

# TUNDRA

The word tundra conjures visions of treeless arctic expanses. Here lichens and heath form a dense carpet under shrubby hummocks of willow. In summer, depressions of sedge-marsh vegetation float on waterlogged muskeg soils over permafrost. In winter the land is frozen and forbidding. But tundra, not confined to the Arctic, has more than one type, each with distinctive plants and wildlife. Alpine tundra and grasslands occur at lower latitudes in high mountain ranges. Tundra soils may be deep and boggy in moist locations or thin and rocky with sparse plant life in drier places exposed to wind. But tundra and grasslands are fragile and once scarred can take decades to heal.

BLM manages nearly 100 million acres of Alaska, much of it inaccessible, relatively pristine wilderness. These lands are mostly vast, treeless expanses of arctic tundra mixed with scattered stands of white and black spruce called taiga. Wildlife watchers can also find tundra wildlife in several locations on BLM land in the lower 48 states.



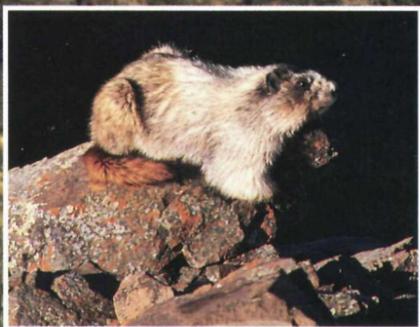
The Denali Highway, one of the most dramatic drives in America, crosses BLM land between Pax-

son and Cantwell, Alaska. Miles of rolling tundra are dotted with small ponds and lakes set against the backdrop of the glacier-clad Alaska Range. Viewers often see grizzly bears, wolves, moose, caribou, foxes, bald eagles and trumpeter swans.

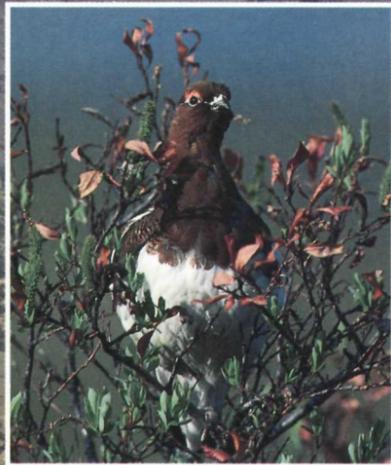
Another fine Alaska BLM area for wildlife observation and hiking is along the Mt. Pinnell Trail in the Steese Mountains Conservation Area. On gently rounded upland tundra, the trail climbs to the very tops of the peaks, providing tremendous views of the surrounding valleys and mountain ranges. One is likely to see collared pikas, caribou, moose, hoary marmots and a host of tundra birds from ptarmigans to water pipits and horned larks. Early summer wildflower displays are outstanding.

The Steens Mountain Loop in eastern Oregon offers easy access to dramatic alpine grasslands. Glacial U-shaped valleys dotted with cirque lakes are carved into the flanks of this fault block mountain. The eastern face is an escarpment dramatically dropping 5,000 feet into the Alvord Desert. At the highest elevations, one can see rosy finches, pikas, elk, pronghorns, bighorn sheep, mule deer, badgers, a host of other animals and one of the highest golden eagle densities in the Great Basin.

BIG INDIAN GORGE NEAR STEENS MOUNTAIN IN OREGON, C. W. TELFORD



HOARY MARMOT, G. C. KELLEY



WILLOW PTARMIGAN, J. JOHNSON/ANIMALS ANIMALS



CARIBOU, TOM MANGELSEN

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

# WATCHABLE WILDLIFE



BADGER, TOM AND PAT LEESON

# AN INVITATION TO ALL AMERICANS...

"Watchable Wildlife" is a new Bureau of Land Management program designed to increase opportunities to photograph, study or simply watch the countless mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates that live on the 270 million acres of federal land that BLM administers.

