



## MEDIA RELEASE

**Embargoed until 00.01 Tuesday 2 October 2018**

### **Give rutting deer their space, The Royal Parks charity warns photographers**

Photographers and selfie-takers, desperate to get the perfect shot of wild deer in battle, are being urged by The Royal Parks charity to keep their distance during rutting season.

The annual rut which takes place in Bushy and Richmond Parks between September and November, sees red stags and fallow bucks compete for females. The male deer, pumped full of testosterone, roar, bark and clash antlers to fight off rivals and attract as many females as possible. Clashes can be so violent that the deer can die as a result of their injuries.

Adam Curtis, Park Manager for Richmond Park, said: “Aside from being dangerous and stressful to the deer, getting too close can inhibit natural behaviour. Once, I counted 60 photographers encircling a single stag. There are some very responsible wildlife photographers out there, but sadly there are far too many that value the photo over the subject.”

The Royal Parks’ advice is always to keep a 50-meter distance. If you are taking snaps, use a long lens and consider visiting at off peak times such as dawn on a weekday. Dog walkers are also advised to be cautious and should either walk their dog elsewhere, or make sure they are on a lead and keep to paths and busy areas, where deer are less likely to congregate.

Curtis added: “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.

“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. 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.”

Richmond Park and Bushy Park are the two largest of the eight Royal Parks, and together span more than 3,500 acres. They are managed by the Royal Parks charity and are home to nearly a thousand wild red and fallow deer.

### **Notes to editors:**

For further information please visit: [www.royalparks.org.uk](http://www.royalparks.org.uk).

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### **About The Royal Parks**

The Royal Parks is a charity created in March 2017 to manage 5,000 acres of historic Royal parkland across London.

Every year there are an estimated 77 million visits to The Royal Parks, providing unparalleled opportunities for enjoyment, exploration and healthy living in the heart of London.

The charity looks after eight of London's largest open spaces: Hyde Park, The Green Park, Richmond Park, Greenwich Park, St James's Park, Bushy Park, The Regent's Park and Primrose Hill, and Kensington Gardens. It also manages other important open spaces in the capital including Brompton Cemetery, Victoria Tower Gardens, and the gardens of 10, 11 and 12 Downing Street.

The parks are owned by the Crown with statutory responsibility for their management resting with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The Royal Parks charity manages the parks on behalf of the government.

It costs £36m a year to manage the parks. The charity raises around 75 per cent of this money itself, with the remaining 25 per cent coming from Government.

For further information please visit: [www.royalparks.org.uk](http://www.royalparks.org.uk) and follow us on @theroyalparks , Facebook.com/TheRoyalParksLondon and Instagram.com/TheRoyalParks