

Chinese Water Deer

Species Description

Scientific name: *Hydropotes inermis*

AKA: Water deer, Carw dŵr Tseina (Welsh)

Native to: East China and Korea

Habitat: Reedbeds and woodlands

Chinese water deer were first kept by London Zoo in 1873. Wild populations have established due to escapes mostly from Woburn Abbey and Whipsnade in Bedfordshire, as well as deliberate releases.

The Chinese water deer is a small, usually solitary, deer with a reddish-brown summer coat and paler winter coat. It has large rounded ears (usually held upright), beady black eyes and no antlers.

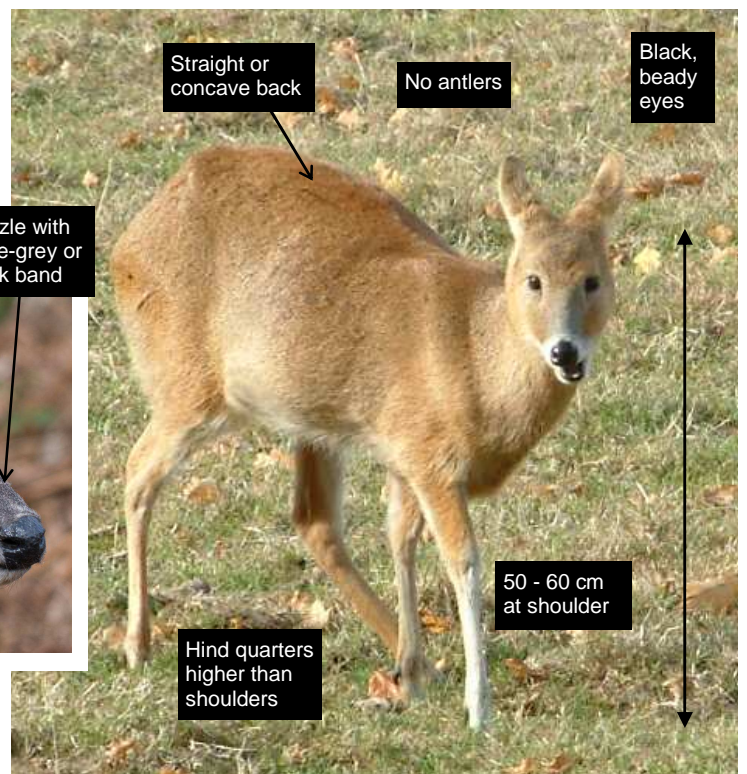
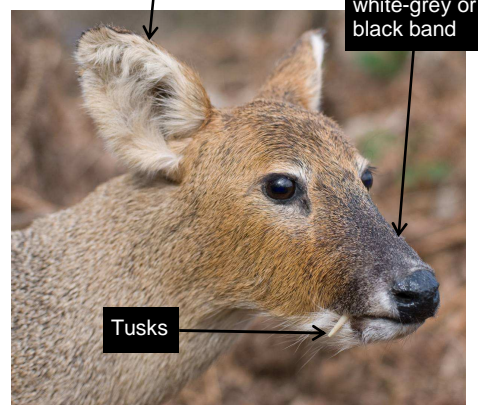
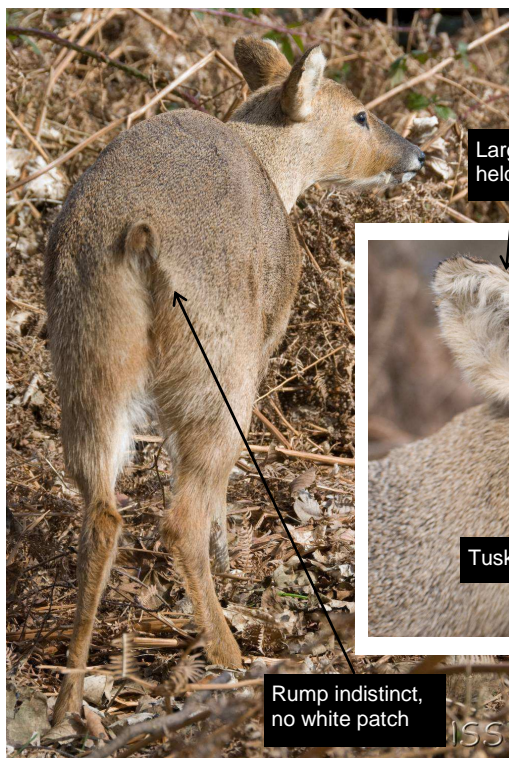
When running away, Chinese water deer often use a bounding gait in which legs are flung high in the air.

Chinese water deer is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England and Wales. As such, it is an offence to release or allow the escape of this species into the wild.

For details of legislation go to www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation.



