

Enjoy Wildlife.....Safely.

Mount Rushmore National Memorial is home to a large variety of wildlife, some of which you may encounter during your visit. As a visitor to this habitat, take some time to learn about the wildlife and remember to respect their need for space while viewing them.

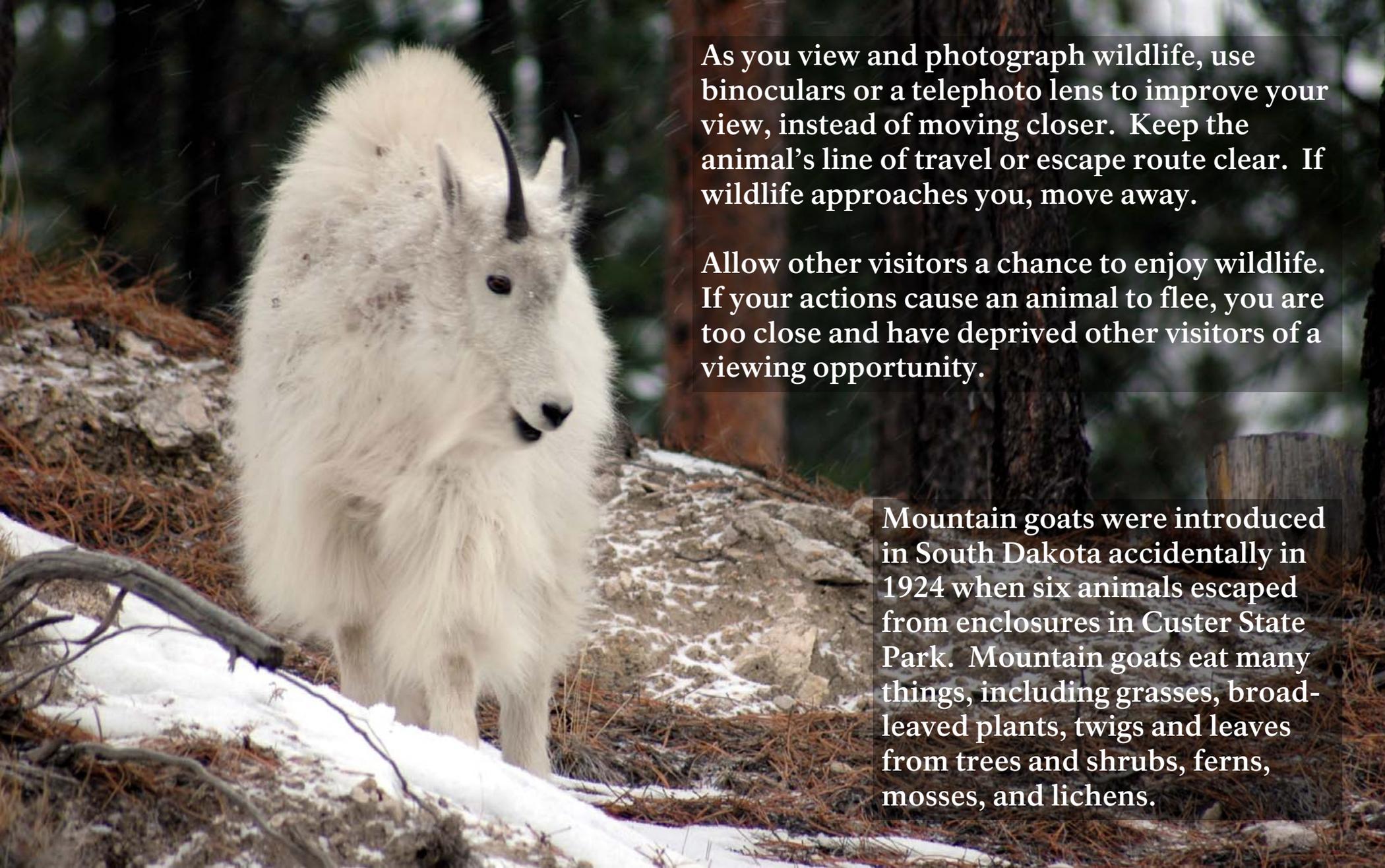
Mule deer (pictured to the left) are commonly seen near Mount Rushmore. They spend summer days in the shade, moving and feeding during the early morning and late evening hours. In winter, they become more active during the warmer daylight hours. Mule deer eat a wide variety of grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and parts of trees.



While some animals may spend part of the year close to roads and developed areas where they are easy to observe, remember to enjoy them from a distance. Wild animals may appear to tolerate people, but approaching too close can cause them stress and disturb them from resting areas, natural feeding areas, and travel routes.



Yellow-bellied marmots can be seen along the Presidential Trail during the summer as they feed on grasses, broad-leaved plants and seeds. Marmots are true hibernators and are usually not active from October until April, depending on weather conditions.



As you view and photograph wildlife, use binoculars or a telephoto lens to improve your view, instead of moving closer. Keep the animal's line of travel or escape route clear. If wildlife approaches you, move away.

Allow other visitors a chance to enjoy wildlife. If your actions cause an animal to flee, you are too close and have deprived other visitors of a viewing opportunity.

Mountain goats were introduced in South Dakota accidentally in 1924 when six animals escaped from enclosures in Custer State Park. Mountain goats eat many things, including grasses, broad-leaved plants, twigs and leaves from trees and shrubs, ferns, mosses, and lichens.

The least chipmunk (below) is a small member of the squirrel family. They can be seen bounding around all parts of Mount Rushmore, usually moving very quickly. Chipmunks do not hibernate and feed year round on the fruits and grains of many plants, seeds from pine trees, and insects.



Please remember not to feed wild animals. Animals have their own sources of food with the proper nutrition in the park; your food can only hurt them. Wrappers and plastic bags that human food is packaged in are often eaten by wildlife, which can cause serious health problems or even death.

Red squirrels like to live in dense stands of mature trees, like the ponderosa pines found at Mount Rushmore. They harvest green pine cones to store for later eating, especially during winter. When available, red squirrels also eat tree buds, flowers, fruits, mushrooms, insects, and occasionally small mammals and bird eggs and nestlings.



Feeding wildlife can also cause them to lose their fear of people. Once habituated, these animals often become increasingly aggressive. Because they are still wild, they remain unpredictable and may strike out with antlers, horns, teeth, hooves, or claws without warning. Your close interaction with wildlife may seem like a positive experience, but you could be setting someone else up for injury. Many people are injured each year by animals that have begun to EXPECT humans to feed them.

Many different birds live at Mount Rushmore during each of the parts of the year, including this white-breasted nuthatch (below). Nuthatches, which live here year round, eat insects, nuts and seeds. Watch for them creeping headfirst down ponderosa pine trunks in search of food.



As you visit Mount Rushmore National Memorial, please remember:

- Do not approach wild animals.
- Do not feed wild animals.

By following these rules, you will help protect the animals here in their natural home. This will allow many generations of visitors to safely experience the thrill of seeing them in a natural state.

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