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Source: Journal of Wildlife Diseases, 7(2) : 109-110

Published By: Wildlife Disease Association

URL: <https://doi.org/10.7589/0090-3558-7.2.109>

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A CASE OF POLYDACTYLISM IN SIKA DEER IN NEW ZEALAND

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Daniel¹ reports front-foot polydactylism in some 90 red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) of both sexes from 12 localities in New Zealand. He states that only one other case of polydactylism in deer is known to him, that reported by Nobs³ for a roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) in Germany. Miller and Cawley² report a polydactylous right front foot from a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) fawn in eastern Ontario, Canada, and claim that this is the first documented account of polydactylism in a North American cervid.

A case of polydactylism (Fig. 1) has now been found in the right front foot of a sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) hind shot in the Otupua Valley, Ahimanawa Range, central North Island, New Zealand, 1969, at about 39° 05' S and 176° 20' E. There is a greatly reduced extra metacarpal, a digit (comprising three phalanges), and

one aberrant dew claw. The extra metacarpal is slender compared with that of the functional cannon bone, of which it is independent; the vestigial second metacarpal splint bone is attached to the head of the extra metacarpal. Also, the hoof (dew claw) of the vestigial second digit of the functional foot is duplicated, the two parts being fused for most of their length. This type of polydactylism is similar to that found in about two-thirds of the cases which Daniel¹ has recorded in New Zealand red deer.

The writer is indebted to D. H. Vowles for making available the polydactylous foot (acquired from S. Rivers, who shot the sika hind) shown in Fig. 1, and M. J. Daniel, Ecology Division, New Zealand Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, for the record of Miller and Cawley and for reviewing this note.

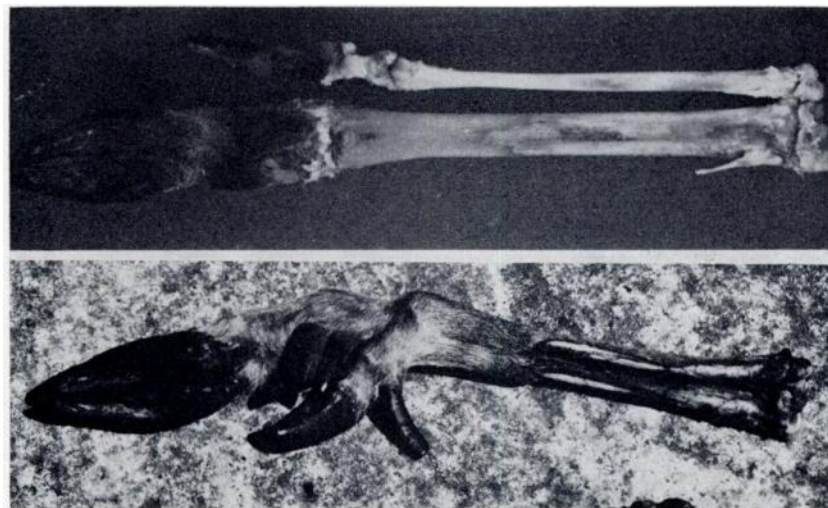


Fig. 1: Polydactylous condition of front right foot of sika hind.

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Received for publication October 27, 1970
