

WHITE-TAILED DEER

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rock Creek Park
<http://www.nps.gov/rocr/>



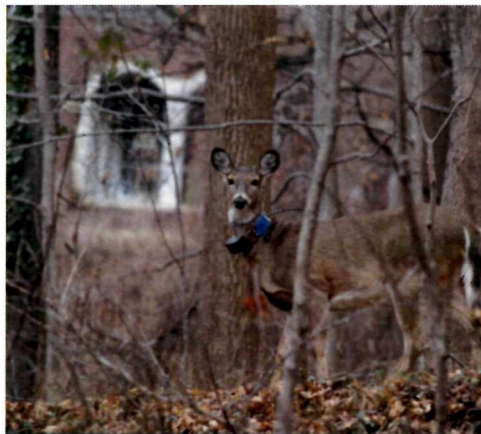
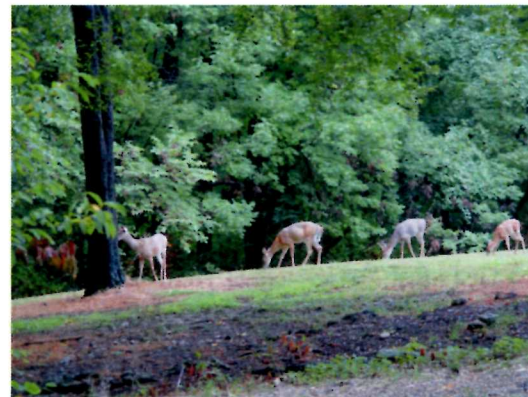
OVERVIEW



White-tailed deer were first observed in Rock Creek Park in the middle 1980's. In the 1990's deer populations increased, and today seeing deer is quite common. The current deer population in Rock Creek Park is estimated to be around 200 animals. Deer overpopulation is a concern in Rock Creek Park and throughout the metropolitan area.

Management Action

The National Park Service has been monitoring the deer population in Rock Creek Park and in other national parks in the National Capital Region. Monitoring has included spotlight counts for population trend data, distance sampling for deer density estimates, road kill records, vegetation plots for browse



measurements and deer exclosures. These data confirm substantial growth in population numbers both in Rock Creek Park and in the surrounding region. This gave us the information we needed to receive the funding to begin a deer management plan/environmental impact study. The National Environmental Policy Act requires all federal agencies to conduct environmental impact studies

before any major federal action can be taken. We anticipate that the study will begin some time this year.

How Can I Keep Deer Out of My Yard?



Park neighbors can take steps to “deer proof” their properties. Fences are the most effective method to keep deer out of your yard. Fences should be at least 8 feet tall. Solid wood fences are better than chain link fences because deer cannot see what is on the other side. Repellents and scare devices can be effective in some situations. Search engines on the internet can provide multiple product suggestions.

Deer enjoy landscaping plants flowers and gardens in neighborhood yards. Remove vegetation that deer prefer such as English ivy, periwinkle and Chinese ivy. Install deer resistant plants such as American holly, jack-in-the-pulpit and blueberry elder.

Changing your planting palette may deter deer from entering your yard or garden. Individual plants can be protected by netting and wire cages. A list of plants that deer prefer and deer resistant plants can be obtained from the Rock Creek Park Nature Center and Planetarium by calling (202) 895-6070 or on line at www.nps.gov/rocr.side.

