

Sika (Japanese) Deer

Kingdom: Animalia **Phylum:** Chordata **Class:** Mammalia **Order:** Artiodactyla
Family: Cervidae **Cervus nippon**

Description: The Sika is a medium sized, compact deer.

Length: 3.5-5 feet

Height: 3.5 inches

Weight: 100-242 lbs.

Lifespan: 10 years, 25 years in captivity

Habitat: .Forests, marshes, grasslands

Range: Eastern Asia and Japan

Status: Stable

Diet in the Wild: Grass, leaves, flowers and fruit

Special Features:

- Only the males have antlers. Each antler has four tines.
- Start growing new antlers as soon as they shed the others.
- Both males and females have a shaggy neck mane that darkens in winter.
- Primarily nocturnal.
- Very vocal. Calls range from soft whistles to loud screams.
- Excellent swimmer who will jump into water to escape predator.
- Not territorial.
- Groups are a males and around 12 females.
- Amazingly hardy. During harsh winters can survive on scarce food.
- Easily tamed.
- The Sika is regarded as sacred in Japan. They are kept in temples where people come to visit them and offer them rice cakes.
- Antlers are used in traditional Chinese medicine.

Breeding/Care of Young:

- Sexual maturity at 18-24 months
- Gestation is 217 months
- Usually a single birth but occasionally twins
- Weaned at 8-12 months