

# Mammals

"Why do we so delight in the wild creatures of the forest, some of us so passionately that it colors our whole life?"

- Olaus Murie



Uinta ground squirrel

## General Information

The diversity of wildlife communities in Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway complements the spectacular scenery.

As part of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, these two National Park Service areas contain a variety of wildlife habitats. Each habitat must supply the basic needs of wildlife: food, water, cover and living space. Familiarity with the habitats and habits of wildlife results in increased viewing opportunities.

## Where to Look for Wildlife

### Northern Jackson Lake

From Lizard Creek Campground for four miles south, Highway 89-191 follows the eastern shore of Jackson Lake. Several turnouts and two picnic areas provide vantage points for enjoying the view of the Teton Range across the lake and for wildlife watching. Along the lakeshore, aspen groves and colorful wildflower meadows alternate with extensive conifer forests. Lush meadows attract mule deer and elk, while the lake attracts American white pelicans, Canada geese and other waterfowl.

### Colter Bay

The roads and trails in the Colter Bay area provide views of a wide array of mammals. Deer feed at the edge of conifer forests. Uinta ground squirrels flourish in dry sagebrush meadows, while red squirrels chatter incessantly from conifer forests. Alert observers catch occasional glimpses of

## Habitat Types

### Alpine

Wind and snow limit life above treeline (about 10,000 feet). Some plants and animals have adapted to the seemingly harsh conditions. Plants are mat-like, animals are few. Look for yellow-bellied mamots, pikas and bighorn sheep.

### Sagebrush

The most widespread habitat type in the park, sagebrush flats occur on dry, porous soils. More than 100 species of grasses and wildflowers grow along with abundant sagebrush. Lack of cover makes large animals conspicuous. Look for pronghorns, coyotes, bison, badgers, elk and Uinta ground squirrels.

### Forests

From treeline to valley floor, forests provide cover and food for many mammal species. Lodgepole pines dominate, but forests also contain firs, aspens and spruces. Look for elk, mule deer, martens, red squirrels, black bears and snowshoe hares.

### Rivers, Lakes and Ponds

Aquatic habitats and adjacent forests, marshes and meadows fulfill the needs of many forms of wildlife. Diverse and abundant vegetation offers excellent food and cover. Look for moose, river otters, beavers, muskrats, coyotes, bison and mule deer.

snowshoe hares and martens in the conifer forests. Trails in the Colter Bay area lead to ponds inhabited by beavers, muskrats, waterfowl and sometimes river otters; hiking may also provide views of moose and elk.

### Willow Flats

The extensive freshwater marsh between Jackson Lake Dam and Colter Bay can be viewed from the back deck of Jackson Lake Lodge and the Willow Flats Overlook, 1/4 mile south of the lodge. Shrubby willows provide browse for moose. In evening and early morning elk graze on grasses growing in large patches among willow stands. Beavers have created ponds by damming streams throughout Willow Flats; beaver ponds also harbor muskrats and waterfowl.

### Oxbow Bend

A cut-off meander of the Snake River is one mile east of Jackson Lake Junction. Slow-moving water provides habitat for fish such as suckers and trout, which become food for river otters, and occasionally beaver and muskrats. Moose browse on abundant willows at the water's edge. Elk occasionally graze in the open aspen groves to the east.

### Teton Park Road from Signal Mountain to South Jenny Lake

Extensive sagebrush flats are interspersed with stands of lodgepole pines and aspens. Pronghorn gather in small groups in the flats where they browse on sagebrush. At dawn and dusk look for elk grazing on grasses and wildflowers growing among the sagebrush. Bison occasionally may be found between Signal Mountain and North Jenny Lake Junction. Please park in turnouts or pull vehicle onto the road shoulder while watching wildlife.

### Timbered Island

A forested ridge surrounded by sagebrush lies southeast of Jenny Lake. Small bands of pronghorns, fastest North American land animal, forage on sagebrush. Elk leave the shade of the forest at dusk to eat grasses growing among the sagebrush.

### Snake River

From Jackson Lake Dam south, the riparian area along the Snake River attracts a variety of wildlife. Elk and bison graze in grassy meadows along the river. Bison also eat grasses in the sagebrush flats on the benches above the river. Beavers and moose eat willows that line the waterway.

