

# Junior Rangers and Park Explorers

Great Sand Dunes  
National Park and Preserve



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

# Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve



## *Let's Get Started!*



<p><b>Ages 3-6</b></p>	<p>complete the 4 activities marked with a</p>		<p><b>Kangaroo Rat</b></p>
<p><b>Ages 7-9</b></p>	<p>complete the 6 activities marked with a</p>		<p><b>Bear</b></p>
<p><b>Ages 10-12</b></p>	<p>complete the 7 activities marked with an</p>		<p><b>Elk</b></p>
<p><b>Ages 13&amp;up</b></p>	<p>complete the 6 activities marked with</p>		<p><b>Binoculars</b></p>

To earn a badge or patch, you must complete all sections for your age group.

After finishing all your sections, have a ranger check your book at the Visitor Center. Then you'll take the pledge, and receive your official badge or patch from Great Sand Dunes!

# Safety First!

## Junior Ranger Safety Checklist



As a Junior Park Ranger, your job is to stay safe, and keep the park safe, too!

Check these off as you read them with your parent or guardian:

*The sand can get dangerously hot on summer days! Explore the dunes in early morning or evening during summer.*

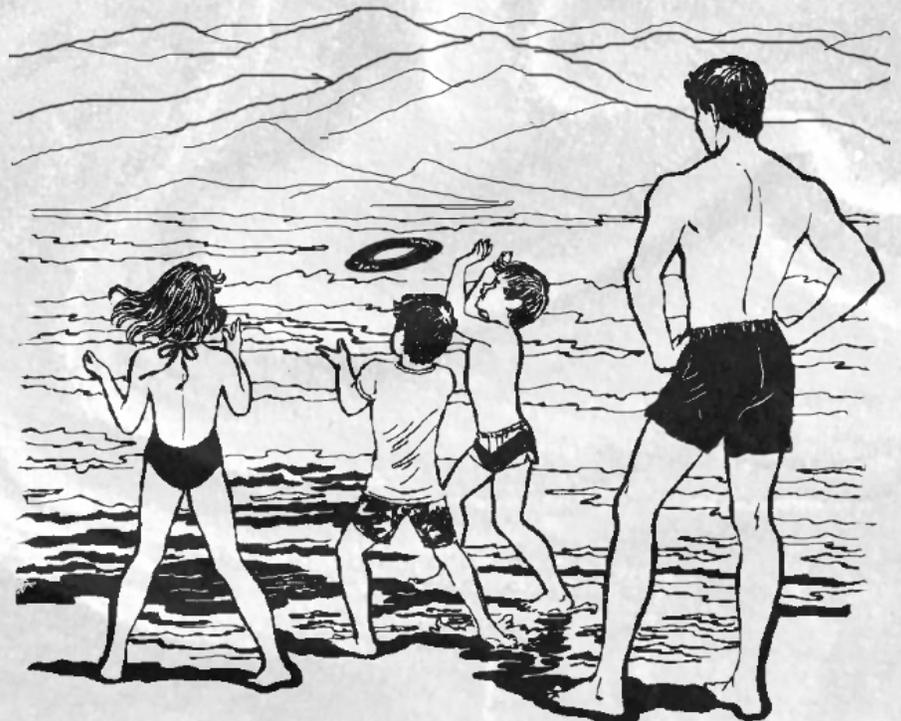
*Never explore the dunes if it looks stormy - lightning can strike at any time during a storm!*

