

## Feral February Episode 5 – Going stag

### Description

*Throughout the month of February, which I am calling –œFeral February,–œ I am going to do something a little bit different –œ I –œ™m going to create a series of theme posts every week day about my favourite things in the world: Animals.*

*Today –œ™s animal is the stag beetle!*

There are over 1,000 species of stag beetle on the planet that live in woodlots and forests, and their eggs are laid on decaying tree stumps or roots, with the larvae staying there for years until they mature.

Adult stag beetles vastly differ in size from one-quarter to 3 and one-quarter of an inch (0.5 –œ 8.5 cm long), with the males much larger than the females. The males are extremely imposing creatures –œ with enlarged mandibles that resemble the antlers of male deer (stags) –œ that they use in mating displays and combat with other males, which led to their name. Female stag beetles, while smaller, have more powerful jaws than the male and can bite if provoked.



Stag beetle. Photo courtesy of the Natural History Museum. [Source](#).

These animals are extremely useful in the natural wood cycle of the forest, as their larvae help digest and recycle old wood while they grow into adults. The biggest danger to the stag beetle is from humans removing dead trees from the forest ecosystem for their own uses, simultaneously removing both their habitat and food source.

Daily trivia:

People believed that, once the adult stag beetles emerge, they do not feed for months, until they mate and pass away. Thanks to worldwide beetle studies, it is now believed that they substitute the wood they ate as larvae with nectar and tree sap as adults.

Here is an extra little bit of Friday trivia:

In Germany, due to the stag beetle's association with the Norse god Thor (the god of thunder), there was a myth that if you placed a stag beetle on your head, it would protect you from being struck by lightning

### **Category**

1. Feral February

### **Tags**

1. animals
2. Feral February
3. insects

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