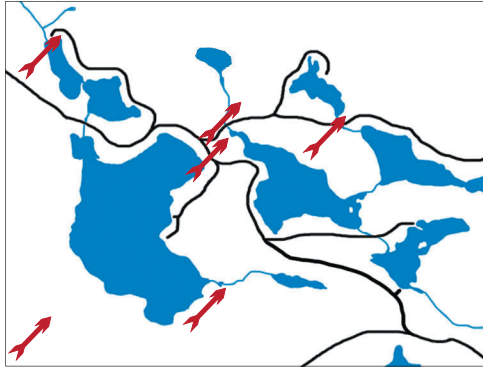


High Lake is on the eastern boundary of a large deer wintering area. It is not unusual to see numerous deer foraging during the winter months in the forests on each side of the woodland road leading to High Lake.



Deer will often travel many kilometres from their summer homes to their winter range, which is usually at a lower elevation where the snow fall is lightest. However, the valleys around High Lake with their mature stands of hemlock and coniferous trees provide the desired degree of protection.



White-tailed deer in the winter

Hemlock are particularly effective in retaining large quantities of snow on their branches without breaking. The sun then dissipates the snow by either evaporating it or allowing it to fall to the ground as water. In this way, animals can move more freely in the forest unhindered even in years of heavy snow fall.

Deer, given their narrow hooves and relatively short legs, find it difficult to navigate deep snow and as a result,

starve if they cannot move about to forage for food. When snow is deeper than 40 centimetres and they are not in a sheltered area, deer will tend to follow previously broken trails. The quantity and quality of food that can be reached along these trails, however, quickly diminishes during a harsh winter.



White-tailed doe with two fawns in mid-summer

When deer are nutritionally weakened or can only move slowly in heavy snow, they are unable to defend themselves or their young from wolves hunting during the winter months.

A healthy herd is capable of almost doubling its numbers during one favourable year, which left alone would burden the food supply and lead to winter starvation. Predators, together with controlled hunting, help to keep the white-tailed deer population in balance with the available supply of nutritional winter food.



White-tailed deer on the edge of the forest near Burns Lake