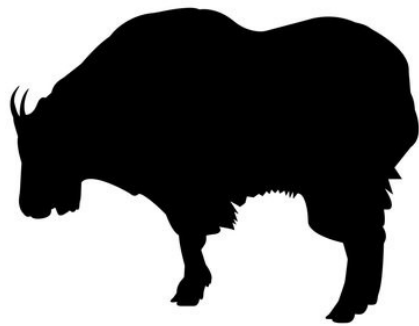


# Animals of the Black Hills

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## Mountain Goat





In the summer months, mountain goats eat a variety of alpine flowers, grasses, and sedges. Mountain goats are more likely to come down from steep heights and eat during the day, seen in the pictures here. In the winter, mountain goats are hard to see because they usually stay at high elevations.

Mountain goats are not originally from South Dakota, but have been living in the granite peaks of the Black Hills after six escaped from the Custer State Park Zoo in the 1920's. During the long winter months, the mountain goat's diet is lean. They winter high in areas where snow is blown away by high winds or in areas where little snow builds up.







Mountain goats are expert climbers. They use their large, strong legs to climb cliffs and across snowy areas. Mountain goats have cloven hooves, or a hoof split into two toes. This stability, along with flexible, soft inner pads, allows them to grip the rocky ledges even if they are icy!







In the summer, mountain goats have a short coat to keep them cool. But in the winter, they grow a long winter coat to keep them warm. When spring comes, mountain goats will shed this thicker layer of hair. Because mountain goats are able to survive at high elevations, they have little competition with other animals for food, especially in the winter!



Both male and female mountain goats have short black horns. Their coats are snowy white and camouflage the goats from predators like mountain lions.





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