

Reindeer eat this in the coldest months



↑ reindeer moss lots of carbohydrates that give reindeer energy to make body heat

Very few other animals eat lichens, and scientists think reindeer evolved to fit this particular food niche

their scientific name is rangifer tardus

the dense network of blood vessels in reindeer noses help keep it's nose warm

their entire body (even their hooves) is covered in fur

topcoat of hairs help shed rain and snow

← female reindeer grow antlers as well as males

← they have ultra violet vision

← nasoturbinal bones in the nose support tissues in the nose that warm/moisten air before it gets to the lungs

← hairs in their coat are hollow, allowing them to trap heat

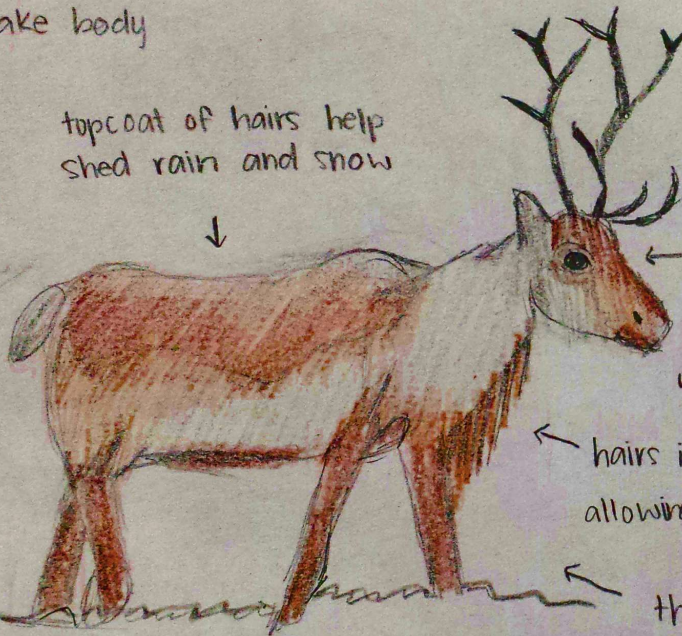
↑ they have special stomach acids that break down lichens

→ they can run up to 50mph

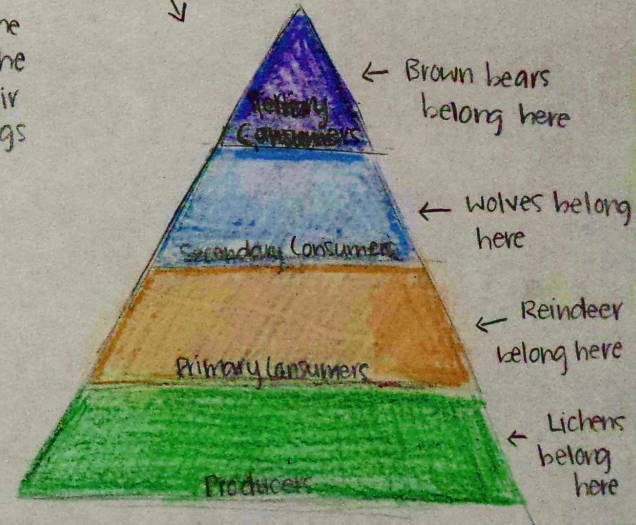
↑ they're very social and herds can have up to 500,000 members in the spring

↑ herds often travel 1000 to 3000 miles to find food in the winter

↑ in summer their footpads become spongelike and provide extra traction but in the winter the pads tighten, exposing the hoof rim which cuts through ice/snow



Reindeer role in the energy pyramid



The reindeer's niche in the taiga is a forager/herbivore that eats lichens. Other examples of foragers are moose, and eurasian beavers.

How their environment affects reindeer:

Food

Reindeer primarily eat leafy greens and mushrooms, plus lichens during the cold winter months. Occasionally they eat bird eggs and arctic char.



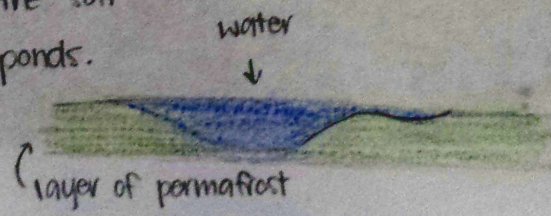
Lakes and bodies of water:

They're great swimmers and can swim 4 to 6 miles per hour when they come into contact with water while migrating.



Lakes are abundant in the taiga, where reindeer can drink. In places where the temperature gets above freezing, the soil melts and creates bogs.

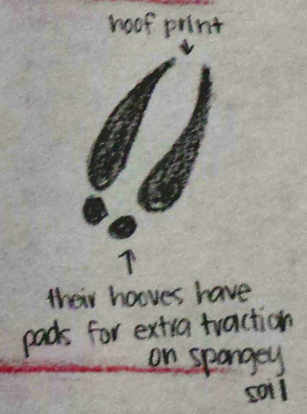
Where permafrost stays frozen, it keeps water from seeping into the soil and makes ponds.



Reindeer seek shelter from the elements in the spruce forests



Space - reindeer of St. Matthew Island. With no predators or competition, reindeer population grew beyond carrying capacity and exhausted resources.



There's overpopulation in Russia. The governor of the Yamal-Nenets region Dmitry Kobylkin said 100,000 would have to be killed because the overpopulation was straining a limited food supply and increasing risk of anthrax infection.

Anthrax - is spread to reindeer through eating lichens which soak up melted permafrost that has the bacteria in it.

Reindeer have compact stocky bodies to retain heat, their veins and arteries run side by side to warm each other, and they have a double coat to trap and insulate body heat. They have adapted to live in a freezing environment and couldn't survive in any warmer