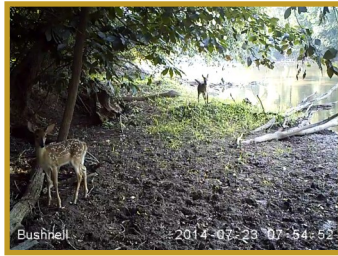


SCIENCE in the Park



White-tailed Deer

Odocoileus virginianus

Family: Cervidae

Herbivore / Prey

Native to Virginia

The white-tailed deer is a large ungulate found throughout the James River Park System. Subsisting on a variety of plants, the white-tailed deer lives in heavily forested areas with dense undergrowth for camouflage and food purposes. They are easily startled and move very quietly, so the likelihood of getting close to these fascinating creatures is very low.

Fun Facts

- When a white-tailed deer spots danger, it will stick its white tail up in the air to alert other deer.
- Thanks to their digestive system, white-tailed deer can eat mushrooms and poison ivy that would make a human sick.
- The white-tailed deer is a ruminant, meaning that it has a four-chambered stomach. Each chamber handles a food at a different stage of breakdown, which allows them to quickly eat a variety of plants and digest them later in a safer place.
- When first born, deer are known as fawns and have white spots covering their brown backs. These appear as sun-flecks in the light and help them to blend into the environment and hide from any potential predators.