



Guide to Hunting in Germany

08d – ROE DEER (*REHWILD*)



Breeding season (<i>Blattzeit</i>):	mid July – mid August (<i>Blattzeit</i> begins with very warm weather)
Gestation period:	dormant until December, total 40-42 weeks
Young are born:	May, June (one or two)
Teeth:	32
Males:	<i>Bock, Rehbock, Sechser, Gabler, Speißer, Knopfbock</i>
Females:	<i>Geiss, Ricke</i>
Yearling female:	<i>Schmalreh</i>
Young female:	<i>Kitz</i>
Young male:	<i>Bockkitz</i>
Herd:	<i>Sprung</i>

From all wild cloven hoofed game living in Eurasia, the roe deer is the most numerous and most widespread species.

This small deer is present roughly from the Mediterranean in the South to Scandinavia in the North, and from the British islands in the west to the Ural mountains in the East.

It is missing in Ireland, but present in Turkey. Within this area, Roe deer inhabit nearly all land habitats – dense forests as well as open agricultural country, plains as well as mountains up to the tree line, bogs and swamps, bush and weed. Even villages and cities may sometimes serve as home for this highly adaptable species.



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An adult buck may reach a length 3 ½ feet with a shoulder height of over 30 inches and a weight of 35 to 45 pounds.

Roe deer vary in color according to the season. From May to October the roe deer's coat is a bright reddish-brown. In the winter the coat has longer hair that is grayish-brown.

The snout is black and has a white spot (*Muffelfleck*) that increases in size with advancing age, so that old bucks have an ice-gray face.

Around the rear is a white spot called the *Spiegel*. The *Spiegel* on male roe deer is kidney shaped, and heart shaped on female roe deer.

Newborn fawns have white spots that disappear after 6 months when they get their first winter coats.

Roe deer with completely white or black coats may be found in some areas.



Rehgeiss with two Kitz



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When alarmed, roe deer –both genders– bark, very much like a dog. Primarily, a *Rehbock* will grunt and bark during the rut (*Blattzeit*) to attract a *Geiss*

From *Geiss*, one may hear a high whistle-like “pheep” sound (*fiepen*), to attract bucks during *Blattzeit* and when making their *Kitz* follow.

Also, *Kitz* may produce the same “pheep” sound, when in danger of being caught by a fox or other predator.

Roe Deer hear and smell very well. They have glands between their hooves, on the rear legs shortly below their ankle, through which they leave secretions – obviously as a means of communication between each other.

Bucks also have glands at the forehead, just below the antlers, which play an important role in marking a territory. During *Blattzeit*, a buck may follow the track of a female with lowered head like a hunting dog.

Roe deer sight does not seem to be well developed. Roe Deer cannot distinguish colors, but will quickly notice movement.



Rehkitz



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Rehbock grow antlers which they shed every year in autumn, to prepare for another set that will grow during the winter and early spring. During growth, the antlers are covered with a velvet-like skin. Blood vessels beneath the skin transport minerals to build the antlers, which are made of real bone. In spring, the antlers become hard and the buck rubs the velvet-like skin away (*fegen*).

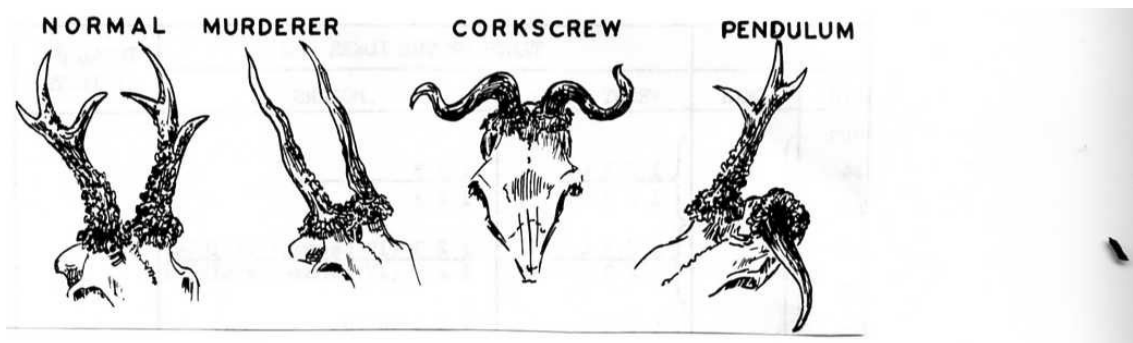
Male fawns start growing little knob-like antlers (*Knöpfen*) in August, and these are shed until February.

