

Name: _____

The World's Largest Deer

by Guy Belleranti

What animal has a long, big-nosed head, a bulky body on long skinny legs, and a big flap of furry skin hanging from its throat? The world's largest deer – the moose.



The moose's big nose gives it a great sense of smell. The big body gives it strength. The long legs help it walk through deep snow, step over logs, and stand in deep water. The big flap of furry skin hanging from its neck? Well, it's called a bell, but its purpose is sort of a mystery. While both bulls (males) and cows (females) have bells, the bull's is larger. Some scientists think the bell might help bulls attract mates.

Moose live in the forests and meadows of cooler places like Alaska, Canada, and the northern United States. They also live in cooler parts of northern Europe and Asia, where they're called Eurasian elk. The elk in North America, however, are not moose. Instead, these elk (also called wapiti) are a slightly smaller species of deer.

Moose may not look like fast runners, but their looks are deceiving. If a moose feels threatened, it can charge at 35 miles an hour. Mothers are very protective of their calves, who along with the old and sick, are most vulnerable to predation by wolves, bears and mountain lions.

Moose are herbivores or plant eaters. They eat tall grasses, leaves, twigs, buds, berries, pinecones, bark, and other vegetation. In warmer months, they spend lots of time in lakes, ponds, and rivers cooling off. They're very good swimmers and will dive underwater to find tasty greens.

Only bulls grow antlers, and what a work of art their antlers are. They're flattened and huge, with a spread of four to six feet!

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1. According to the information in the article, what is the relationship between moose and North American elk?
 - a. Moose are a smaller species of deer than North American elk.
 - b. North American elk are not a species of deer, but moose are.
 - c. Moose and North American elk are both species of deer, but moose are larger.
 - d. North American elk and moose do not have any similarities between them.

2. If you visit the Canadian Rockies in July, where might you be likely to spot a moose?
 - a. deep in the forest
 - b. in rivers or ponds
 - c. inside caves
 - d. on mountain heights and cliffs

3. Based on what you learned in the article, what is a moose's bell?

4. Moose are strong, powerful animals, but that doesn't mean they don't have predators. Name three predators of the moose.

5. Which description would **not** be true of a moose?
 - a. A moose is an omnivore.
 - b. A bull moose has a rack of antlers.
 - c. A cow moose has a bell.
 - d. In Europe, moose are known as Eurasian elk.

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.



_____ 1. meadows

_____ 2. deceiving

_____ 3. vulnerable

_____ 4. vegetation

_____ 5. bulky

_____ 6. charge

_____ 7. antlers

_____ 8. protective

_____ 9. herbivores

_____ 10. Eurasian

a. run ahead at a high speed

b. from the continental landmass of Europe and Asia

c. branches of horns on a male deer's head

d. areas of open space; fields

e. animals that only eat plants

f. helpless, powerless, defenseless

g. heavily built; large

h. able to fool someone into thinking something that isn't true

i. safeguarding; keeping someone or something from harm

j. plant life

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In the article, "The World's Largest Deer," you learned that moose are strong, powerful animals with unusual features that help them thrive in their environment.



On the lines below, describe your favorite animal. Where does it live? What does it look like? What does it eat? Identify three features that help that animal adapt to its environment.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

ANSWER KEY

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 - a. deep in the forest
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 - c. inside caves
 - d. on mountain heights and cliffs

3. Based on what you learned in the article, what is a moose's bell?
A moose's bell is a flap of skin hanging beneath its throat that scientists think may attract mates.

4. Moose are strong, powerful animals, but that doesn't mean they don't have predators. Name three predators of the moose.
Wolves, bears, and mountain lions

5. Which description would **not** be true of a moose? a.
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