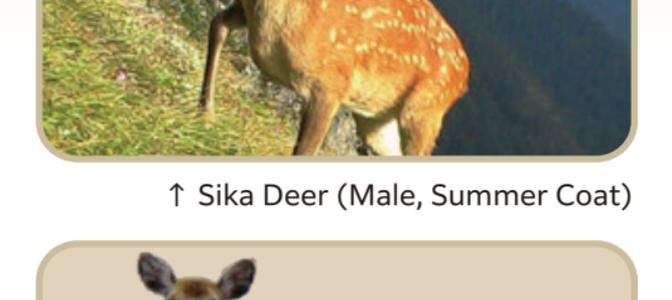


Invasion of Sika Deer in Mt. Hakusan

In recent years, populations of sika deer have been increasing nationwide, leading to problems such as crop damage, forest degradation, and a growing presence in urban areas.

In addition to agricultural and forestry losses and risks of personal injury, "ecological damage" has become a major concern in national parks.

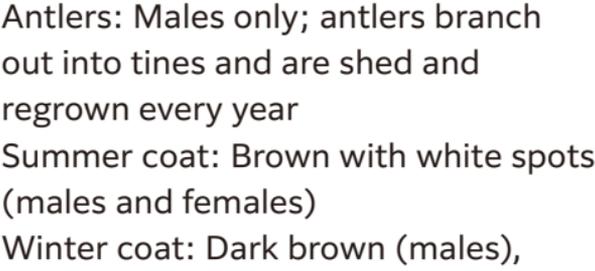


What is the "Sika Deer?"

Basic Information



↑ Sika Deer (Male, Summer Coat)



↑ Sika Deer (Female, Winter Coat)

Length: 130–160 cm

Shoulder height: 80–90 cm

Weight: 40–90 kg

Antlers: Males only; antlers branch out into tines and are shed and regrown every year

Summer coat: Brown with white spots (males and females)

Winter coat: Dark brown (males), grayish-brown (females)

Lifespan: 10–12 years (males), 15–20 years (females)

Rump: White

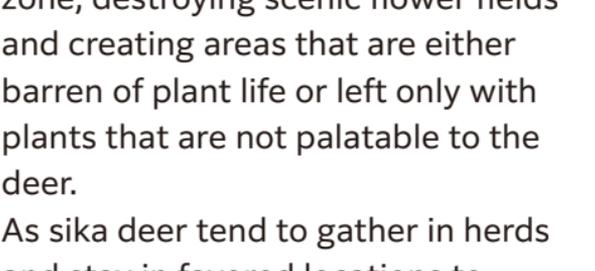
Reproduction: Adulthood is reached at about 1.5 years, with females bearing young from the age of 2 years.

Does typically give birth to one fawn annually, and it is said there is no decline in this rate even as the does age.

Diet: Primarily grasses. Deer eat most types of plants, including leaves, fruits, bark, bamboo grass, and fallen leaves. Reports indicate that females can consume over 5 kg of food per day.

Characteristics: Deer gather in herds without establishing any clear territory. They tend to stay in favored locations for extended periods, sometimes consuming all vegetation in alpine flower fields.

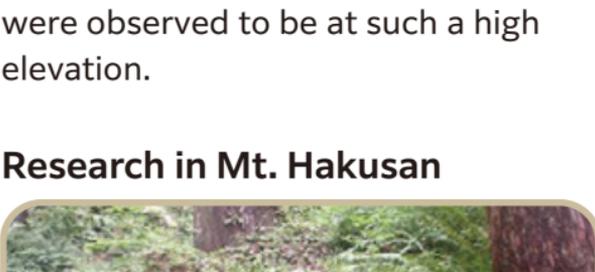
Japanese Serow



Designated a "National Special Natural Monument," this animal is not related to the sika deer. Both males and females have non-branching horns, and their rumps are not white.

Impact of Rising Sika Deer in Mt. Hakusan?

Sika deer's impact on alpine zone



↑ Inside the deer fence, many flowers bloom, while outside there are only a few.

In the Minami Alps, which like Mt. Hakusan is an alpine National Park, increasing numbers of sika deer have been consuming plants in the alpine zone, destroying scenic flower fields and creating areas that are either barren of plant life or left only with plants that are not palatable to the deer.

As sika deer tend to gather in herds and stay in favored locations to forage, their increasing numbers can quickly impact the local vegetation. Areas that have been stripped of vegetation are more prone to soil erosion from rain, reducing the mountain's capacity to prevent landslides. In addition, restoring damaged flower fields is extremely difficult, especially those with rare alpine plant colonies.

What's Happening at Mt. Hakusan?

Sika deer appear in the alpine zone

In 2013, sika deer were spotted at an elevation of about 2,100 m on the Nanryu-do trail of Mt. Hakusan, attracting widespread attention. Although their presence had previously been confirmed around Mt. Hakusan, this was the first time they were observed to be at such a high elevation.

Research in Mt. Hakusan

↑ Image of sika deer captured by sensor camera in Hakusan National Park

In 2013, the Ministry of the Environment began a survey using sensor cameras in high-elevation areas, along with a survey of lower-elevation areas begun in 2016. The Ministry is currently collaborating in surveys with the Ishikawa Prefectural government and the Forestry Agency.

In addition, surveys of vegetation were conducted with the aim of selecting alpine plant colonies for priority protection to enable a rapid response in the event the population of sika deer further increases and spreads to Mt. Hakusan's alpine zone.