*Never wander off alone.*

*Don't feed wildlife - human food hurts them. Keep wildlife wild.*

*Leave plants, animals, rocks, sand, and artifacts where they are.*

*To stay healthy in this high altitude, drink lots of water.*

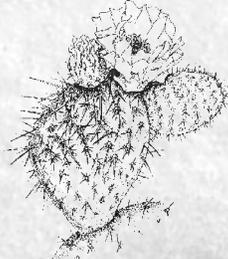


# Dunes Bingo

## Scavenger Hunt



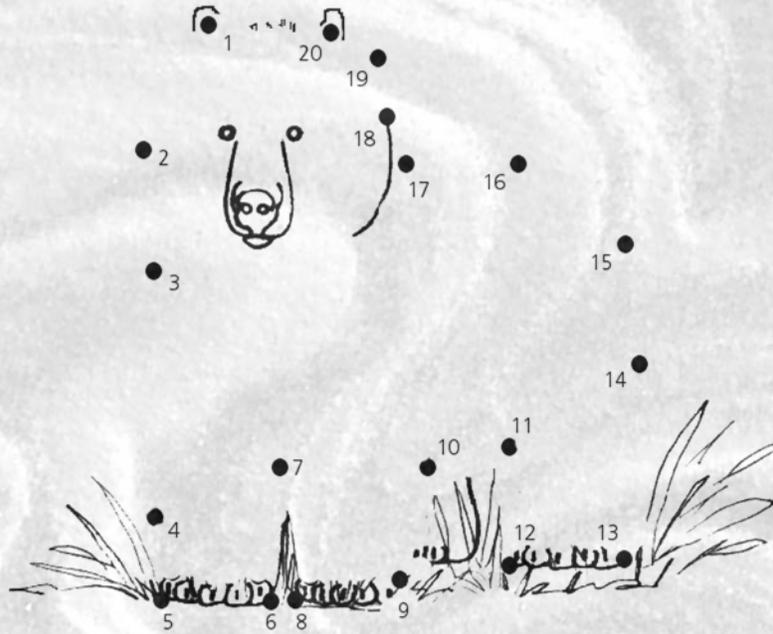
Circle each thing as you see it in the park. To complete this section, you must find four in a row in any direction.

 <p><b>Pine Tree</b></p>	 <p><b>Creek</b></p>	 <p><b>Flower</b></p>	 <p><b>Yucca</b></p>
 <p><b>Stars</b></p>	 <p><b>Park Ranger</b></p>	 <p><b>Mule Deer</b></p>	 <p><b>Cottonwood Tree Leaves</b></p>
 <p><b>Dunes Grass</b></p>	 <p><b>Insect</b></p>	 <p><b>Cactus</b></p>	 <p><b>Tracks</b></p>
 <p><b>Bird</b></p>	 <p><b>Chipmunk</b></p>	 <p><b>Butterfly</b></p>	 <p><b>Black Sand</b></p>

# Dot to Dot



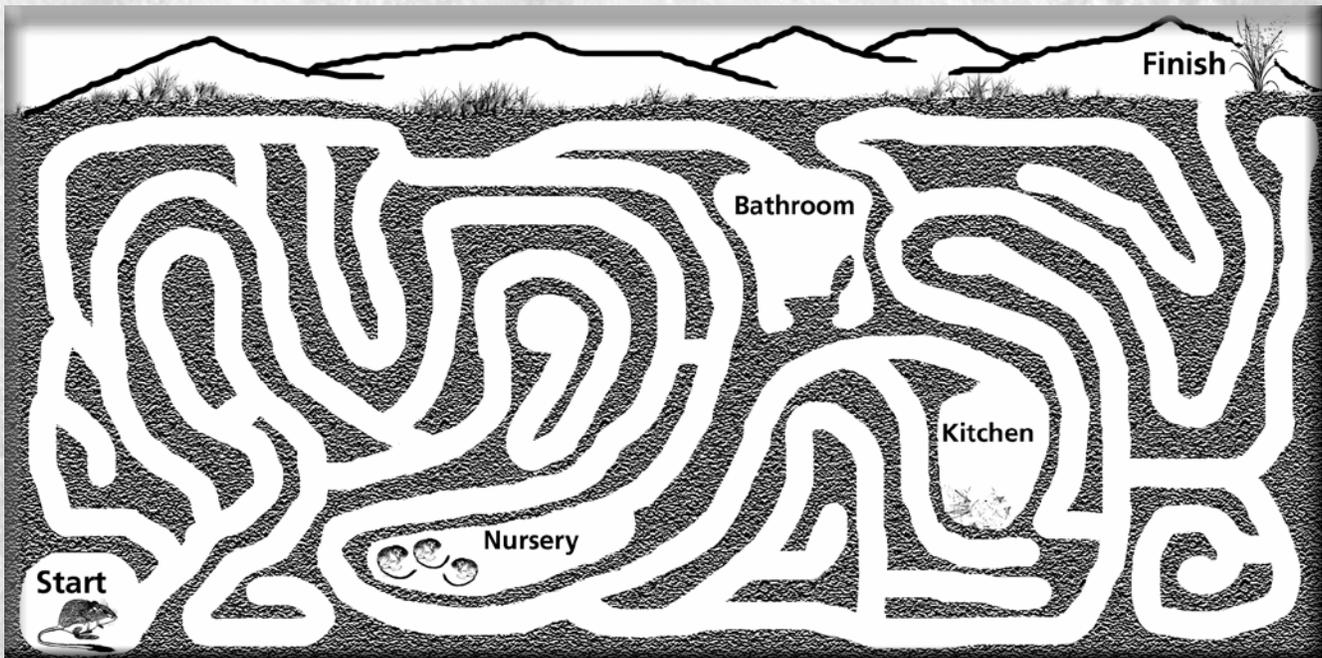
Connect the dots to see an animal that comes out at night here. Be sure to keep your campsite clean so they won't bother you!