The almost 1 year old buck will now grow his yearling antlers, which may be spikes (*Spiesser*), four-point forks (*Gabler*) or sometimes already six points (*Sechser*).

During the following years the antlers will grow in size and weight, a buck will reach the peak of antler development at an age of five to six years.

Antlers with more than the usual six points are caused by injuries during rubbing the velvet, car accidents and sometimes injuries to the testicles.

Bucks with injuries to their testicles sometimes grow a big, soft velvet-like proliferation (*Perückenbock*).



Among some hunters, roe deer are said to live an “unsocial” life, because herds (*Sprung*) are rarely seen. However, this is not the a picture. Adult females remain nearby to their offspring, 1 or 2 in most cases, for an entire year, until they give birth to the next generation.

In autumn, even older females – but rarely males – will sometimes rejoin the family, and adult males may do so as well.

Herds consisting of four to six deer, sometimes many more, are more likely to form in preferred winter areas. However, unlike red deer, *Reh Geiss* with fawns will not join other females in summer.



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Ein Sprung Rehe (A herd of roe deer)

The very “unsocial” part of life is shown by the mature *Rehbock*. In early spring, they become very aggressive against each other. They look for a territory, which each of them will occupy exclusively for himself throughout the mating period in August, and defend it at all costs against rivals.

Borders are marked by scraping the earth with their forelegs, and by rubbing the forehead against small trees and branches. By this, the buck leaves the secretion of a gland, telling other males by scent that the territory is already occupied.

During the mating period (*Blattzeit*), which occurs in late July and early August, males stay inside their territories for most of the time and are being accompanied by females, in most cases only one at a time.

Herding during the rut does not occur among Roe Deer. A female is being driven by the buck for hours and on fairly long distances. To humans, this behavior seems to be quite aggressive, but this is not the case. It is the female, who governs the game, not the male.

Running has proved to be necessary for the female to get in heat. Normally, the buck will stay 2-3 days with one female, who will be in heat for only one day. After the rut, the bucks become less aggressive.



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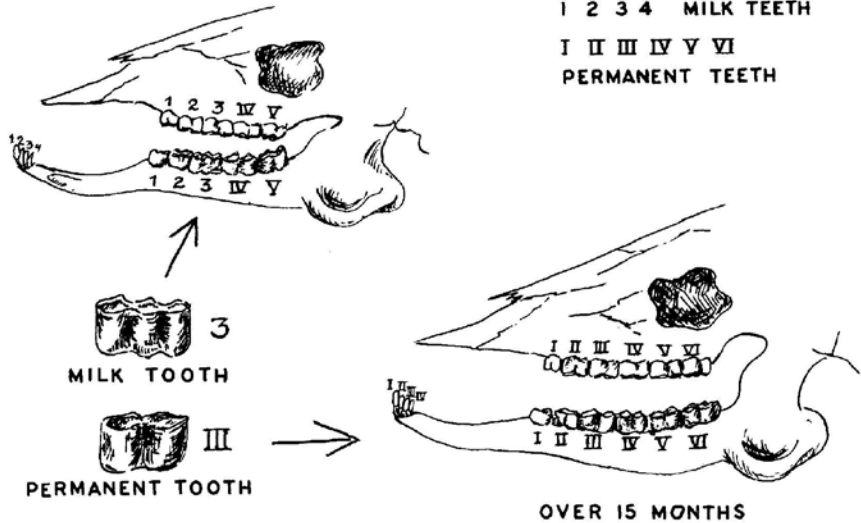
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Mating occurs in July and August, birth in late May and early June, resulting in a gestation period of 10 month. Regarding the small size of Roe Deer, this seems to be an unusually long time. However, the fertilized eggs do not grow before late December. Instead, the eggs “rest” in the uterus.

First then, embryo development begins. The delayed gestation allows the species to have two very energy-consuming activities during favorable seasons – mating and embryo growth.

