



12-31-1968

A probable record of the white-tailed deer in Nevada

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Recommended Citation

Bradley, W. Glen and Hansen, Charles G. (1968) "A probable record of the white-tailed deer in Nevada," *Great Basin Naturalist*. Vol. 28 : No. 4 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/gbn/vol28/iss4/7>

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NOTES

A PROBABLE RECORD OF THE WHITE-TAILED DEER IN NEVADA

A shed left antler, slightly weathered, was found by Charles G. Hansen between Rug Mountain and Dead Horse Trail, 46 miles north of Las Vegas, Nevada on the Desert National Wildlife Range. The antler (M5558), on deposit in the Biology Museum at Nevada Southern University, was found in a steep-sided dry wash on the alluvial fan between the main Sheep Range and Tule Deer Ridge at an elevation of approximately 5,000 ft. The surrounding vegetation is dominated by Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia*), pinyon pine (*Pinus monophylla*), and juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*).

On the basis of the weathered and bleached condition we estimate that it was shed within the last 5 to 10 years. The antler is 267 mm. in length and the two tines are 82 and 61 mm. in length. Both tines arise from the single main beam and from the slope of the base the antler curved out over the brow. These features are characteristic of the white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). However, Kellogg (1956) stated that there may be exception to the normal dichotomous forking of the antlers of mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and discussed a specimen from the Kaibab plateau, Arizona with antlers which were branched as in the white-tailed deer. The shed antler was compared with over 300 mule deer skulls from Nevada on deposit at the Nevada Southern University Biology Museum. All of these which had tines exhibited the normal dichotomous branching. Mule deer with antlers of a comparable length were usually not forked or, if forked, had dichotomous tines of longer length than that of the shed antler. The shed antler was not as rounded in cross section and had fewer burrs near the base than the mule deer antlers examined.

Based on this examination we conclude that the shed antler probably belonged to a white-tailed deer. Hall (1946) discussed the status of this species in Northern Nevada and concluded that there were no authentic records for the state. The nearest record of white-tailed deer is Bill Williams Mountain, Coconino County, Arizona, which is approximately 190 airline miles southeast of the Nevada locality (Hoffmeister, 1962). The present record tentatively places this species in Southern Nevada.—W. Glen Bradley¹ and Charles G. Hansen².

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