



AXIS DEAR
AUSTRALIA, N.T., Darwin
MAJ 2008
MECHISLAV KLIMOVICH



BRONZE AWARD
102 3/8

Axishirsch (G), *Axis* (F). Also called spotted deer. "Axis" is said to be the name given this animal by Roman scholar Pliny the Elder. "Chital" is from the Hindi *cital*, meaning spotted.

DESCRIPTION (*male*) Shoulder height 32-36 inches (81-91 cm). Weight 150-200 pounds (68-91 kg), sometimes more. The female is smaller.

A beautiful medium-sized deer, slender and graceful. The coat is a bright reddish-fawn covered with permanent white spots and has a dark dorsal stripe. The spots on the lower flanks are arranged in longitudinal rows. Underparts, underside of tail, lower legs and throat are white. The face is buff with a darker brown muzzle. Antlers are long and beautifully lyre-shaped and normally carry three points to a side. Some antlers have additional tines, generally small and located near the junction of the brow tine and the main beam. Longest antlers of record are 44 inches (111.8) (*Rowland Ward*, about 1877).

BEHAVIOR Gregarious, living in groups of 5-10, although herds of more than 100 have been seen. Some herds contain all ages and sexes, others have only females and young, or only males, and the herd composition changes constantly. As is usual with tropical deer, chital breed year-round, so there will be some males with hard antlers at all seasons. Rutting males fight frequently and furiously for females, injuring each other and breaking tines in the process. Females typically produce one fawn, sometimes two. Principal predators are leopards and wild dogs. Individuals have lived more than 20 years in captivity.



Sedentary, spending its entire life in a small area. Diurnal, resting during the hotter part of the day, but may become nocturnal when temperatures are very high or when molested. Does not tolerate cold climates because it lacks the necessary layers of insulating fat. Mainly a grazer, but browses occasionally and is fond of fruits and flowers. Eyesight is excellent, hearing and sense of smell are good.

HABITAT Grassland and open forest. Seldom in thick forest.

DISTRIBUTION India and Sri Lanka (Ceylon). Introduced in the Andaman Islands.

