Name _____

The Life Cycle of a Deer: Reproduction and Care

Deer have a fascinating way of reproducing and caring for their young. During the fall, deer enter a season called the rut. This is the mating season when male deer, called bucks, compete for the attention of female deer, called does. Bucks often fight by locking antlers to show their strength and win the right to mate with the females.

Once mating occurs, the female deer carries her baby, called a fawn, in her womb during a period called gestation. The gestation period for a deer lasts about six to seven months, depending on the species. Most fawns are born in late spring or early summer when food is plentiful.

A female deer usually gives birth to one or two fawns at a time. Right after birth, the fawn has white spots on its fur, which help it blend into the surroundings and stay hidden from predators. The mother deer stays close to her fawn, keeping it safe and nursing it with milk. The fawn relies on its mother for food and protection during the first few months of its life.

Fawns learn important survival skills from their mothers, such as how to find food and avoid danger. After about three to four months, fawns start eating plants and can follow their mothers more actively. By the time they are six months old, most fawns are weaned off milk and can graze on their own.

Deer reproduction and care for their young help ensure the survival of their species. The bond between a mother and her fawn shows how animals care for their offspring in the wild.

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