

Mountain Habitat



What is a mountain habitat?

Mountain habitat is a broad term that defines the terrain rising above the foothills. Many separate habitats make up mountain habitat as a whole. These habitats include coniferous forests of several juniper and pine species, deciduous stands of aspen, meadows, lakes, streams, valleys, alpine tundra, talus slopes and open rocky terrain. Some small areas of the highest mountain habitat retain a blanket of snow all year. In Wyoming, mountain habitat is generally located above 7,000 feet and rises to above 13,000 feet.

Why are mountain habitats important?

Mountain habitat provides food, shelter, and breeding/nesting areas for many species of wildlife. It is also a very important source of snow. Snow that has fallen in the mountains over the winter melts in the spring and summer. This melt water runs into lakes, streams, rivers, and reservoirs, benefiting both wildlife and people.

Where is mountain habitat in Wyoming?

There are several distinct mountain ranges in Wyoming that run generally from the southeast to northwest corners of the state. The Medicine Bow, Laramie, Wind River, Big Horn, Absaroka, and Teton ranges are the most well-known. All of the Wyoming mountain ranges are part of the vast Rocky Mountain chain. Gannet Peak, found near Pinedale, is 13,804 feet high and rises above five glaciers.

Mountain Ecosystem Flashcards

Elk



Bighorn Sheep



Mountain Lion



Yellow-bellied Marmot



Least Chipmunk



Golden Eagle



Mountain Ecosystem Flashcards

Clark's Nutcracker



Mountain Bluebird



Mountain Chickadee



Raven



Boreal Toad



Mountain Fritillary



Mountain Ecosystem Flashcards

White Bark Pine



Subalpine Fir



Glacier Lily



Wyoming Paintbrush



The Sun



Elk

Name: Elk
Scientific Name: *Cervus elaphus*
Predators: Humans, wolves, mountain lion
Prey or Food: Sedges, grasses, woody plants, fallen leaves

Did you know? Native Americans named the elk "wapiti" which means white rump. Early settlers named it elk which is what they called their moose in Europe.

Bighorn Sheep

Name: Bighorn Sheep
Scientific Name: *Ovis canadensis*
Predators: Wolves, coyotes, mountain lions, bobcats, raptor
Prey or Food: Grasses, leafy plants

Did you know? The horns on an adult male can weigh up to 30 pounds which is more than all the bones in his body combined.

Mountain Lion

Name: Mountain Lion
Scientific Name: *Puma concolor*
Predators: Humans, occasionally bear or wolves
Prey or Food: Deer, elk, bighorn sheep, beaver, porcupine, other mammals

Did you know? These cats are ambush predators, they wait in silence then attack from above by leaping onto the shoulders of its prey.

Yellow-bellied Marmot

Name: Yellow-bellied Marmot
Scientific Name: *Marmota flaviventris*
Predators: Raptors, coyote, badger, bobcat, weasels, and marten
Prey or Food: Grasses

Did you know? Also called the rockchuck because they communicate with chucks, whistles, and trills.

Least Chipmunk

Name: Least Chipmunk
Scientific Name: *Tamias minimus*
Predators: Large mammals, reptiles, raptors, other birds
Prey or Food: Berries, seeds, mushrooms, eggs, hatchlings

Did you know? These critters keep busy collecting food to store in their underground burrows.

Golden Eagle

Name: Golden Eagle
Scientific Name: *Aquila chrysaetos*
Predators: No natural predators
Prey or Food: Mammals

Did you know? These "dragons of the sky" are big, fast flying, efficient predators.

Clark's Nutcracker

Name: Clark's Nutcracker
Scientific Name: *Nucifraga columbiana*
Predators: Raptors, reptiles, mammals
Prey or Food: Pine seeds

Did you know? These birds bury the seeds they pull from pinecones. Most are eaten later, but the ones they forget help to regrow the forest.

Mountain Bluebird

Name: Mountain Bluebird
Scientific Name: *Sialia currucoides*
Predators: Other birds
Prey or Food: Insects

Did you know? Male bluebirds arrive each spring before the females in order to establish a nesting site; usually it's an abandoned woodpecker cavity.

Mountain Chickadee

Name: Mountain Chickadee
Scientific Name: *Poecile gambeli*
Predators: Raptors, reptiles, mammals
Prey or Food: Insects, seeds, nuts

Did you know? To survive the winter months, these tiny birds must eat almost constantly to keep up their fat reserves.

Raven

Name: Raven
Scientific Name: *Corvus corax*
Predators: Raptors, humans
Prey or Food: Carrion, mammals, birds, garbage

Did you know? These smart birds will follow other birds in order to raid their nests or stores of food.

Boreal Toad

Name: Boreal Toad
Scientific Name: *Bufo boreas boreas*
Predators: Mammals, birds
Prey or Food: Insects

Did you know? The toads lay their eggs in mountain ponds and streams.

Mountain Fritillary

Name: Mountain Fritillary
Scientific Name: *Boloria alaskensis*
Predators: Mammals, amphibians, birds, reptiles
Prey or Food: Flower nectar

Did you know? It takes this butterfly two years to go from caterpillar to adult.

White Bark Pine

Name: White Bark Pine
Scientific Name: *Pinus albicaulis*
Predators: Mammals, birds
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? This tree is important habitat, food, and shelter to a wide variety of mountain wildlife.

Subalpine Fir

Name: Subalpine Fir
Scientific Name: *Abies lasiocarpa*
Predators: Mammals, birds
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? This tree may not produce cones for the first 20 years of its life.

Glacier Lily

Name: Glacier Lily
Scientific Name: *Erythronium grandiflorum*
Predators: Pollinators, bears and rodents eat the roots; deer and elk eat the pods
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? This flower is also called "avalanche lily" because it is often found on steep mountain slopes.

Wyoming Paintbrush

Name: Wyoming Paintbrush
Scientific Name: *Castilleja linariaefolia*
Predators: Pollinators
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? This is Wyoming's "State Flower."

The Sun

Plants use the sun's energy to grow through a process known as photosynthesis. Because plants are the beginning of all food chains, all plants and animals transfer the sun's energy when they eat.