

# Outdoor Recreation

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# Outdoor Education

## **Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus hemionus*)**

Although we take deer populations for granted, Rocky Mountain mule deer reached a low point of about 41,000 in New Mexico in 1926. Laws governing game animals and fish were passed by the Territorial Legislature in 1897, but were hard to enforce. No legal hunting for deer, elk, antelope or bighorn sheep was allowed for five years early in this century. State laws and public attitudes regarding wildlife progressed to allow a comeback of deer herds. Today, there are approximately 90,000 mule deer in our state.

Their large ears, which give them the 'mule' nickname, are gray outside and whitish inside. The winter coat is brown to gray, with white hair under the jaw and down the throat. There is a white rump patch around the tail, and the tip of the tail is black. Summer coats are reddish, as are the coats of fawns, which also have white spots on the sides and back for the first two or three months. Fawns weigh about six pounds at birth and grow to 65 pounds by their first autumn.



**Learning About New Mexico's Wildlife  
Mule Deer**



New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

[www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us)

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