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Why don't we do it, deer?

Oxford scientists discover link between strength of doe and sex of fawn

[Barry Foster](#)

You've heard the legend that a baby's gender is determined by the coital stance employed by its parents. Well, now biologists claim to have proof that it is social not sexual position that counts - that is, when it comes to reproduction in deer.

A team of researchers from Oxford and Edinburgh universities claim to have settled a 30-year dispute by proving that deer and other hoofed mammals ensure the survival of their species by adjusting the sex of their offspring.

The strongest and fittest females are more likely to produce male offspring - ensuring that the next generation of male studs will be more like Rambo than Bambi - whilst the weaker females show a greater tendency to produce female offspring.

Dr Stuart West, a research fellow at Edinburgh University's Institute of Cell, Animal & Population Biology, said that "whilst the physiology that allows this isn't known", the trait was most noticeable in species where the fewest males monopolised mating, such as deer and bison.




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