

White-tailed Deer
(Odocoileus virginianus)

vs.

Mule Deer
(Odocoileus hemionus)

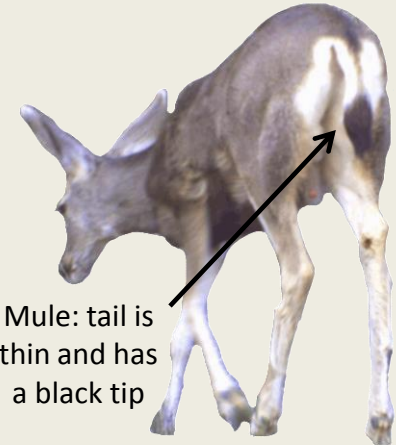
Primary Identifying Features:

Tail

Tail is the most distinct and common feature used to differentiate White-tailed and Mule deer



White-tailed: tail is very fluffy and white; will "flag" tail in the air when alarmed



Mule: tail is thin and has a black tip

Antler Shape

In some seasons, antler shape can be easily used to distinguish species of male deer



White-tailed: antler points branch off of a single, main beam



Mule: antlers have two main beams, which fork evenly as they grow

Metatarsal Glands

Located on the outside of the hind leg, the length of this gland varies between species



White-tailed: short metatarsal gland



Mule: long metatarsal gland

White-tailed Deer
(Odocoileus virginianus)

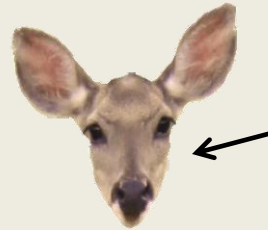
vs.

Mule Deer
(Odocoileus hemionus)

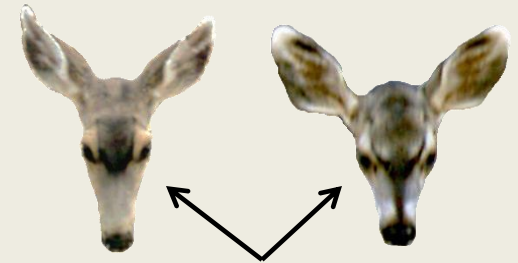
**Secondary
Identifying Features:**

**Facial
Coloration**

While these characteristics are not always expressed, and are often variable, they can be used to **confirm** an identification by primary features



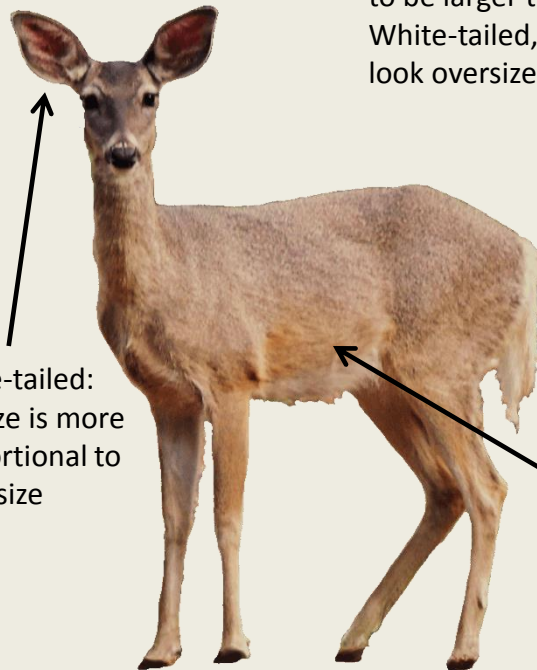
White-tailed: may have white eye-ring, nose band, and chin



Mule: often have a dark facemask between the eyes, which varies in shape and size