### Blacktail Ponds

This turnout is located 0.5 mile north of Moose on Highway 26-89-191. Old beaver ponds have filled in and now support grassy meadows where elk graze during cooler parts of the day. Moose browse on willows growing along the river.



Yellow-bellied marmot

## Hiking Trails

### Hermitage Point

Beavers thrive in numerous ponds, while moose forage on succulent pond vegetation and browse on willows. Deer and elk favor open forests.

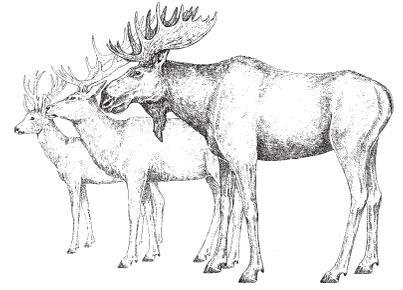
### Two Ocean Lake / Emma Matilda Lake

Numerous elk summer in this vicinity, feeding on meadow grasses during cooler parts of the day; open forests provide refuge for elk during hot summer days. Moose browse on willows growing along the lakeshore. Mule deer, coyotes, black and grizzly bears, martens and red squirrels also frequent this area.

Cascade Canyon and Death Canyon Look and listen for pika and marmots in boulder fields along the trails. Moose browse on willows and other shrubs growing along creeks. Black bears frequent both canyons. Mule deer are occasionally seen at canyon mouths.

### Taggart Lake and Beaver Creek

Willows growing along Beaver Creek provide food for moose. Elk graze on lush grasses and deer browse on shrubs that proliferated since the area burned in 1985.



Bull moose (foreground), bull elk (center) and buck mule deer (background). Males have antlers; females do not. Antlers are shed each year—in December and January for moose, in late winter and early spring for elk and deer.

## Etiquette for Wildlife Observers and Photographers

P Do not approach or harass wildlife. Use binoculars, spotting scopes or long lenses for close views and photographs. Maintain a safe distance of at least 300 feet from large animals such as bears, bison, moose and elk. Do not position yourself between an adult and its offspring. Females with young are especially defensive. Repeated encounters with people have cumulative effects including stress and behavior changes, such as avoidance of an essential feeding area after frequent approach by people. Patient observation from a distance is often rewarded by witnessing interesting animal behavior not influenced by human presence.

P Do not feed wildlife, including ground squirrels and birds. Feeding wild animals makes them dependent on people. Normal behavior and nutrition may be altered and could impact an animals ability to survive winter. Habituation to people and high use areas could eventually result in aggressive behavior in all animals.

- For wildlife, raising young is a private affair. Nesting birds are easily disturbed. If an adult on a nest flies off at your approach, circles you or screams in alarm, you are too close to the nest. Unattended nestlings readily succumb to predation and exposure to heat, cold and wet weather.
- Allow other visitors a chance to enjoy wildlife. If your actions cause an animal to flee, you have deprived other visitors of a viewing opportunity.

### Bears

Black and grizzly bears live throughout the park and may be active any time of day or night. The following guidelines are an abbreviated list. Refer to the park newspaper Teewinot for a complete description of park regulations on proper bear etiquette, food storage, and to learn the difference between a black bear and a grizzly bear. These guidelines are for your protection and for the preservation of the bears, one of the true signs of wild county.

P Do not allow bears to obtain human food. Allowing a bear to obtain human food can result in aggressive behavior. The bear is then a threat to human safety and must be removed or destroyed.

P Avoid encounters. Make bears aware of your presence by making loud noises like shouting or singing. Be especially careful in dense brush or along streams where a bear may not hear you approaching.

P Do not run from a bear. Running may elicit an attack. If the bear is unaware of you, change your route to avoid the bear. If the bear is aware of you but not aggressive, back away slowly, talking in an even tone while waving your arms.

P If a bear attacks stand still. Bears often "bluff charge," stopping before contact. Experts generally recommend standing still until the bear stops, then back away slowly. Do not drop your pack; it may protect your body if attacked. Climbing trees is no protection from bears. If you are knocked down protect your stomach and neck.

