

WORST-CASE SCENARIO®

HOW TO FEND OFF A CHARGING REINDEER

1

Stand your ground.

Most reindeer have been bred to be docile livestock; they are sometimes referred to as “tundra cows.” They will run around, rather than over, a standing person, even when charging in a herd.

2

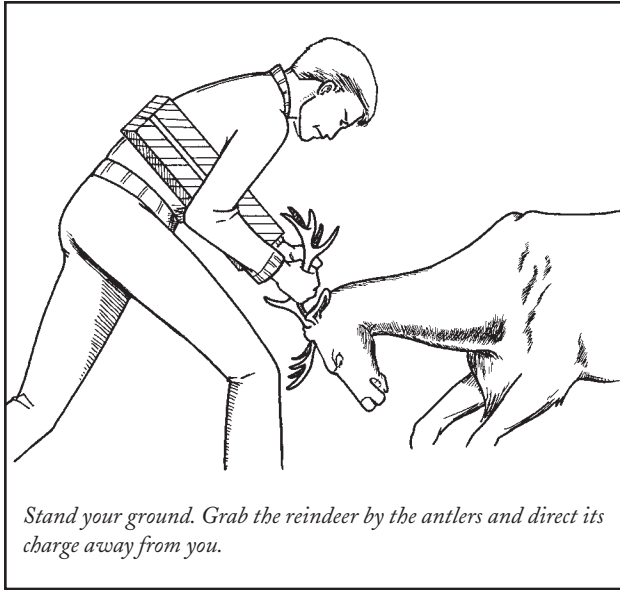
Watch for reindeer in rut.

Reindeer mate from late August to October, when they will be in rut, or heat, and much more dangerous. Each male, or bull, will keep a harem of females and will become unpredictable and aggressive with any person who approaches. While both male and female reindeer have antlers, male reindeer are noticeably larger, weighing 400 pounds or more. During rut, necks on males will be large and swollen.

3

Watch for front-leg kicking.

When disturbed, reindeer will rear up on the hind legs and kick out with the front hooves. Females are generally not dangerous except when defending calves. Stay well back and to the side to avoid being kicked. During rut, reindeer bulls will try to gore rather than kick, if antagonized.



Stand your ground. Grab the reindeer by the antlers and direct its charge away from you.

4 Watch for antler display.

Before goring, a male will often attempt to intimidate by showing, or “presenting,” its antlers, turning his head to the side. Be wary in approaching or cornering a bull reindeer during this display.

5 Back up slowly.

Speak to the reindeer in a soft voice. Do not make any sudden movements.

6 Do not raise your arms over your head.

The bull may take this as a challenge sign that you are also displaying antlers.

7 If the reindeer attempts to gore you, grab the antlers.

Grasp one branch with each hand and attempt to steer the head away from you. If the reindeer tries to lunge forward, you may not be able to stop it, but guiding the antlers may allow you to redirect its charge.

8 Move to the side quickly as you release the antlers.

The reindeer will now be beside you and may just move away. Do not run, or you will call attention to yourself. Carefully put distance between yourself and the reindeer.

9 Call for help.

Using a voice and tone that does not further antagonize the reindeer, advise others in the area of your situation. They may be able to distract the reindeer, if it is still in pursuit.

Be Aware

- Caribou, which are much more aggressive and dangerous, are often mistaken for reindeer. Reindeer have shorter legs and are rounder.
- Male reindeer have huge antlers, with as many as 14 to 18 points per side.