# The Rat's Race



Kangaroo rats use rooms in their burrows like people use rooms in houses. Draw a line to help the kangaroo rat find its way up to the dunes.



# Be an Artist



On this page, draw your favorite scene or animal at Great Sand Dunes.  
Borrow crayons at the Visitor Center if you want to make a color drawing!

# Explore the Dunes



Hike or use a dunes wheelchair to explore anywhere you want to go in the sand!

For your safety in summer, plan your dunes time for early morning or evening. On summer afternoons there are often dangerously hot sand temperatures or thunderstorms with lightning.

Each dune has a gentle side where sand builds into ripples, and a steep side where sand slides down. On this picture, draw an arrow to show which direction the wind usually blows. Draw another arrow to show which way the water flows to carry the sand back to the valley.



Look at the sand while exploring the dunes.

Is all the sand the same size? \_\_\_\_\_

Pick up a handful of sand. Look VERY closely. What colors do you see? List five of the colors:

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_



Write a poem about your time in the dunes:

I see \_\_\_\_\_

I smell \_\_\_\_\_

I taste \_\_\_\_\_

I hear \_\_\_\_\_

I feel \_\_\_\_\_

# Dunes Exploration



Hike or use a dunes wheelchair to explore anywhere you want to go in the sand!

For your safety in summer, plan your dunes time for early morning or evening. On summer afternoons there are often dangerously hot sand temperatures or thunderstorms with lightning.

Record the common or scientific names of 5 plant or animal species you observe, beginning at the edge of the dunes. (Check the park map, or ask for information sheets on Common Plants and Endemic Insects.)

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_

As you explore, look closely at the sand. Light, coarse sand washed down from the nearby \_\_\_\_\_ Mountains, while the dark, fine-grained sand originated across the valley in the \_\_\_\_\_ Mountains. Black \_\_\_\_\_ sand comes from both mountain ranges.

In your own creative words, write a short poem describing how the Great Sand Dunes were formed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The Great Sand Dunes, and most of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, are federally designated wilderness. Describe how different the dunes would be today without that protection: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