MONTH	AGE		TEETH OF THE LOWER JAW		TOTAL # OF TEETH
	MONTH	YEAR	FRONT TEETH	MOLARS	
MAY	Born				
JUN	1st	}	1 2 3 4	1 2 3	20
JUL	2nd		1 2 3 4	1 2 3	
AUG	3rd		1 2 3 4	1 2 3 (IV becomes visible)	
SEP	4th		1 2 3 4	1 2 3 (IV becomes visible)	
OCT	5th	} 1st	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 IV (V becomes visible)	24
NOV	6th		1 2 3 4	1 2 3 IV (V becomes visible)	
DEC	7th		1 2 3 4	1 2 3 IV V	
JAN	8th	}	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 IV V (VI becomes visible)	28
FEB	9th		1 2 3 4	1 2 3 IV V (VI becomes visible)	
MAR	10th		1 2 3 4	1 2 3 IV V (VI becomes visible)	
APR	11th	} 2nd	I II III IV	1 2 3 IV V VI	32
MAY	12th		I II III IV	1 2 3 IV V VI	
JUN	13th		I II III IV	I II III IV V VI	
JUL	14th		I II III IV	I II III IV V VI	
AUG	15th		I II III IV	I II III IV V VI	32

7 MONTHS





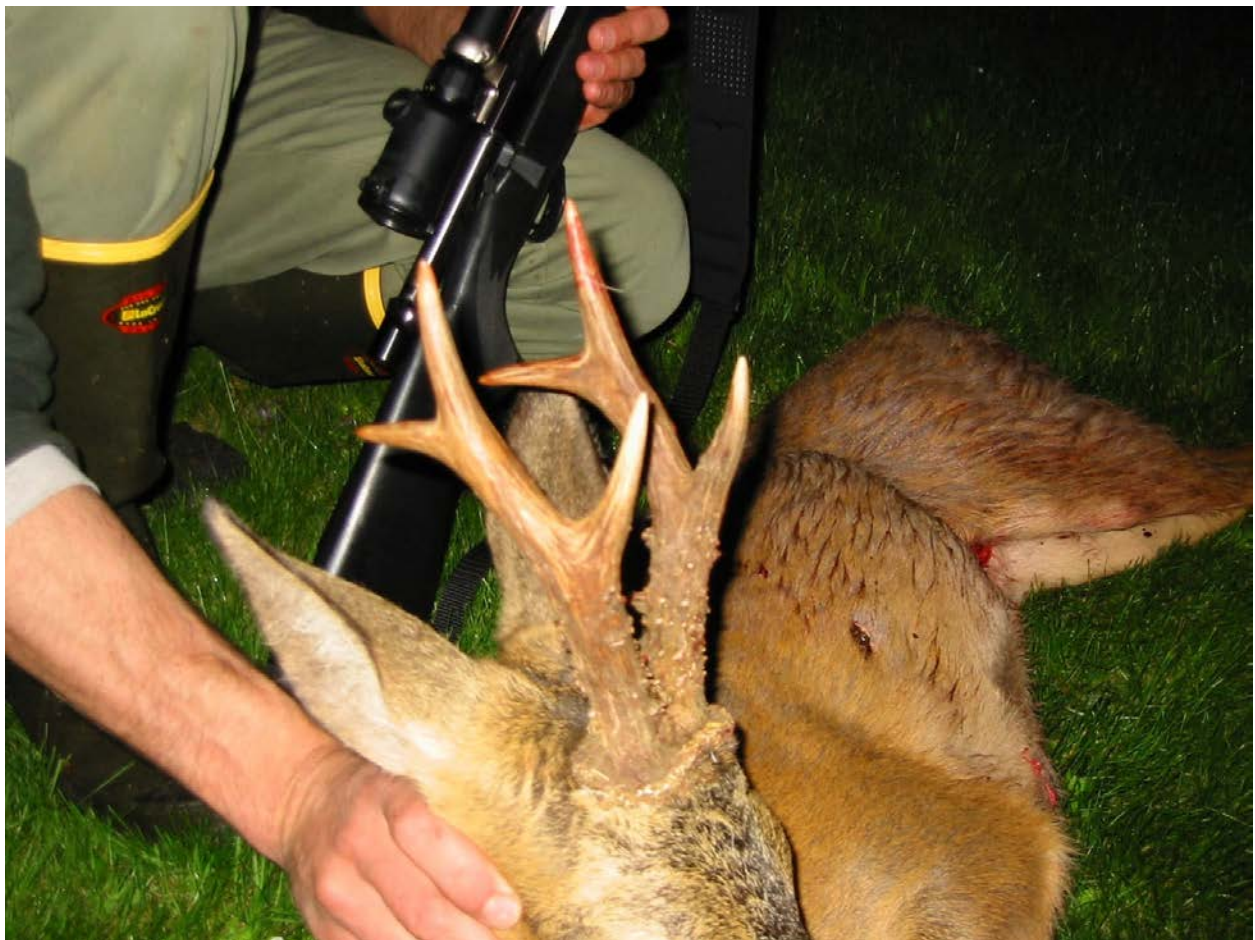
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Roe Deer is the most important game species in Europe. Hunting methods vary between countries and cultures, depending of the type of landscape and traditions.

