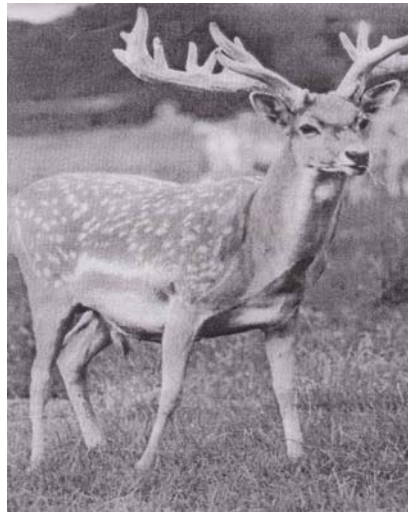


MESOPOTAMIAN FALLOW DEER



Dama dama mesopotamica
(also known as Persian Fallow or Meso Deer)

STATUS

- Critically Endangered in their native habitat in war ravaged countries.
- The total population in reserves and free range in 2001 was approximately 290 animals.
- They have been heavily poached for trophies and venison (meat).
- They are under world **CITES** (Convention for International Trade of Endangered Species) laws for protection – they cannot be legally hunted or used for venison.
- An international stud book was formed for Mesopotamian Deer in 1991.

ORIGIN

- Indigenous to Iran (formerly Persia), Israel, Jordan and Lebanon.
- The antler format of a Persian Fallow buck were depicted on a relief in the palace of Ashurnasirpal II Nimrud – c. 9th Century BC.

HABITAT

- These deer are found in grassland and open woodland.
- In Iran 60km south of Kermanshah in 1991 the free ranging herd's estimated number was 150 pure animals, the last remaining viable wild herd left in their native habitat. All the remaining animals are in Zoos or Parks throughout the world.

DESCRIPTION

- Mesopotamian deer are larger than the European fallow deer at 95-110cm and 80-120kg.
- Each herd has a dominant buck.
- Spikers and immature bucks form bachelor groups.



POINTS OF INTEREST

- Bucks mark trees with a scent gland, which is just below their eye. They also ring bark young trees to mark out their territory.
- Antlers are shed each year, and start growing again immediately. Antlers are the fastest growing animal tissue in the world.
- The antlers are covered with a fur-covered skin called velvet, which protects it while it is growing. They take approximately 110 days to be fully grown and calcified into solid bone. Each year antlers are larger till the buck is 8 years of age and fully mature.
- Bucks have a mating period (rutting) of approximately 6 weeks in autumn
- Most fawns are born at the start of summer.
- Mesopotamian Deer can leap over 2 metres if threatened.