

## Tails Matter When You're Talking About Deer

The whitetail deer of North America is instantly recognized by the flash of the erect fluffy white tail and white rump that indicate the flight response of this species of deer. It's almost comical to watch these deer in flight with those white tails flagging their every move in open country. There are some 30 subspecies of whitetail deer scattered all over the United States and southern Canada.



A deer species related to whitetails is known as mule deer because this species' large ears reminded early settlers of a mule's ears. The mule deer's large ears distinguish it from other deer species. Mule deer are found in the western United States and Canada in steep, rocky, sparsely vegetated open areas, and in prairie or desert regions. Mule deer are gray-brown in color and feature whitish legs and a white patch on the rump.



The tail of the mule deer is white with a black tip and is generally kept in a drooped position. Unlike a whitetail deer, a mule deer never flags its tail. The mule deer's antlers branch into two equal forks and the rack of the buck (male deer) is usually smaller than a whitetail's. The mule deer has an unusual bounding leap that can move the animal nearly 25 feet at a time over rough terrain. This movement that uses all four feet simultaneously is called stotting and allows a mule deer run at about 45 miles per hour. With their stiff-legged bounce, it seems like they are on springs.