

RANGE:

Found throughout Scandinavia, Finland, Russia, in North America on Greenland, Canada and Alaska.

HABITAT:

Live in Arctic tundra and boreal forest.

SIZE:

Weight: Female 60 kg to 170 kg (132 lbs. to 370 lbs.) Male up to 300 kg (700 lbs.)

Height: 34 to 55 inches (97 to 140 cm)

Length: 150 to 230 cm (60 to 90 in)

LIFE EXPECTANCY:

Females 15 years, Males typically live less than 10 years in the wild.

REPRODUCTION:

- Gestation period is approximately 228 days, in May or June. Twinning has been reported but is very rare.
- Breeding begins in September/October.
- Female reindeer usually reach reproductive maturity as yearlings and may stay productive up until 15 years of age.
- Bulls don't breed until they're three years old.

DIET:

Wild: Sedges, grasses, leaves of willows and birches. In the winter when food is scarce they mainly eat lichen (a symbiotic relationship between algae and fungi). They also eat voles, lemmings, birds and bird eggs.

Zoo: grain, beet pulp, and alfalfa hay

BEHAVIOR:

- A caribou calf can run within 90 minutes of its birth.
- The primary function of the antlers is for gaining social dominance. The bulls use them to fight for cows in the autumn.
- Reindeer and caribou are the only deer where males, females, and calves produce antlers.
- Bulls drop their antlers in January, and pregnant cows and calves retain theirs until the spring.
- In the wild, caribou migrate in large herds over great distances. They can traverse more than 5,000 kilometers in one year, with extensive migrations in the spring and fall.

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- There are fundamental differences between reindeer and caribou. Reindeer are domesticated caribou. Reindeer are shorter, stouter, and tend to be lighter in color.
- Reindeer and caribou hooves are broad and flexible which enable them to walk on snow. The broad hooves also help in swimming and digging.
- Caribou are a source of food, clothing, shelter, and tools for the Inuit people.
- Natural threats to caribou include avalanches, wolves, wolverines, lynx and bears.
- Reindeer and caribou hairs trap air providing them with excellent insulation. These hairs also help to keep them buoyant while swimming.

STATUS:

Common

REFERENCES:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reindeer>

<http://reindeer.salrm.uaf.edu/html/reinFAQ.html>

<http://animal.discovery.com/guides/mammals/habitat/tundra/caribou.html>

http://www.mnh.si.edu/arctic/html/caribou_reindeer.html

