

Royal Parks urge caution to photographers during the deer rutting season

The Royal Parks are reminding visitors to give the wild deer space.



By [Megan Shersby](#)

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Photographers and selfie-takers in search of the perfect rutting [deer](#) image are being urged to keep their distance by The Royals Parks, both for their own safety and also to allow the deer to exhibit natural behaviours.

“Once I counted 60 photographers encircling a single stag,” says Adam Curtis, park manager for Richmond Park.

“Just because our deer are in enclosed parks does not mean they are domesticated. Our deer are wild and therefore unpredictable. People fail to realise this when they are chasing them with a selfie stick, attempting to feed them or even trying to pet them.”

Both red and fallow deer can be found in Bushy and Richmond Parks in London, the two largest of the eight Royal Parks.

During [autumn](#) the red stags and fallow bucks fight to see off rivals and attract females, and the clashes can be extremely violent – although not common, deer can die as a result of their injuries.



Photographers getting too close to deer. © Stephen Darlington

“Stags during rutting season can weigh up to 25 stone, reach speeds of up to 30 miles per hour and have over 20 sharp spikes on their head,” continues Curtis.

“Getting close to them, or any deer, is dangerous. Also, during the rut, stags are being chased by other stags, so people and dogs that get too close risk getting caught in the crossfire.”

The recommendation from The Royal Parks is to keep a minimum 50m distance away from the deer.

For photographers, they advise using a long lead and visiting at off peak times, such as dawn on a weekday.

“Aside from being dangerous and stressful to the deer, getting too close can inhibit natural behaviour,” says Curtis. “There are some very responsible wildlife photographers out there, but sadly there are far too many that value the photo over the subject.”

Dog walkers are also urged to be cautious, and either walk their dog elsewhere or keep their dogs on a lead, keeping to paths and busy areas.