



## REEVES' MUNTJAC

(*Muntiacus reevesi*)

**Adult size.** Bucks (males): 10 to 18kg, 44 to 52cm at shoulder. Does (females): 9 to 16kg, 43 to 52cm at shoulder.

**Colouration.** Summer: reddish brown. Winter: grey brown.

**Antlers.** Short (up to 10cm), branched with one or two points.

**Life span.** Bucks: up to 16 years. Does: up to 19 years.

**Social groups.** Solitary.

**Time of birth.** All year round.

**Number of offspring.** One kid.

**Gestation period.** 7 months.

**Food & feeding.** Browsers of brambles, ivy, ferns, grasses and broadleaf tree shoots.

**Habitat.** Dense woodland, coppice, over-grown gardens.

**Status.** Exotic. Widespread and increasing in number and range.

**UK distribution.** South and central England and Wales. North of the Humber distribution is patchy but reaches close to the Scottish border.

**Recognition.** Small, stocky, brown. Long pedicles, short antlers and visible upper canines in bucks. Very large facial glands below the eyes.

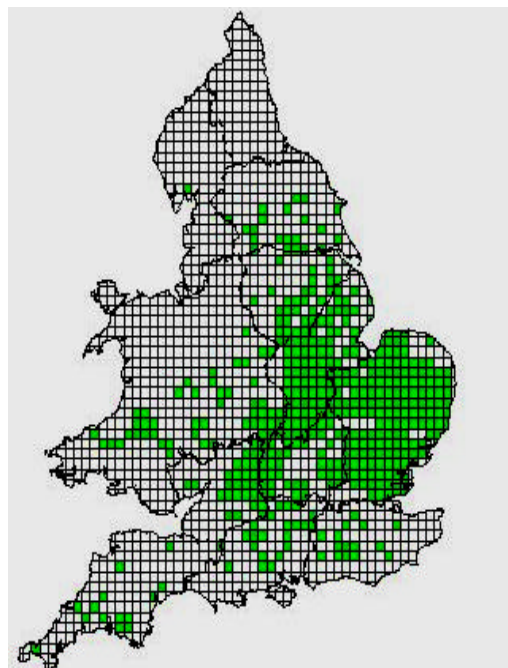
**Origins & history.** Muntjac were first introduced from China to Woburn Park in Bedfordshire in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Deliberate releases and escapes from Woburn, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire lead to feral populations establishing.



*Muntjac buck*

Their rapid spread across England and Wales has been facilitated by deliberate movement and release.

**Vocalisation.** A common name for muntjac is "barking deer" resulting from the single, loud bark given under a number of circumstances. An alarmed muntjac may scream whereas maternal does and kids squeak.



*Distribution of muntjac in 10km squares in England & Wales*

**Conservation versus muntjac.**

Due to their year-round breeding and rapid rate of dispersal muntjac can quickly colonise new areas and reach

high densities. Unfortunately muntjac have a feeding preference for plants that are of conservation importance, such as bluebells and primulas. In areas of high muntjac density semi-natural woodland can become devoid of native ground-flora, which has serious implications for conservation of native woodlands. Careful, planned management of muntjac populations is therefore imperative for the protection of our remaining ancient and semi-natural sites.



***Muntjac doe***

**The rut.** In contrast to all other species of deer in Britain, muntjac do not have a defined breeding season (rut). Instead, they breed all year round and the does can conceive again within days of giving birth. Bucks may fight for access to does but remain unusually tolerant of subordinate males within their vicinity.

**Activity.** Muntjac are active throughout the 24-hour period but make more use of open spaces during the hours of darkness in populations experiencing frequent disturbance. Peak times of activity are at dawn and dusk. After feeding long periods are spent "lying up", which is where the deer lies down to ruminate.

**Economic factors.** Unlike other species of deer in Britain, muntjac cause little

damage to forestry and agriculture. Muntjac trophy hunting is only recently becoming popular and so roe deer stalking has little tradition on country and forest estates. The most significant direct economic impact that muntjac have on human interests is in collisions with cars. However, this has welfare as well as economic implications.

**Further reading.**

*Muntjac*, by N. Chapman and S. Harris. Published in 1996 by the Mammal Society, London and the British Deer Society, Fordingbridge.

*Muntjac deer: their biology, impact and management in Britain*, edited by B. Mayle. Published in 1993 by the Forestry Commission, Farnham as the proceedings of a conference.

*Reeves' muntjac Muntiacus reevesi in Britain: their history, spread, habitat selection and the role of human intervention in accelerating their dispersal*, by N. Chapman, S. Harris and A. Stanford. Published in 1994 in *Mammal Review*, volume 24 pages 113 to 160.

*The handbook of British Mammals*, edited by G. B. Corbet and S. Harris. Published in 1991 by Blackwell Scientific Publications, London.