



# American Pika

## *Ochotona princeps*

-Pika are found on rockpiles and talus slopes only in the very highest elevations at Bandelier.

-Pika are closely related to rabbits and hares but have shorter, rounder ears and their hindlegs are only slightly longer than their front legs.



-Pika do not hibernate in the winter but remain active consuming grasses and plants they collect and store in crevasses under rocks during the warmer months.

-Pika survive the cold winters by burrowing far under the snow where the deep snowpack acts as an insulator to keep them from freezing.

-Pikas emit high pitched whistling calls to communicate and to announce intruders into their territory.

-Pika are active during the day and frequently venture off their rockpiles to eat or to collect plants for later consumption.

-Pika have many predators including weasels, foxes, coyotes, and birds of prey.



-Pika are currently under consideration for threatened status by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Pika are intolerant to even short periods of warm temperatures (> 78 Fahrenheit) and need deep snowpack to survive the winter. Global climate change may pose a threat to the survival of this species. A determination will be made by February, 2010.

