



Jr. Animal Scientist

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**Learn
About
Reindeer
Around
the World**

Reindeer or Caribou?



Did you know that reindeer is a caribou and a caribou is a reindeer?

They are the same species (*Rangifer tarandus*), but they live in different places. Reindeer live in northern Europe and Asia and caribou live in North America. The smallest of the *Rangifer* are the Svalbard reindeer (Santa's reindeer), while the largest are the boreal woodland caribou.

How did the same species become so different?

Thousands of years ago, reindeer were domesticated and used as food for meat, hides for clothes, antlers and bones crafted into household items, work and even companionship. Some reindeer were even milked! Still today, reindeer are used throughout Europe and Asia. Many reindeer that you might see are on farms that utilize them for commercial purposes around Christmas.

Fun Facts:

- The word reindeer comes from the Old Norse word “hreinin,” which means “horned animal”.
- The word caribou is based on the French word for “Snow shoveler.”
- Both male and females can grow antlers.
- Their noses are specifically designed to warm the air before it gets to their lungs.

Reindeer Herding/Farming

Reindeer herding began over two thousand years ago, and continues today around the world most prominently Russia, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Greenland, Alaska, Mongolia, China and Canada. Reindeer are still used today for the same purposes as they were over 2,000 years ago. These types of farms are found in very remote areas where human populations are small. However, the number of reindeer is quite large. In certain regions of Russia, there are more than 17,000 reindeer.



Fun Facts:

- Some reindeer herds live in the same small pastures their entire life.
- Some caribou herds migrate further than any terrestrial mammal on earth, covering thousands of miles.



Does Rudolf Really Have a Red Nose?

Actually, yes! Reindeer do have shiny red noses. Scientists have found the answer as to why their noses are red. Reindeer have a large network of capillaries that carry blood through their noses. Not only does this make their nose red, it also helps keep them warm when they are working hard and it is freezing outside!

What do they eat?

At Christmas we leave out cookies for Santa and carrots for the reindeer, however, in the wild they eat very differently. Reindeer are herbivores, meaning they eat only plants. They of course would enjoy a carrot if they could find one, but usually they feast on a mix of grasses, shoots and leaves, fungi and mosses.

On average, an adult reindeer can eat 9 to 18 pounds of vegetation a day!

How do they communicate?

Reindeer not only have the ability to see in the dark, but also use their sense of sound to keep track of the herd. There are tendons that slip over the bones in their feet as they walk. This produces a clicking sound and helps them all stay together. This noise is also louder in larger animals and can be a sign of dominance in the herd.

Can Reindeer Walk On Ice?

They were made to walk on ice! Reindeer hooves change seasonally. During the summer months the hoof pads are soft and spongy so they can walk on softer ground. During the cold winter months, their hooves shrink to expose the rim of the hoof. This allows for better scraping on ice and reduces exposure to the cold ground.

Santa's Reindeer

Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen all got their names from a poem in 1823 authored by Clement Clarke Moore. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer didn't join Santa's team until 1939 with the help of Robert L. May.

Fun Facts:

- Reindeer do not sweat.
- Reindeer can see ultraviolet light! Human vision cuts off at wavelengths around 400nm, while reindeer can see up to 320nm. This helps them see through the glowing white of the snow.
- Reindeer are excellent swimmers.
- Only Santa's reindeer can fly, but wild reindeer can run very fast: up to 50 mph!
- Reindeer live to be 15 years old in the wild and can be 20 years old in captivity.



Photo: iStock / Dmitry_Chulov

Reindeer Candy

Have a parent help with the hot glue

Things you need:

- Craft glue or hot glue
- Large candy canes
- Red candies (red hots) or red pom-poms
- Small googly eyes
- Brown pipe cleaners

Have a parent help with the hot glue



Photo: onelittleproject.com

Directions:

1. Place a dab of craft glue or hot glue on the end of a candy cane's hook and press a red candy or red pom-pom onto the glue. Repeat until all of your candy canes have red "noses."
2. Smear a strip of glue about 1 inch above the nose and press two googly eyes onto the glue.
3. Twist a brown pipe cleaner at the top of the candy cane, right where it starts to curve. Pinch each side several times, so that it has bends that resemble reindeer antlers. If your pipe cleaner seems to slip around, add a dab of glue to the bottom so that it doesn't slide.
4. Your candy cane reindeer are now finished. Although the candy canes are edible, the small parts and glue on the canes make these more appropriate for decorations than eating. If you want entirely edible candy cane reindeer, you could use royal icing to glue on the candy nose and use it to make the reindeer's eyes.

Have a parent help with the hot glue

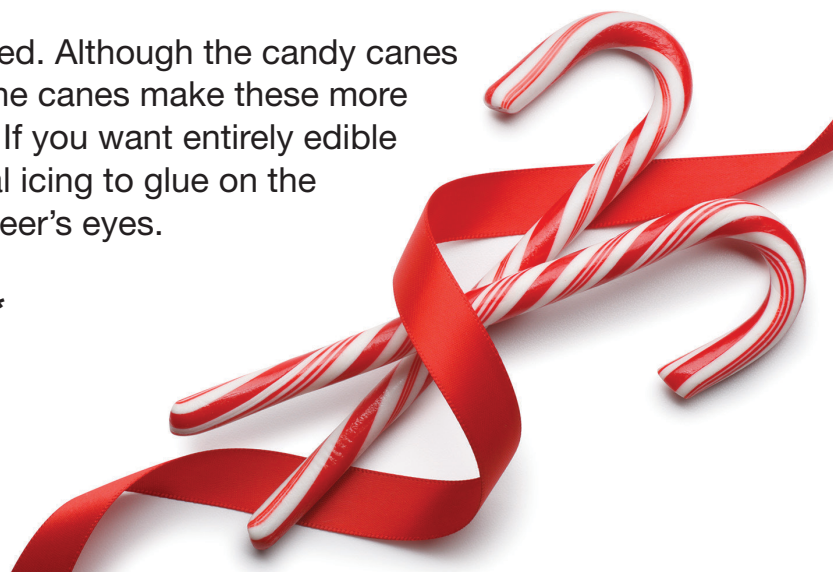


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Find the **Bolded** Words

HERBIVOROUS

an animal whom eats only plants

T L

U B

CARIBOU

another name for reindeer

G P H L

W J R D

REINDEER

another name for caribou

O H K B L J

Z J X Z N S

MAMMAL

warm-blooded vertebrate animal

S M Q V L M S N

T T B K I V L E

MIGRATION

seasonal movement of animals

C M T Z W T E S Z Y

O A N Y G K M M E S

T G S V I J A F S H U S

UNGULATE

hooved animal

E E T S X O R S F A X I

N I S Y L O M J P Y R P L I

REINDEER MOSS

winter food – high in carbohydrates

O H Z D R N M J Z R I A H F

E I R Z V A E J O H R M J Y Z Q

O I Q R X T M V K N M Z N Z F V

Z N R M E W C G Z Z A D N S N E Z T

V O I L M K Z Z G M S Q B R H K P X

J R I C O C U N G U L A T E P U L C Z A

V E T V Q W Y G X O D F F V B M E U Y Z

O R S A D S H Y H T D D Y O Q Z K P L T J D

M C A R I B O U E T L J X E A T W D R V J S

M J W K G W R V A K H I L G S R E E D N I E R G

R N K J I K O E A Z E T V W E Z T C S U W B N D

Q G D M D M S C W E O Y H E R B I V O R O U S M A O

S D P K H B U C N Q D J B A R P I D G C M D N Y G N

N O B L

V I P D

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