

INFORMATIVE—RESEARCH

Deer Don't Need to Flee to Stay Trouble-Free!

Have you ever been in trouble and wanted to get away? The white-tailed deer can swim, run, hide, and fight to stay out of trouble.

In early April, fawns (baby deer) are born. After a few weeks, the doe (the mother deer) leaves her fawns to find food. The doe leaves her fawns in a bushy place. The trees and grass can help keep the fawns from being seen by hungry predators. The white-tailed deer has many predators, such as these: mountain lions, bobcats, leopards, lions, dogs, bears, tigers, coyotes, wolves, and even humans.

The fawns' camouflage hides them in April's trees and golden grasses. In spring, the fawns' fur is brown with white spots. In summer, the fawns' white spots disappear and never come back. In winter, their fur is gray, which helps them hide in the snow.

When the deer see, smell, or hear something suspicious, they stick their white tails up to signal that danger is near. The leader will run, and the others will follow.

When a deer is chased to water, it knows what to do. The deer will win this battle. The deer runs into the water and swims to the deepest part. If the predator thinks it's going to win the battle, it is wrong. The deer will kick and thrash until the predator drowns or walks off wounded.

If a deer is in a wide-open field and notices a predator, it will run zigzag to get away. It runs zigzag to confuse the predator. If the deer ran straight, it could become a venison feast.

There is one more way that deer stay out of trouble. Bucks fight with weapons called antlers. These are different from horns because they are attached to the skull, and horns are not. Antlers are made of bone and have vitamins in them. The deer can use its antlers to protect itself.

Deer stay safe by hiding, swimming, running, and fighting. Whenever you see a deer raise its tail, you know that it has seen a predator.