



Whitetail Buck showing an exceptionally reddish color fur. (Submitted photo/Colorado Parks and Wildlife)

Whitetail and mule Deer In Colorado

When we talk about deer in Colorado, most people speak of the mule deer. Colorado is a haven for mule deer, or muleys, as they are affectionately known, with estimated populations exceeding 425,000.

There is another deer that calls Colorado home, and its numbers have been on the rise in recent years. Approximately 75,000 whitetail deer have made Colorado their home, and it is doing well here. Most of the deer populations are in eastern Colorado, on the plains and in the river bottoms.

There was a time when the only deer you saw in the river bottoms was the whitetail, but estimates now show a different story. Aerial surveys by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) show about a 50/50 mix in the river bottoms of whitetails and mule deer.

The whitetail will vary in color from a red/brown in the summer to a grayish brown during the winter. The change in color allows them to blend in with their habitat. They have white fur around their eyes, muzzle, throat, underbelly, and under their tail. When startled, a deer will raise their tail and display the large white tail section, sometimes called a flag.

Somewhat smaller than a mule deer in size, the bucks can weigh up to 300 pounds and the does usually top out at 200 pounds. The bucks have antlers that shed in the winter, and grow a new set in the spring. The antlers can grow as much as an inch



Tips from the Posse  
By Mark Rackay

per day.

A deer’s eyes have more rods than cones, making them have very sharp night vision, but limited day vision. The colors green, orange and red appear as different shades of gray to them. Hunters wear blaze orange safety vests and it appears gray to the deer.

A whitetail deer can run at speeds up to 40 miles an hour and can swim at speeds of 13 miles an hour. They have a long stride when running, up to 25 feet. Unlike mule deer, when startled, they take off for places unknown. Mule deer have a tendency to stand still while, perhaps in hopes that they are not seen by what startled them.

Whitetail deer are a browsing animal, feeding on over 600 types of plants. Crops, like soybeans, corn and alfalfa, are a favorite food, which is why they do so well on the plains. A mature deer can eat 8 to 15 pounds of food a day. An adult will remain bedded about 65 percent of the time, getting up to feed about five times a day.

The whitetail fawn is an incredible creature. A newborn can stand in 20 minutes, walk within 24 hours, and fully outrun a man within five days.

I had an opportunity to hunt whitetail this past fall, on a whitetail only tag issued by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife. The outfitter I went with was J and D Outfitters, run by Doyle Worbington. Doyle has been hunting Eastern Colorado since early 2000 and has seen a few changes.

“When people think of whitetail deer, they never think of Colorado. Most folks look to Iowa, Kansas or Illinois. For really big deer, everyone heads to Canada. Because of that, Colorado is a sleeper for trophy sized deer,” said Doyle.

“We have always had whitetail out there, but

their quality is much better now. It seems like there are more fully mature sized deer than ever before.”

CPW estimates the deer population on the eastern plains in the Northeast region will exceed 60,000, and half of which are whitetail. Since the two species cohabitate areas together, there have been some behavior changes in the whitetail population. Whitetail bucks have begun breeding mule deer does during the rut.

“I saw a whitetail buck run a very large mule deer buck, off of his harem of 9 does during the rut this year,” Worbington told me.

The whitetail deer is more territorial than the mule deer, and much more aggressive. This aggressiveness is what is allowing the cross breeding, as mule deer bucks usually back down from the whitetail.

This aggressiveness is probably why the ranchers don’t like the whitetail bucks. There have been many instances where a whitetail will run cattle off of winter feed, so the deer can have it.

We have some whitetails here on our side of the state as well. Occasionally, one is seen in the river bottoms of the Uncompahgre, adjacent to the farm fields. I personally saw one a couple years ago near Ida Road.

It seems that the whitetail population in Colorado is doing well, and I hope it continues to grow. They are a beautiful animal and make the woods seem a little bit fuller when you see one.

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These destinations aren’t ‘hot,’ but they’re ‘cool’

By STEVE STEPHENS  
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This chilly season is also traditionally time for “What’s hot?” lists for the new year: “Hot” people, “hot” events;and, in the world of travel, “hot” places to visit.

