

SEQUOIA NATURE GUIDE SERVICEHABITS OF MULE DEER IN SEQUOIA

Probably no other area of equal size within the United States shelters more of the California Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus californicus*) than does the Sequoia National Park. This park contains seven townships of land, 252 square miles, and a conservative estimate of the number of deer contained is over 3,000.

The deer spend their winters in the lower brush areas of the park but migrate in the summer to higher lands. Many deer come to Giant Forest Camp where amid the campers they live and rear their young during the entire summer season. Fawns born on the campgrounds, among human beings, seem dissatisfied elsewhere and return to the place of their birth from year to year. The deer usually put in their appearance at the camp in advance of the visitors whom they always seem glad to meet in the spring. When the tourist camps are vacated late in the autumn the deer do not tarry long at Giant Forest although through late October and November they may often be seen marching solemnly in columns of six or a dozen through the deserted camp grounds as if mutely protesting against the lack of scraps from campers' tables.

Students of the Nature Guide Service and visitors to the park were given an opportunity to study these animals this season in the Giant Forest camp as never before. There were animals of practically every size and age present and they were studied at the following places: Superintendent's residence - large 4 point buck; Commissioner's residence - two does with four fawns; Government kitchen - 3 point buck; Parker Group - one doe and fawn; Milk Station - four 5 point and one 4 point bucks; Recreation grounds - three 3 point bucks, a doe and two fawns; Government stables - one 5 and one 4 point bucks; Linder camp - four yearling does; Moro lunch grounds - five yearling does and one spike buck; Lodgepole - one 5 and two 3 point bucks, five does and seven fawns; Wolverton - three does, five fawns and two 3 point bucks.

The California Mule Deer is foremost of the species for intelligence. They respond quickly to kind treatment and are equally quick to detect harshness or threatened danger. When once their wild instinct of nervousness is overcome they seem to have a profound liking for and confidence in mankind and enjoy association with two-legged friends.

The fawning season for this locality is June and July. Twins and triplets are frequent.

Those who have seen the noble antlered bucks in picturesque Round Mdw. at Giant Forest or who have watched the little spotted fawns follow the does through the forest glades are loth to hunt the deer when the season opens on Sept. 1st. Many a sportsman who salted deer at Giant Forest or watched the soft eyed animals munching melon rind, bread or other table scraps has resolved to hunt thereafter with the camera rather than the rifle. Yet in past seasons, there have been "sportsmen" who, when the season opens, would lie in wait just outside the park boundary; waiting, perhaps, until the buck that a little child petted and fed during the summer, might cross the line from the sanctuary of the Sequoia Park to the danger zone outside. Fortunately, public opinion in the San Joaquin Valley is rallying to the support of the National Park Service so that the park rangers find less difficulty every year in preserving for the pleasure of all the people the magnificent herds of deer in the Sequoia National Park.