

TEACHER GUIDE: Letter 5: Mule Deer

CONCEPTS COVERED

Santa Rosa Plateau

Animals

Diversity

Location

Plants

Weather

Representative animal—mule deer

Characteristics

Defense

Enemies

Food

Habitat

Herbivores

Animal signs

Scat

Tracks

Predators

Controlling animal populations

Reserve history

Establishing the Reserve

Grizzly bears

Luiseno Indians--hunting

Staying safe on the Reserve

What to do if you meet a mountain lion

CONTENT VOCABULARY

- ancestor—a person or animal from whom one is descended
- ancient—very old; belonging to a time long ago
- antlers—the two, large, branching, bony structures on the head of a deer, moose, or elk
- digest—to break down food in the body so that it can be absorbed into the blood and used by the body
- fawn—a baby deer
- herbivore—an animal that only feeds on plants

- mammal—a warm-blooded animal with fur or hair on its skin and a skeleton inside its body;
- females produce milk to feed their young; e.g. dogs, cows, elephants, mice, whales, humans
- mountain lion (also cougar, puma, panther)—large (100 pounds) carnivorous cat
- mule deer—large herbivore related to moose and elk
- sage—any of various plants related to mint having grayish-green, spicy-smelling leaves; sometimes used as flavoring in cooking
- scat—leftovers following digestion; poop
- survivor—one who continues to live or exist following an accident or disaster that caused the death
- of others
- ticks—small animals related to a spider that attach themselves to people and other animals and suck
- their blood: are known to spread disease

OTHER WORDS TO KNOW

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|------------|-----------|----------|-------------------------|
| ancestors' | footprint | hoof | Santa Ana Mountains |
| antelope | disease | zoo | California grizzly bear |
| camouflage | habitat | mastodon | |

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Why is the Santa Rosa Plateau a good place for animals to live?
- How did mule deer get their name?
- What are two new things you learned about a mule deer?
- How do deer defend themselves?
- How can you tell if an animal is a mammal?
- Why would you be lucky to see an animal when you visit the Reserve on your field trip?
- If you don't see any animals, what signs might they have left to tell you they are there?
- When Native Americans went hunting, what did they do to camouflage themselves?
- Describe how a mountain lion hunts.
- Give one reason why predators are important.
- You are hiking with your family and you see a mountain lion. What should you do?
- Why is it important to have places like the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

Have students draw a picture of a carnivore, an herbivore, and an omnivore. Include the food they might eat in the drawing. Label their pictures (Remind students: no blood or gore.)

Play "Oh Deer" from Project Wild