

# MOOSE

updated March 2017



potter park zoo docent manual 2017

<b>Range</b>	Temperate to subarctic in the Northern Hemisphere
<b>Habitat</b>	Boreal and mixed deciduous forests
<b>Diet (wild)</b>	Terrestrial vegetation, mainly forbs and other non-grasses and fresh shoots from trees
<b>Diet (captivity)</b>	Pelleted diet and browse, primarily willow
<b>Description</b>	Height: 4½–7 feet at the shoulder; weight: 440–1,500 pounds. Dark brown body with long faces and muzzles that dangle over their chins. A flap of skin known as a bell sways beneath the throat. Males are immediately recognizable by their huge antlers, which can spread 6 feet from end to end.
<b>Lifespan</b>	Wild: 15–25 years
<b>Reproduction</b>	Females give birth to one or two calves in the spring, each weighing about 30 pounds. Calves grow quickly and can outrun a person by the time they are just five days old. Calves stay with their mothers until the following spring. Mating occurs in September and October. The males will seek several females to breed with. Both sexes call to each other during the mating season: Males produce heavy grunting sounds that can be heard up to one-third of a mile away, while females produce wail-like sounds.
<b>Behavior</b>	Unlike most other deer species, moose are solitary animals and do not form herds. They are mostly diurnal. Moose can become very aggressive when frightened, and females with young or males in rut can be especially dangerous. Raw numbers show that moose injure more people than almost any other wild mammal (only hippos injure more). They have very flexible joints and can kick with both their front and back legs.
<b>Our animals</b>	1 female, 1 male. Born: 05/2013 (female, Willow); 06/2014 (male, Meeko). Wild born in Alaska: female was orphaned when her mother was hit by a car and the male was found separated from his mother.
<b>Cool stuff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moose are the largest member of the deer family</li> <li>• Moose are so tall that they prefer to browse higher grasses and shrubs because lowering their heads to ground level can be difficult.</li> <li>• Antlers take 3–5 months to fully develop, making them one of the fastest growing animal organs. Moose antlers can add up to a pound of new antler per day. Other than yearling moose, any attempt to judge a moose's age is purely guesswork. In fact, very old moose have antler development that is usually misshapen. Discarded antlers represent a source of calcium, phosphorus and other minerals and are often gnawed upon by other animals, including squirrels, porcupines, rabbits and mice.</li> <li>• Hooves act as snowshoes to support the heavy animals in soft snow and in muddy or marshy ground.</li> <li>• Moose are at home in the water and, despite their staggering bulk, are good swimmers. They have been seen paddling several miles from shore, and will even submerge completely, staying under for 30 seconds or more. Moose can also turn 180° while submerged and resurface at surprising distances from where they went under.</li> <li>• Moose have been clocked running at 38 miles per hour over obstructed ground.</li> <li>• When hand-reared, moose can be trained to follow voice commands and can carry a 275-pound pack or pull a 600–800 pound sled at a walking speed of 3 miles per hour. Although individual moose are amenable in captivity and attempts have been made to domesticate them, it is difficult to keep them long or in large numbers due to the difficulty of supplying appropriate foods and their susceptibility to livestock diseases.</li> <li>• Horses panic at the site of a moose. In the late 1600s, King Karl XI of Sweden tried to use moose for a special light cavalry that could swarm across inhospitable terrain and whose very appearance would cause great disarray among any horse-riding enemy.</li> </ul>

<b>Phylum</b> Chordata	<b>Class</b> Mammalia	<b>Order</b> Artiodactyla	<b>Family</b> Cervidae	<b>Genus</b> Alces	<b>species</b> <i>A. americanus</i>
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