

## How to Identify the Deer and Shoot

In some circumstances a hunter can misidentify the target. In this article you will find how to identify the object. When a hunter sees any of these possible illusions, he should change his position so as to view the object from a different angle. It is of no use to try to identify the object without moving, for the longer a man gazes at an object which he hopes is a deer, the more certain he will be that it is a deer, and if he gazes long enough, with the expectation of seeing the object move, it will appear to move, thus completing the deception.

In spite of the tricks, which our eyesight sometimes plays on us, sight is the most reliable of our senses when it comes to identifying deer. Sound will sometimes call our attention to some animal which might be an unseen deer, yet if we shoot before making identification by sight, the chances are we will be mistaken and the noise maker will prove to be something other than a deer. A walking deer makes about as much noise as a cat makes while stalking a mouse, unless the ground is honeycombed with frost or covered with a crust of snow. Even when walking over dried leaves, a deer can seldom be heard by the average hunter at a distance of fifty yards. Deer seldom brush hard enough against trees or bushes to be heard or to shake branches. Infrequently they break sticks or limbs, especially while running and when panic-stricken.

Running deer may be heard for some distance if the ground is frozen hard or if they are running through dry leaves. This sound is distinctive to the experienced hunter, but should be used by him as preparation for the sight of the animal, not merely as an excuse for shooting at the apparent position before the animal can be plainly seen. While the fast-moving sound of running footsteps is very apt to be made by a deer, any slow-moving sound might be made by some other animal. If this sound of slow-moving footsteps is accompanied by the sound of breaking sticks or brush, it is probably made by a man-one of the noisest animals which travel the woods.

While sitting at the foot of a tree in a beech grove waiting for grey squirrels to start their evening harvesting of the many beechnuts in the area, I was surprised to find that a deer had approached to a spot about a hundred feet in back of my position. I had not heard a sound to warn me of its approach; and as it bounded off to the nearest softwood thicket, the sound of its footsteps faded away before the animal reached cover. Later, when the squirrels began to feed, I found their noise in those dry leaves greater than the deer's after its first few startled jumps.

Another time I sighted a feeding deer before it was aware of my presence and I watched as it approached my hiding place. It was feeding on the twigs and buds of some sort of a bush; and, although it didn't seem to look where it placed its feet, it never snapped a dry stick or made any other discernible sound as it neared me. It approached until I could hear the sound of its teeth as they sheared the twigs it was eating, yet I heard no other sound until it became aware of my presence and started to run. It doesn't seem possible that these animals can move around in the woods as silently as they do. When I hear a noise in the woods, I am always a little doubtful if it is a deer until I am actually able to see the animal.

When a hunter sees any of these possible illusions, he should change his position so as to view the object from a different angle. It is of no use to try to identify the object without moving, for the longer a man gazes at an object which he hopes is a deer.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

### About the Author

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