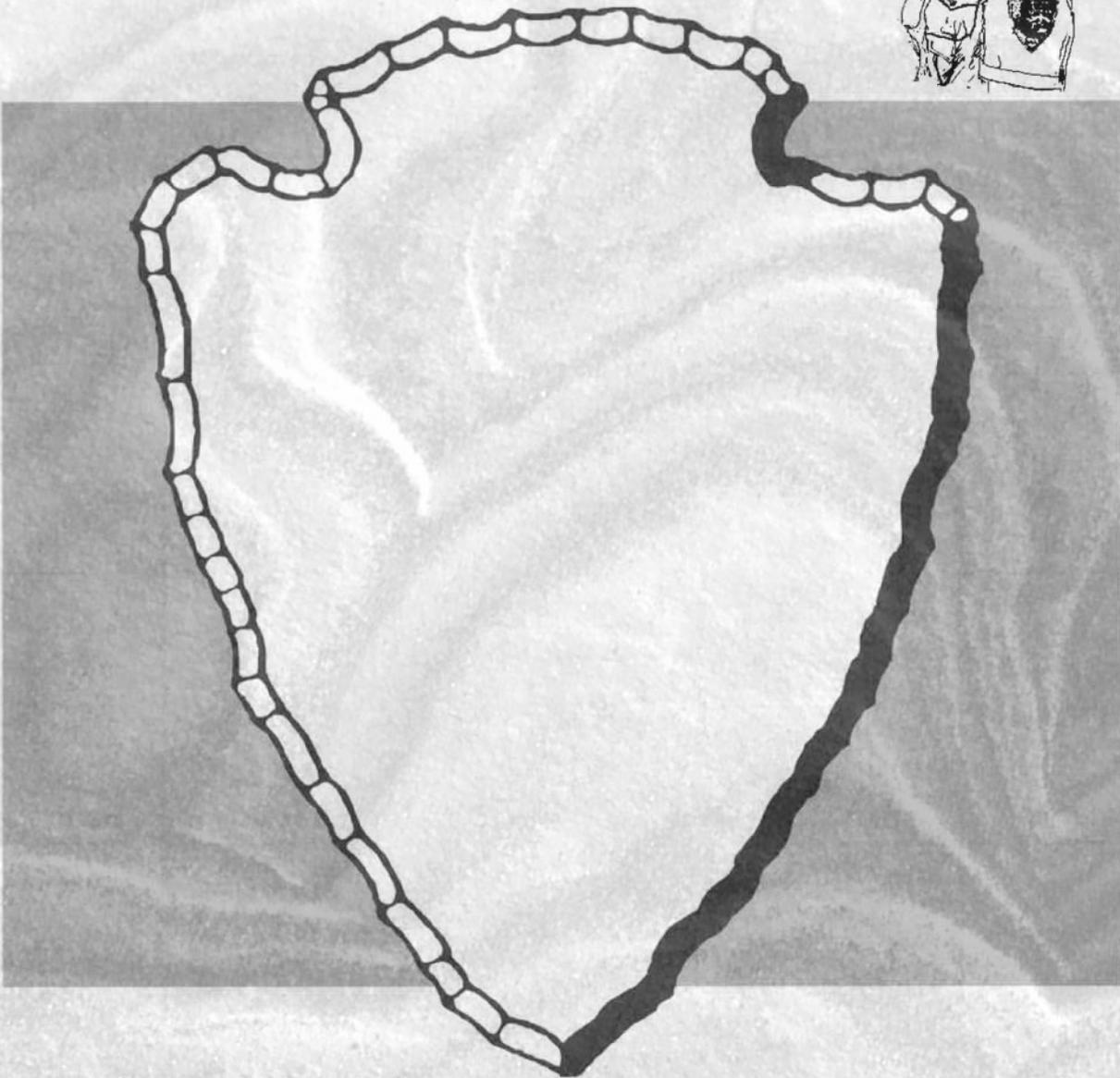
What place in your own community might benefit from better protection? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# The Arrowhead



The arrowhead is the symbol of the National Park Service. You will see it in over 400 National Park Service units, on buildings and ranger uniforms. Below is the outline of the arrowhead, but it is not finished. Find an arrowhead in the park and complete the drawing.



Rangers protect many aspects of our national parks:

- The sequoia tree and bison represent plants and wildlife
- The mountains and water represent scenic beauty and recreation
- The arrowhead represents artifacts and history

# Habitat Diversity



Use the park map to learn about the diverse habitats of Great Sand Dunes.



**WETLANDS** around Great Sand Dunes are generally rich in life. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ thrive in wetlands along streams. A specialized wetlands habitat surrounded by salt-encrusted soils is called a \_\_\_\_\_.



**GRASSLANDS** at Great Sand Dunes are mostly found on the \_\_\_\_\_, the part of the sand deposit that is mostly covered with vegetation. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are two common animals here.



**DUNES** There are at least seven species of \_\_\_\_\_ that live in the dunes and nowhere else on Earth. Two flowers that can live on the dunes are the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_.



**MONTANE FOREST AND WOODLANDS** Juniper trees prefer \_\_\_\_\_ hillsides, while Douglas fir and narrowleaf cottonwood thrive in \_\_\_\_\_ drainages. Hundreds of bird species live in the montane forest, including the \_\_\_\_\_.



**ALPINE TUNDRA** Elevation and long, cold winters are the factors which limit life in this area, which is usually covered by \_\_\_\_\_ much of the year. Alpine tundra is found above \_\_\_\_\_ feet in elevation. One of the tiny flowers that live here is the \_\_\_\_\_.

## Habitat Match (next page)



At Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, there are many different types of habitats – places where plants and animals find food, water, and shelter. On the next page, label the different habitats and name the animals in each section.

(HINT: The PARK MAP will help you find the answers!)

### Dunes

Extreme heat in the summer, high winds, and a lack of water make survival a big challenge in the dunes.



I am the only mammal that can live all the time in the dunes. My body makes water from my food, so I never have to take a drink!  
I am a: \_\_\_\_\_



My long legs keep me off the sand when it's very hot. I don't live anywhere else on Earth!  
I am a: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Wetlands

Water from springs, rain, and melting snow creates wetlands.