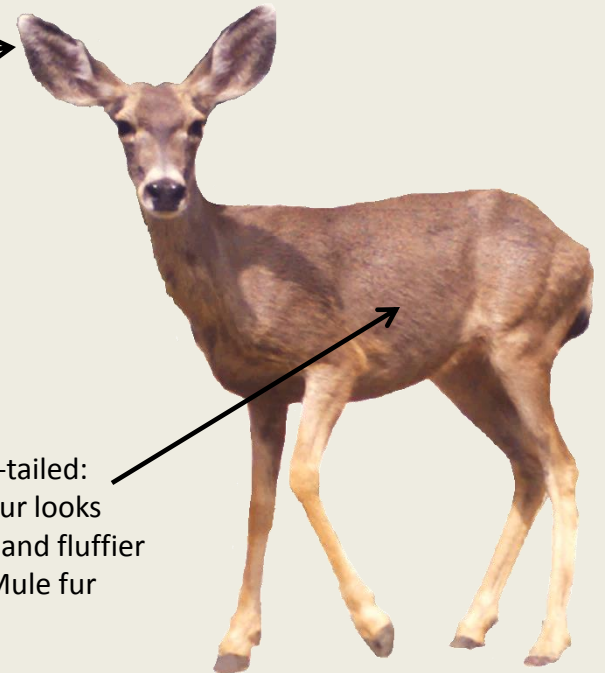
Fur Texture

There are subtle differences in the appearance of fur texture between species, which becomes apparent in a side-by-side comparison



White-tailed: ear size is more proportional to head size

Mule: ears tend to be larger than White-tailed, and look oversized



White-tailed: body fur looks softer and fluffier than Mule fur

Ear Size

Ear size is slightly variable between species

Note: These two species can interbreed to produce hybrids

**Black-tailed Jackrabbit
(Lepus californicus)**

vs.

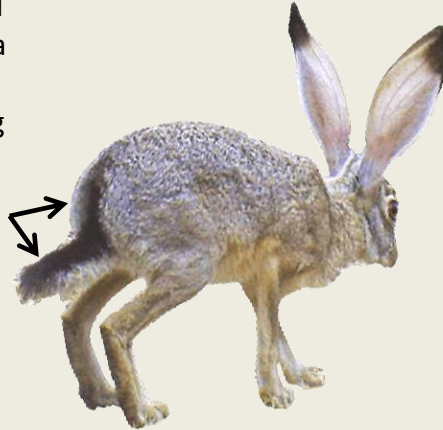
**Antelope Jackrabbit
(Lepus alleli)**

**Primary Identifying
Features:**

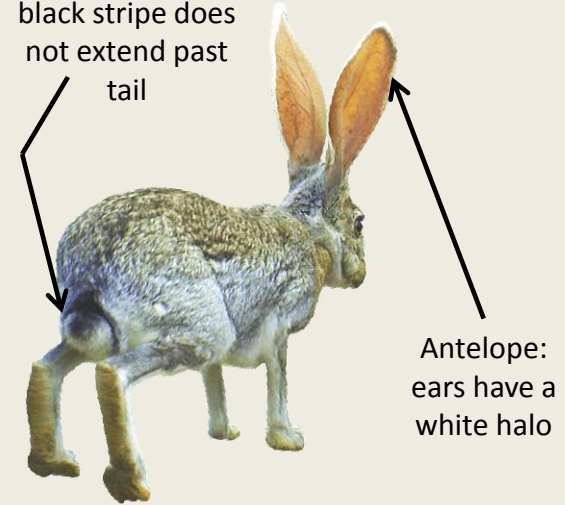
Tail

Tail size and stripe length
are the easiest way to
identify a fleeing
jackrabbit

Black-tailed: tail
is long and has a
distinct black
stripe extending
from the tip of
the tail, up the
rump



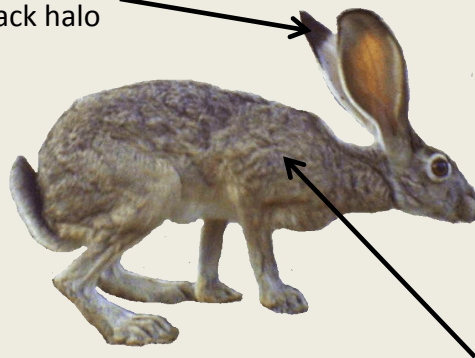
Antelope: tail is
quite short and
black stripe does
not extend past
tail



