

The Concern of Deer Predators

People are often concerned that deer in their yards might attract other animals, because of the presence of deer feces and the presence of deer themselves as a prey animal. While both situations are possible, neither is likely.

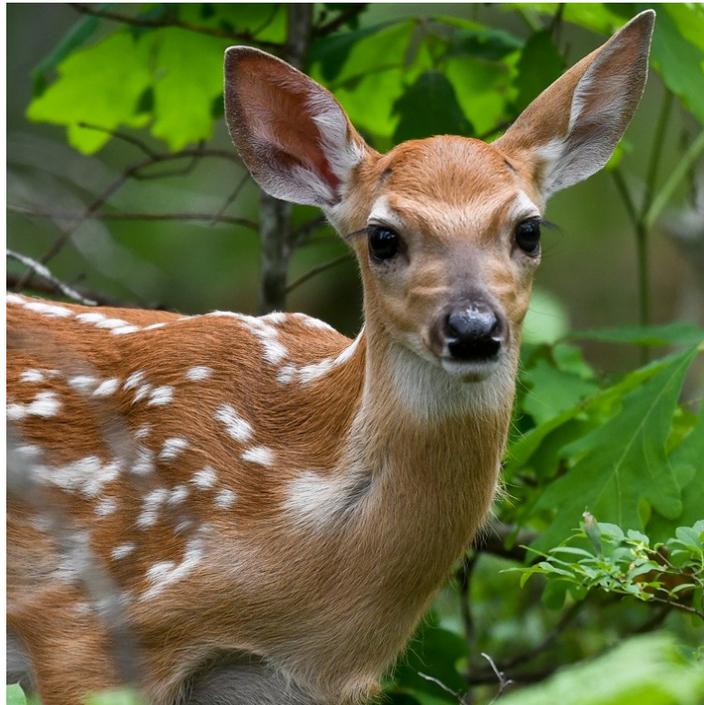
The major predators of white-tailed deer include coyotes, black bears, bobcats, foxes, grizzly bears, mountain lions, and wolves. Many of these, such as foxes and bobcats, prey primarily on fawns. Others, such as mountain lions and wolves, prey heavily on adult deer and may have a significant effect on controlling deer populations.

Of these, only coyotes are common in West Seneca. However, coyotes are unlikely to be strongly attracted to suburban yards by the presence of deer in most cases.

Many people in suburban areas report the birth of fawns in their yards. One likely explanation for this is something called the "human shield effect." This is the idea that because many large carnivores actively avoid humans, prey species may use these spaces to provide a safe refuge

Deer thrive in what are known as "edge" habitats. These are places where natural habitats meet human-dominated landscapes.

Many studies on deer have focused on understanding their ecology and behavior in suburban landscapes. Research suggests that deer are most likely to utilize residential areas in winter and spring, when natural food sources may be limited, and often retreat to areas farther from people during the summer when young fawns are present. Food sources found in suburban neighborhoods, such as birdfeeders and garden plants, may increase deer visitation to these areas



Life of a Deer



White-tailed deer are a common sight in urban and suburban neighborhoods. They are well-known as an "urban-adapted" species - one that is able to exploit resources in human occupied areas, but is not entirely dependent on humans for their survival (Rodewald and Gehrt, 2014).

An individual deer can consume 4 to 8 pounds of flowers, shrubs, and seedlings a day. A large herd of deer can dramatically impact the plants they feed on. There are many native and non-native species that they tend to avoid. The result of this is that certain species - often native species that deer prefer - are greatly reduced, and plant communities become dominated by the few species that deer avoid eating (which are often invasive).

Diseases Associated with Deer

While deer are known to carry a number of diseases, the majority of these are not passed on to humans. Here are several diseases that are commonly asked about when concerning deer.

Lyme Disease - Transmissible to humans and pets through ticks

Chronic Wasting Disease - Not believed to be transmissible to humans or pets

Leptospirosis - Transmissible to dogs Mange/Scabies - Transmissible primarily to pets (typically from foxes and coyotes)

Covid-19 - Transmissibility unknown; risk thought to be low

Escherichia coli - transmissible through droppings.

How we Should Handle the Overpopulation of Deer



When faced with issues of human-deer conflict, many people feel it is important to look for a way to manage the situation while preserving the lives of the local deer. In the West Seneca town survey (2021), approximately 1/4 of residents opposed lethal means of deer control. Here are some small things our town can do to help with the issue of deer overpopulation

There are many methods that may be employed to reduce deer-vehicle collisions: Reduce speed limits in deer crossing areas, Improve lighting along roadways to increase visibility, Manage habitat along roadways to improve visibility, such as cutting back tall vegetation or creating a wide border that is mowed along the sides of the road, Conduct education to raise awareness of the risks of deer- vehicle collisions during the rut season to increase driver caution during dawn and dusk time periods.

This information was found here <https://sites.google.com/view/west-seneca-deer-faqs/home> with the permission of Cynn timer Gaash from the deer committee.

How to Properly Treat Deer.

Intentional feeding of wild deer was first made illegal in New York State in 2002. Initially, the primary reason for this regulation was to avoid the large congregations of deer that may be found at feeding sites to reduce the risk of disease transmission. Since that time, additional regulations have been passed to clarify existing deer feeding laws, and reduce human-deer conflict.

Despite the enjoyment many people get from feeding deer, it is important to understand that these laws are put in place to protect people, deer, and other wildlife species.

Many people feed leftover food scraps to wildlife as a way to reduce food waste. As well-intentioned as this may be, human food is rarely good for wildlife, and feeding animals can lead to a variety of health and behavioral issues

Food scraps and yard waste together currently make up more than 30 percent of what we throw away, and could be composted instead. Making compost keeps these materials out of landfills and provides an effective way to fertilize your gardens