During the last century, huge efforts have been undertaken to improve the quality of roe deer populations through selective shooting. The idea behind this was to kill animals (mainly bucks) with inferior body mass and antlers, in order to develop a population with bigger and healthier animals, mainly with great trophies.

Today, selective shooting and winter feeding (which also sometimes had been carried out to produce bigger, healthier deer and great trophies) are more and more abandoned.

In many countries, the main goal of Roe Deer management is to keep population density low, in order to support the natural re-growth of mixed forests that are rich in deciduous trees and white pine.



Sechser Bock



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Pendulum (*Pendelstangenbock*)

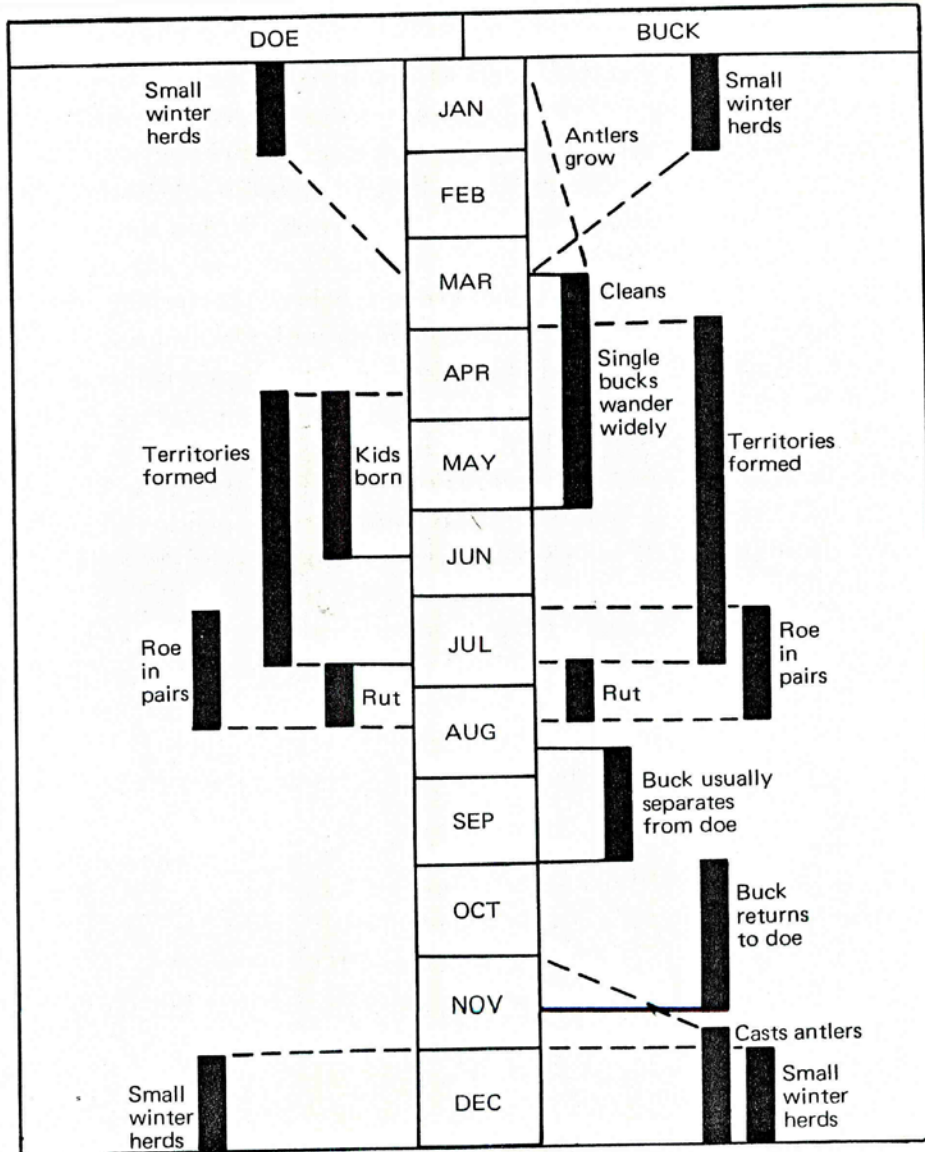


Unusual antler development



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Seasonal behavior of roe deer