Antelope:
ears have a
white halo

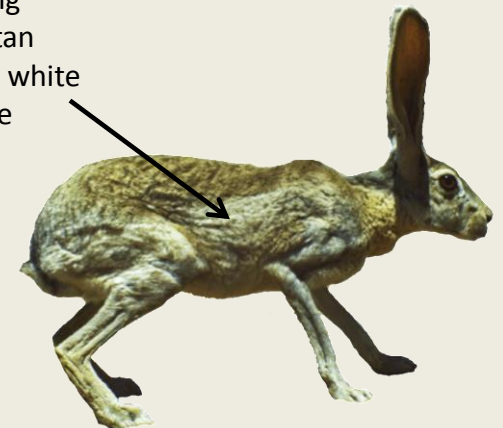
Coloring

Black-tailed:
ears are tipped
with black and
have a black halo



Black-tailed: body
fur is gray-brown
throughout

Antelope: has
contrasting
brownish-tan
upperside and white
underside



Ear Tips

Ear tips and
edges have
distinguishable
color patterns

Sidebody

General fur coloration
varies between these two
species and can be seen
well on the sidebody

**Hooded Skunk
(Mephitis macroura)**

vs.

**Striped Skunk
(Mephitis mephitis)**

vs.

**Hog-nosed Skunk
(Conepatus leuconotus)**

Primary Identifying Features:

Color Morphs

Although coloring does vary within species, there are recognizable patterns

Tail Length

Tail to body ratio is important to consider when distinguishing between species

Body Shape

Overall body shape and size can reveal much about a skunk's identity, as well



Hooded: bushy tail always exceeds body length

Hooded: longer hair behind head creates a "hood"

Hooded: coloration highly variable; white markings may be present on face, but will not connect to body stripe

Striped: tail length equal to or shorter than body length



Striped: thin white stripe present between ears and eyes; stripe connects to a larger white stripe down the back, which forks near the tail

Striped: has the largest body and greatest total length of the **four** Sonoran Desert skunks

Hog-nosed: body is colored solid black on bottom and solid white on top

Hog-nosed: tail is all white, and equal to or shorter than body length



Hog-nosed: legs are short and thick with downward curving claws; snout is long, hairless, and flat-ended

Hooded Skunk
(*Mephitis macroura*)



Striped Skunk
(*Mephitis mephitis*)



Hog-nosed Skunk
(*Conepatus leuconotus*)

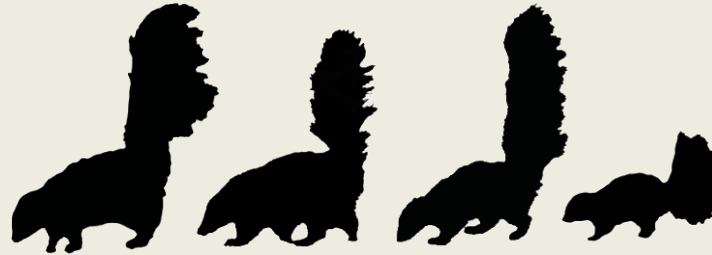


Spotted Skunk
(*Spilogale gracilis*)

Spotted: body has several stripes along back and sides; white dot present between the eyes



Spotted: tail is relatively short and tipped in white



Skunk Size and Body Ratio Comparison
From left to right: Striped, Hog-nosed, Hooded, Spotted

Primary Identifying Features:

Color Morphs

Unique color pattern makes it easy to distinguish the Spotted skunk from the other three species

Tail Length

Tail length is noticeably shorter than body length

Body Shape

Of the four skunks, the Spotted has the smallest body and shortest total length