## Mammal List

### Insectivora (Insect-eaters)

- c Masked Shrew *Sorex cinereus*
- c Vagrant Shrew *Sorex vagrans*
- r Dwarf Shrew *Sorex nanus*
- u Northern Water Shrew *Sorex palustris*

### Chiroptera (Bats)

- c Little Brown Bat *Myotis lucifugus*
- u Long-eared Myotis *Myotis evotis*
- u Long-legged Myotis *Myotis volans*
- u Silver-haired Myotis *Lasiorycteris noctivagans*
- r Hoary Bat *Lasiurus cinereus*
- u Big Brown Bat *Eptesicus fuscus*

### Lagomorpha (Rabbits and Hares)

- c Pika *Ochotona princeps*
- c Snowshoe Hare *Lepus americanus*
- u White-tailed Jackrabbit *Lepus townsendii*

### Rodentia (Gnawing Mammals)

- a Least Chipmunk *Tamias minimus*
- c Yellow Pine Chipmunk *Eutamias amoenus*
- u Uinta Chipmunk *Tamias umbrinus*
- c Yellow-bellied Marmot *Marmota flaviventris*
- a Uinta Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus armatus*
- c Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus lateralis*
- a Red Squirrel *Tamasciurus hudsonicus*
- u Northern Flying Squirrel *Glaucomys sabrinus*
- u Northern Pocket Gopher *Thomomys talpoides*
- a Beaver *Castor canadensis*
- a Deer Mouse *Peromyscus maniculatus*
- u Bushy-tailed Woodrat *Neotoma cinerea*

- c Southern Red-backed Vole *Clethrionomys gapperi*
- c Heather Vole *Phenacomys intermedius*
- a Meadow Vole *Microtus pennsylvanicus*
- a Montane Vole *Microtus montanus*
- u Long-tailed Vole *Microtus longicaudus*
- c Richardson Vole *Microtus richardsoni*
- r Sagebrush Vole *Lemiscus curtatus*
- c Muskrat *Ondatra zibethicus*
- c Western Jumping Mouse *Zapus princeps*
- c Porcupine *Erethizon dorsatum*

### Carnivora (Flesh-eaters)

- Ursidae - Bear Family
- c Black Bear *Ursus americanus*
- u Grizzly Bear *Ursus arctos*

### Canidae - Dog Family

- a Coyote *Canis latrans*
- u Gray Wolf *Canis lupus*
- r Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

### Mustelidae - Weasel Family

- c Marten *Martes americana*
- u Short-tailed Weasel *Mustela erminea*
- r Least Weasel *Mustela nivalis*
- c Long-tailed Weasel *Mustela frenata*
- u Mink *Mustela vison*
- r Wolverine *Gulo gulo*
- c Badger *Taxidea taxus*
- u Striped Skunk *Mephitis mephitis*
- c River Otter *Lutra canadensis*

### Felidae - Cat Family

- r Mountain Lion *Felis concolor*
- r Lynx *Felis lynx*
- r Bobcat *Felis rufus*

- Procyonidae - Raccoon Family
- r Raccoon *Procyon lotor*

### Artiodactyla (Even-toed Hooves)

- Cervidae - Deer Family
- a Elk (wapiti) *Cervus elaphus*
- c Mule Deer *Odocoileus hemionus*
- r White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*
- a Moose *Alces alces*

### Antilocapridae - Pronghorn Family

- c Pronghorn *Antilocapra americana*

### Bovidae - Cattle Family

- c Bison *Bison bison*
- x Mountain Goat *Oreamnos americanus*
- u Bighorn Sheep *Ovis canadensis*

## Symbol Key

- a - Abundant - likely to be seen in appropriate habitat and season.
- c - Common - frequently seen in appropriate habitat and season.
- u - Uncommon - seen irregularly in appropriate habitat and season.
- r - Rare - unexpected even in appropriate habitat and season.
- x - Accidental - out of known range, or reported only once or twice.
- ? - Questionable - verification unavailable.

Abundance categories are based on the park and parkway wildlife database, research projects and observations by biologists and naturalists.