I am a shore bird with a long pointed beak to catch bugs and fish in water. I am an: \_\_\_\_\_

I live in streams or ponds in the sand. I use my teeth for many things. I am a: \_\_\_\_\_



### Grasslands

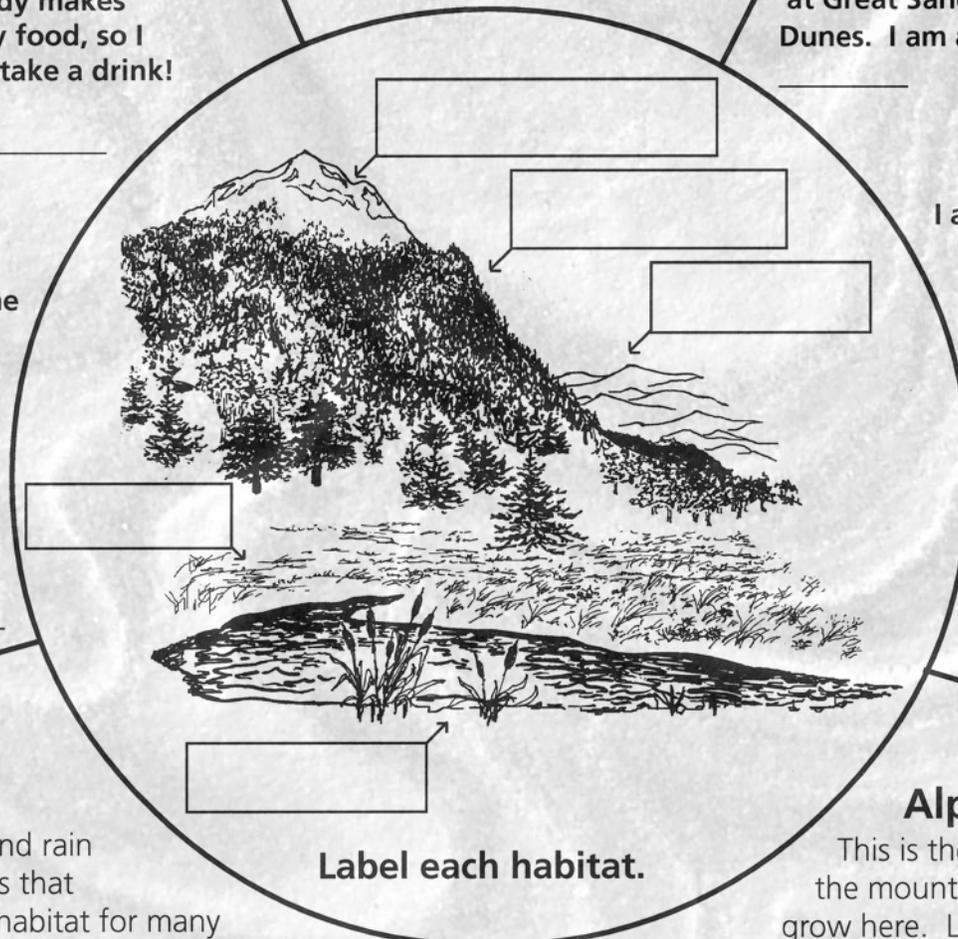
There are few trees in the high grasslands, but lots of space to run.



I am the tallest animal at Great Sand Dunes. I am an \_\_\_\_\_



I am camouflaged to blend in with sand and grass. I eat ants and beetles.  
I am a: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Label each habitat.

### Forest

Lots of snow and rain help grow trees that provide shady habitat for many animals. At different elevations, you will find different types of trees.

I live in the tops of trees and eat the seeds and bark of ponderosa pines.  
I am an: \_\_\_\_\_



I am a small animal in the rabbit family. All summer, I collect plants to eat during the long winter.  
I am a: \_\_\_\_\_



I am an omnivore. I eat meat, berries, and other plants. I hibernate in the winter. I am a: \_\_\_\_\_

I climb the highest mountains and eat alpine plants.  
I am a: \_\_\_\_\_





U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# Great Sand Dunes

National Park and Preserve

\_\_\_\_\_ has completed all requirements to be a

Junior Ranger/Park Explorer

\_\_\_\_\_ National Park Service Ranger or Volunteer

*“As a Junior Park Explorer/Park Explorer, I promise to keep nature clean and beautiful; to protect plants and animals; and to learn more about national parks.”*