

REINDEER

RANGIFER TARANDUS

DISTINGUISHING MARKS:

In the summertime brownish grey, in winter back is grey and stomach white. Fur is bushy, wire-haired. Reindeer has a patch of white fur beneath its tail, which is called a flag. Large cloven hooves. Both sexes have horns. Length of the body 180-220 cm, weight 60-180 kg, males appreciably bigger than females.

PREVALENCE:

In the mountain area and forests of Lapland.

HABITAT:

In wooded terrain, during winter especially on dry moors that grow lichen and moss and on the treeless plain (tundra).

LIFE STYLES:

Reindeer changes its living circle according to food availability. Social animals in the summertime, when females with fawns live in the thousand headed docks. Male reindeers live alone or in small flocks. Social hierarchy is important among males.

NOURISHMENT:

In the summer grass and herbs, in winter main nourishment is lichen, which is dug under snow.

BREEDING:

Copulates in October- November, mating lasts only one day at a time. Gestation lasts about 7 months. Reindeer breeds usually only one fawn. They follow their mothers until the new fawn is born.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE POPULATION:

7000 years ago in the Siberia caribou possibly passed to reindeer. Lapps developed extensive nomadic reindeer care in the late Middle Ages and spread they way of living to the west of Lapland in the 16th century. At its highest rate, the number of the reindeer was in 1970s (195000 over 1-year-old animals), but later the amount of reindeer has been obliged to decline because of the pasture scarcity.

HUNTING:

Annually 40-60 thousand reindeer are slaughtered, from which gathers meat about 1,5 million kg.

