

# Grab-N-Go

## Nature Lessons Kit



# Oh Deer!

## What's a Deer, my Dear?

The most telltale characteristic of a Deer is it's Antlers, but there's more to it than that! Deer belong to a large group of mammals called 'Artiodactyls' which means 'even toes'. This group of animals bears weight on two toes of each foot, and includes animals like cows, goats, sheep, giraffes, hogs, camels and hippos! Here in Texas you'll find two native deer species; the White-Tailed deer and the Mule deer, along with a few invasive feral species like the beautiful and exotic Axis deer!

## What does a Deer do during December?

While we all know what Santa's deer are doing this season, playing reindeer games and zipping around pulling his sleigh, what do local deer do when the temperature gets low and fresh food is harder to find? Their diet shifts and they stockpile bodyfat by consuming high calorie foods like acorns; they grow a warmer winter coat and huddle closer together during winter months.

## Why can't we feed the deer, here?

One sure way to get onto Santa's naughty list is to feed the wild deer. Within our park, too much good free food can train the deer to not fear people, which can be dangerous for both of us. Additionally when the free food they rely on vanishes, they can starve. Generally speaking, there is more harm than good that comes from feeding wild life. A better way to help support the wildlife is to engage in habitat management and natural area conservation.

### White-Tailed Deer

### Axis Deer

### Mule Deer





# PHIL HARDBERGER PARK HOLIDAY DEER HIKE



MY DEAR FRIEND,

I'm writing to you from the North pole with a very important mission! I spoke to my satellite elves in San Antonio recently, and I'm excited to learn of a White-Tailed Deer population in Hardberger Park! The deer need to be surveyed for our recruitment efforts [we don't limit our team to just Reindeer, Ho ho!]. We keep an eye out for any deer that can fly. The only problem is I'm up here. Would you like to help me record your local population? I hope you will take up the task! The questions below need answering. Find a deer, then record!

1. Is it an Adult, Juvenile or Fawn? [Fawn have spots.]
2. Can you tell if it is Male or Female? [Antler Check!]
3. Do you see any others nearby? [Friendly Deer required.]
4. Do you see any Deer Scat? [This tells us about it's Diet.]
5. Are there footprints? Do they start and stop? [The first sign of flight is inconsistent tracks!]

As you know, my buddy Rudolph and I (and the rest of the gang) will be quite busy on Christmas Eve, but we hope to see you even for just a quick moment when we drop by your house. See you then okay? **HO HO HO!**

*Santa Claus*



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**Grab-N-Go**  
Nature Lessons Kit



# Reindeer Treats

A Seasonal Snack For Holiday Helpers!

## Ingredients:

Antlers - Pretzels or Pretzel Sticks, Candy Canes

Head Base - Cracker, Cookie, Peanut Butter Cup, Cheese, Donut or Fruit Slice

Face Parts - Sprinkles, Raisins, Candy

Adhesive - Peanutbutter, Nutella Melted Chocolate or Icing

## Directions:

The way ol' Grammy Claus used to make these treats was, begin with the head base! Grab your cracker, cookie, or fruit and decide which way is up and which way is down. Then, cover it with peanut butter [but you can use icing instead]. Get yer antlers, break, munch, or crunch them if they're too big, and stick'em on the top. Then build the face! Use sprinkles, raisins or candy to make Eyes and a Nose at the least! Add ears and a mouth if yer fancy. Then, when you have them all lined up, it's time to share!



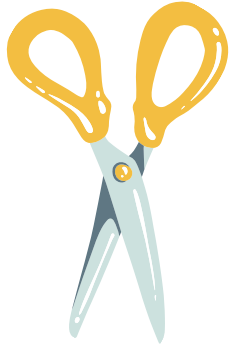
Looking forward to sharing milk and cookies, and reindeer treats with you,

*Santa Claus*

PHIL HARDBERGER  
PARK CONSERVANCY

# CLAUS & CO. TOY MAKERS

*You will need:*



*Directions:*

Find a cardboard tube, this can be from toilette paper or paper towels. Flatten the tube. Trace on the shape of the deer from edge to edge.

Carefully cut out the deer. Cut out two little antlers from the cardboard scrap. Gently pop out the the deer back to it's tube shape, and fold down the head. Then add your color! For eyes, you can use beads or google eyes, and for the nose you can try a pompom! Glue on the antlers and you new friend is ready to play!



PHIL HARDBERGER  
PARK CONSERVANCY