.

In the Wild: They graze on a mixture of grass and water plants.

At the Zoo: They are fed grain, corn, oats, and hay. They have been observed eating duckweed in the Safariland ponds.

Geographic

These animals were originally native to central and northern China.

Range:

Habitat:

Marshy lowlands

Reproduction:

The males gather a harem during the breeding season from June to August. The males fight, or rut, for the right to mate. This includes using their antlers and teeth to chase off competitors. They also rear up on their hind legs to "box" with each other. The female will give birth to 1-2 fawn around 280 days after mating. It will nurse until it is 10-11 months old. The young will then become sexually mature at 14 months old.

Behavior:

The Père David's deer is an excellent swimmer and is fond of the water. These herding animals are very social. They live in large groups except before and during mating season when the males leave the group. Females remain in social groups throughout the year.

Current Status:

The species had been extinct in nature for 800 years before it was reintroduced. In 1865, a French missionary, Père Armand David discovered this species as he caught a glimpse of them in the Emperor of China's Imperial Hunting Park. A herd had survived there. He publicized their existence so a few animals were given to European countries and bred there. The species then disappeared from China after a flood. Due to being raised successfully in zoos and nature reserves; there have been 2500 animals reintroduced to China. They live in three national nature reserves there. Chinese authorities would like to eventually reintroduce them into the wild.

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Species:

Trivia:

The Chinese name for the animal is "sze pu shiang", which means "none of the four". This is because they say it has the tail of a donkey, the neck of a camel, the hooves of a cow, and the antlers of a deer.