

Sometimes there are deer in the adjacent meadow and sometimes there are not. Why is this and where do they go when they are not in the meadow?

There are two main reasons why deer come out onto the turf areas.

The first is for food. The grass is easy to find, and easy to eat (mule deer eat a wide variety of things and in the winter when food is scarce may even eat sticks and twigs). The second reason is the turf areas are a source of water (there is often a puddle around our sprinkler heads (especially in the mornings and the grass is often covered with dew).

Mule deer like to live an area characterized as “edge habitat.” This means they like to have open areas to graze in and they like areas where they can find shelter and concealment. One of the preferred mule deer habitats is the oak woodland (look straight across the field from the interpretive center and you will see an oak woodland- oak woodland habitat is very common throughout this area.

Male and female mule deer have similar home range sizes, about a square mile to just slightly larger. What they want to find in their range are all the things they need for life: food, water and shelter. Depending on what they need at a particular moment they may be anywhere in their range. In addition things like people, cars and predators may scare them out of an area for a time. You may see deer on the grass, if not they may be near the lake or in the woods.