

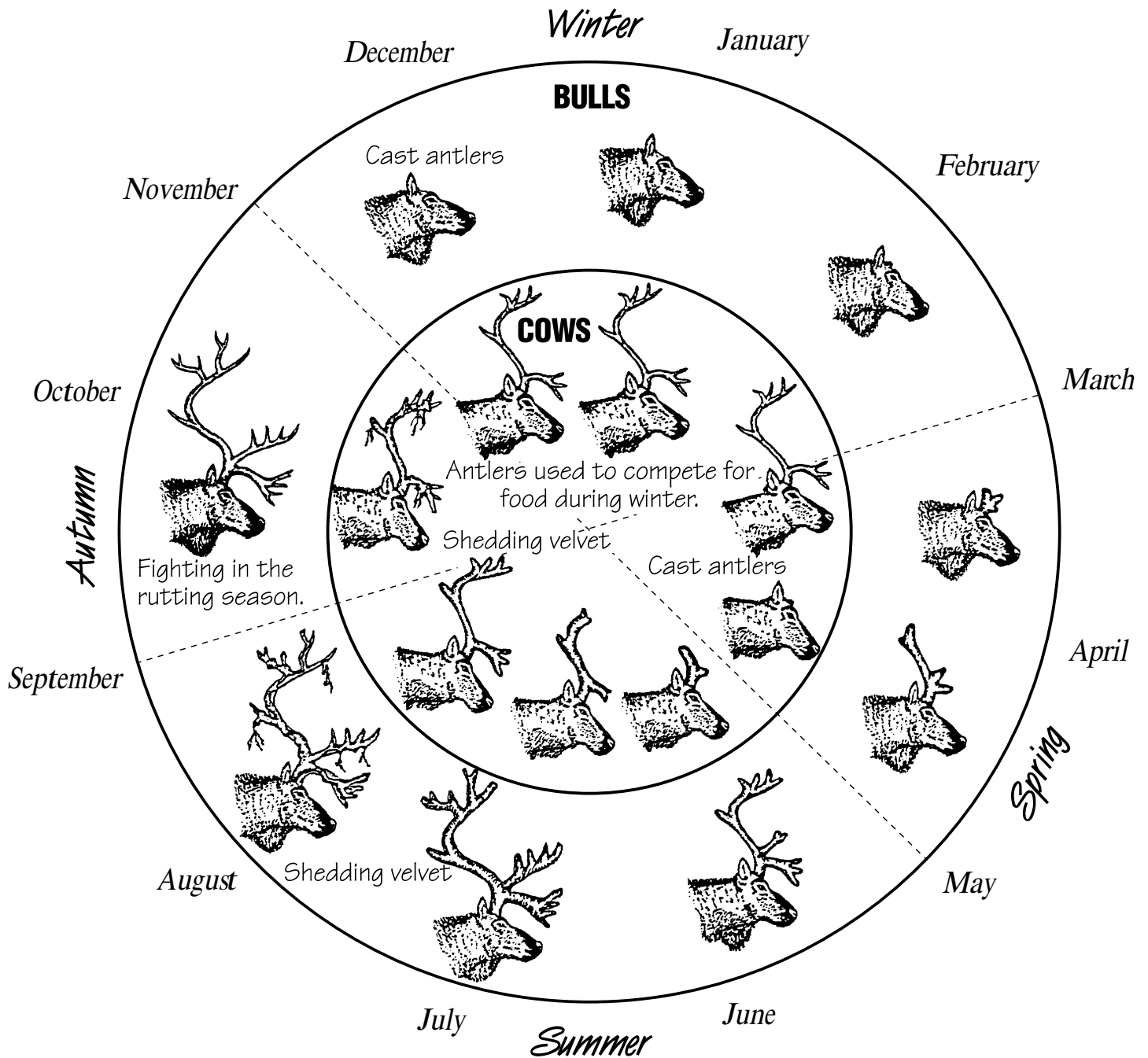
# **The Reindeer Support Scheme**

## ***Student Information Pack***

### **Section 4**

# **ALL ABOUT ANTLERS**

# THE ANTLER CYCLE



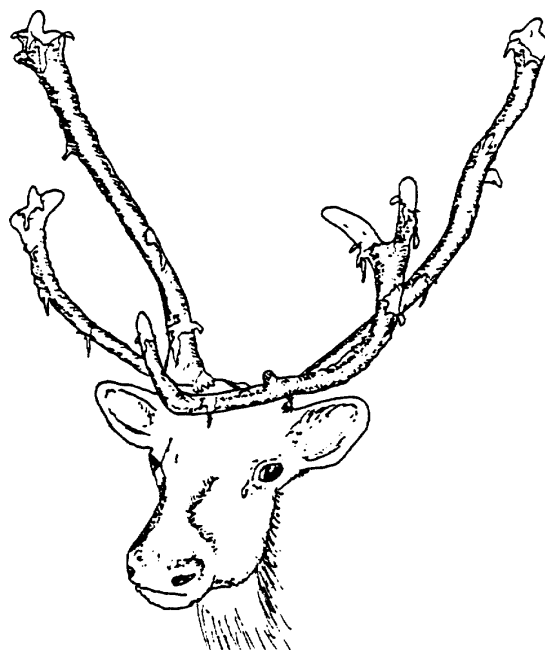
Reindeer are the exception in the deer family because they are the only members in which both males and females grow antlers.

Above is a typical yearly cycle of antlers in the male or "bull" and the female "cow" reindeer.

# ANTLERS vs HORNS

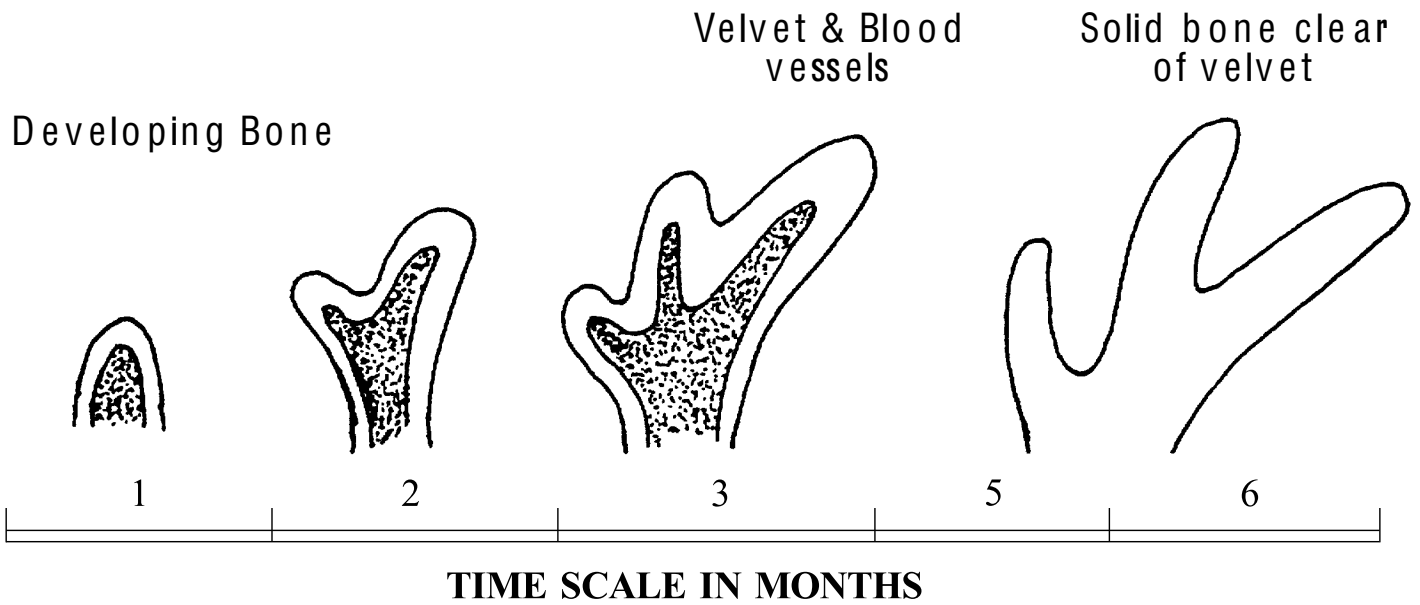


Only members of the deer family grow antlers. Antlers are composed entirely of bone. Every year they fall off and new ones grow. While antlers are growing, the developing bone is covered in a thick velvet skin. The skin protecting the growing antlers carries blood vessels out to the growing tips. When the antlers are fully grown, the velvet is shed and the solid bone underneath is revealed.



Shedding  
Velvet

# ANTLERS



# HORNS

By comparison, horns are another structure which grow from the skull. Horn however, is composed of a protein called Keratin. This is the substance of which our finger nails are composed and, as with our finger nails, they grow continuously from the base. Unlike antlers, horns are not shed, so growth is constant throughout the animal's life. Cattle, Goats, Sheep and Antelope are examples of horned animals. Horns can be aged by counting the growth rings. For example :-