But wait just a minute. Not everyone is interested in visiting the latest trendy and crowded vacation spot. Some travelers, this one included, sometimes prefer to explore the undiscovered places, the forgotten destinations, the off-the-beaten-trail getaways.

So what are some interesting and cool, but not “hot,” places thata travelers should consider in 2018?

**Budapest**

Although it’s one of the biggest cities in Europe, the capital of Hungary is often off the radar of American travelers, said Ike Reynolds of Reynolds Travel in the Polaris area.

“People who visit Budapest just love it,” Reynolds said. “It’s a different world.”

“There are an endless amount of things to explore” in Budapest and Hungary, said George Kun of George Kun Travel in Dublin.

“It’s very safe, English is spoken quite a bit, it has a wonderful history, and the value for the dollar is still good there,” Kun said.

“And a lot of people don’t know that Hungary has an incredible wine region,” he added.

“I’ve taken four groups of 200 people each, and almost every one said something like, ‘I would have never picked this destination before, but now I can’t believe how great it was.’”

“I would be comfortable saying (Budapest) would blow you away and exceed your expectations,” Kun said.

**Portugal**

“Portugal is very hungry for tourists and has been investing a lot of dollars to get people’s attention,” Kun said.

Highlights of the country include not only the capital, Lisbon, but also less-well-known stops such as the Atlantic coast resort town of Estoril, Kun said.

“Estoril has all the bells and whistles that a lot of tourists would look for,” he said.

“The coast of Portugal is beautiful to explore, and Estoril is wonderfully located with great hotels, a big casino

for those who like that action, and wonderful beaches.

**Dominica**

The tiny island in the chain between the Virgin Islands and Venezuela is often overlooked by Caribbean travelers, but that’s probably a mistake, said Elizabeth Blount McCormick of Uniglobe Travel Designers in German Village.

“Hotels there are very affordable,” McCormick said.

“Dominica is not overly developed,” she said. “It’s a very good destination for adventurous types who enjoy hiking and nature” and aren’t so concerned about nightlife or luxury accommodations, she said.

Some sites on Dominica were damaged by Hurricane Maria, but the island is making a quick recovery, according to its tourism office.

Often considered the most natural of the Caribbean islands, Dominica has lush rainforests, colorful tropical reefs and even a boiling lake, naturally heated by volcanic action.

**Canadian Rockies**

“I’m a huge fan of the region around Calgary, Banff, Lake

Louise, Jasper,” Reynolds said.

“Sometimes I think the Canadian Rockies are even more attractive than the U.S. Rockies. Every turn you take brings you to a picture stop.”

And although the American dollar and Canadian dollar were equal in value in 2013, today \$1 American buys more than \$1.25 Canadian.

“That’s a big difference,” Reynolds said. “Canadian travel is a bargain right now.”

Helen Mount, a travel agent with AAA Ohio in Westerville, suggested a Canadian Rockies rail tour.

“We have people starting in Banff, going by rail to Vancouver and then getting on an Alaska cruise,” Mount said.

“Talk about beauty!”

And when you return, your Rocky Mountain stories will be different from those of your American friends, Reynolds said.

**Napa Valley**

Most travelers know about the legendary wine region of California, but many probably fear that recent fires have shut down the wineries or marred the valley’s beauty.

Not so, Kun said.

“The Wine Country fires

were so much in the news that people are uncertain what they’d find there now,” he said.

“It’s going to take time for word to get out that it’s business as usual.”

In the meantime, informed visitors might benefit from deals and discounts from businesses looking to lure back reluctant tourists, Kun said.

“If you’re looking for a place in the good ole U.S.A., the California wine regions are still delightful,” he said.

**Breckenridge, Colorado**

“People think about this part of Colorado, and they usually think about snow,” Mount said.

“They don’t think of it as a summer destination, but Breckenridge is a beautiful, charming town all year round,” she said.

“There’s the beautiful mountain scenery, and you’ve got hiking and mountain biking and all the summertime outdoor sports,” she said.

And accommodations are often cheaper in the summer in traditional ski destinations such as Breckenridge, she added.