Key ID Features



Identification throughout the year

Summer coat: reddish-brown.

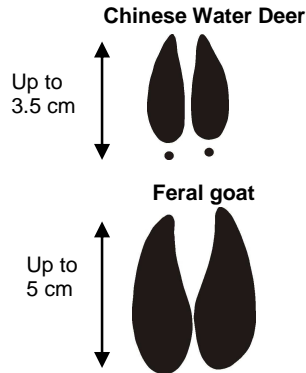
Winter coat: pale fawn to grey-brown.

Males make a whistling call during the rutting season (November - January).

Field Signs

Track are larger than muntjac deer, and leave impressions of dew claws when running in soft mud or snow. Tracks similar in size and shape to feral goat and could also be confused with juvenile deer of other species.

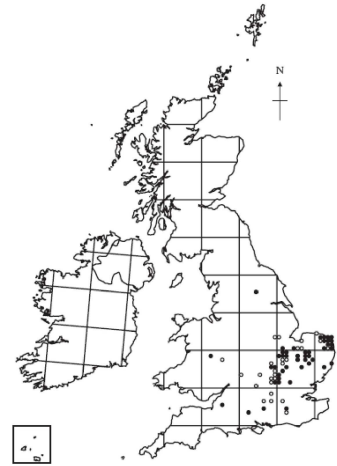
Droppings are dark brown or black, cylindrical, pointed at one end and rounded at the other.



Distribution

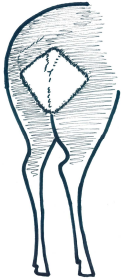
Scattered distribution throughout southern England with strong-holds in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.

Source: Alastair I. Ward, *Mammal Review*



Similar Species

Roe Deer



No black bar on tail, white patch not clearly outlined in black

Chinese Water Deer



No white patch, short stumpy tail

Muntjac Deer



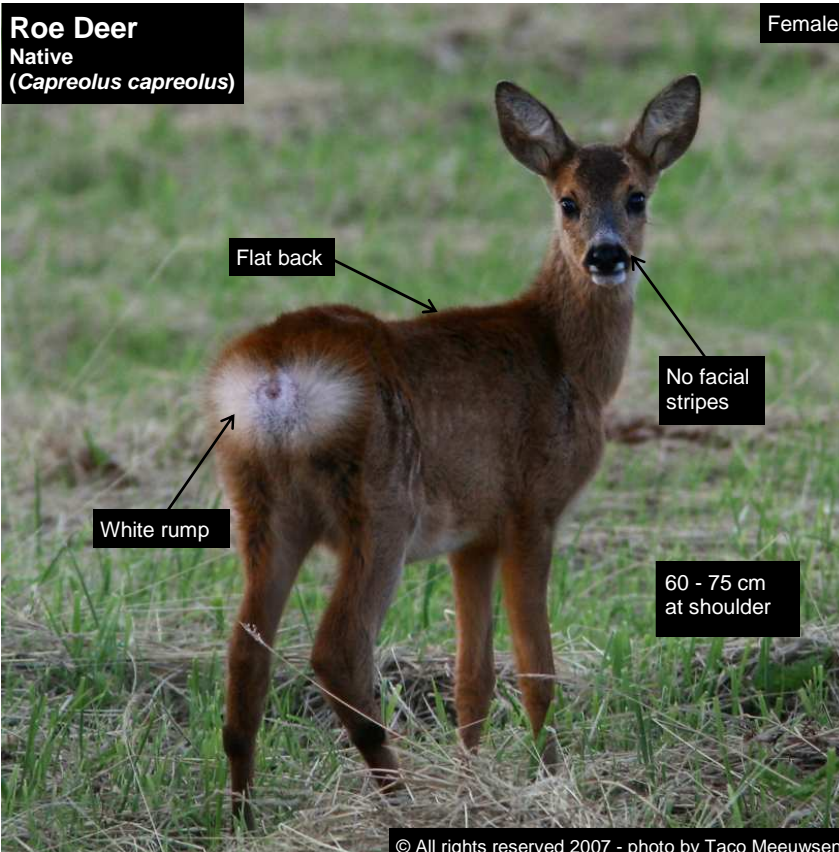
Dark rump, white underside to tail

Approximately to scale

Chinese water deer could be confused with Alsatian dogs due to their similar size and erect ears, especially when seen from a distance or within woodland understorey.

Roe Deer
Native
(*Capreolus capreolus*)

Female



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References and further reading:

Cooke, A and Farrell, L (1998) "*Chinese water deer.*" The Mammal Society and The British Deer Society

Harris, S and Yalden, D W (eds) (2008) "*Mammals of the British Isles.*" The Mammal Society

Ward, A I (2005) "*Expanding ranges of wild and feral deer in Great Britain*" *Mammal Review* 35(2) 165-173