BLM and Defenders of Wildlife have joined in producing these pages to showcase just a few of the more than 3,000 wildlife species and their habitats on BLM-managed lands. Spectacularly diverse, these habitats encompass mesas, rock canyons, towering mountain peaks, vast sun-drenched deserts, pristine lakes, fast-flowing rivers, evergreen forests, ocean cliffs and arctic plains.

Through its Watchable Wildlife program, BLM is identifying and enhancing areas where the opportunity to view wild animals is greatest. Watchable Wildlife is part of BLM's Fish and Wildlife 2000 and Recreation 2000 programs, intended to improve manage-



CY JAMISON, LEFT, AND RUPERT CUTLER

ment of wildlife and recreation resources on the public lands. These programs call for more recreational opportunities and greater emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement. Riparian areas critical to the survival of so many wildlife species must also be restored and rehabilitated.

But BLM cannot do it alone. Active partnership with Defenders of Wildlife and other advocates for the protection of wildlife and habitat is essential.

We have made a commitment to wise and sustainable use of our public lands and natural resources. With coordination and the shared dedication of all Americans, we can assure sound stewardship of this magnificent heritage. It is our mutual hope that BLM's Watchable Wildlife program will foster greater understanding, appreciation and protection of our nation's wildlife. We invite you to watch and enjoy the eagle, the elk, the grizzly and many other species, and to help preserve them for the inspiration of future generations.

Cy Jamison, Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
U.S. Department of the Interior

M. Rupert Cutler, President  
Defenders of Wildlife



The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for managing public lands and resources to serve the needs of the American people. Resources managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield include recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, fish and wildlife, wilderness and scenic, scientific and cultural values. BLM Public Affairs, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20240. 202-343-5717.



Defenders of Wildlife is a national nonprofit organization of more than 80,000 members and supporters dedicated to preserving the natural abundance and diversity of wildlife and its habitat. A one-year membership is \$20 and includes six issues of the bimonthly magazine DEFENDERS. To join or for further information, write or call Defenders of Wildlife, 1244 Nineteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. 202-659-9510.

# COME SEE THE WILDLIFE ON BLM LANDS

As more Americans turn to the outdoors for pastime activities, they are saturating already popular recreation areas. Whether to escape urban overcrowding or to seek new adventures, increasing numbers are using public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Interest in wildlife is expanding even faster than general recreation use. Each year, millions of people are picking up their cameras, binoculars and spotting scopes to watch wildlife in natural settings. In response, BLM has made Watchable Wildlife a key component of Fish and Wildlife 2000 and Recreation 2000, its strategic plans for managing wildlife habitats and recreation resources.

Many challenges face BLM in achieving the goals of Fish and Wildlife 2000. Historically, uses of the land have focused primarily on minerals, timber and livestock grazing. Competition for forage and water

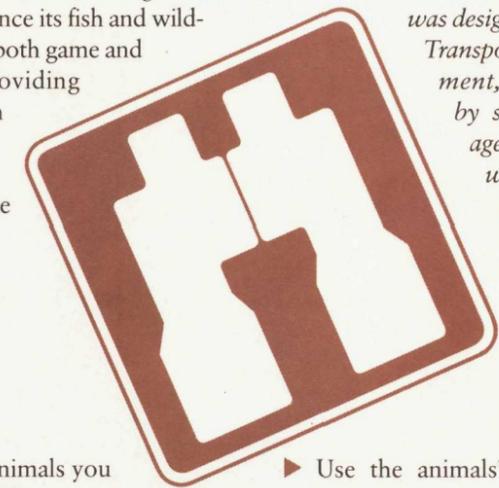
increased between wildlife and domestic livestock. Many riparian areas were degraded, reducing the productivity of habitats. For some species, habitats were fragmented into parcels too small and isolated to meet their needs. In the last 20 to 30 years, however, federal and state agencies and many public land users have come to realize the importance of wildlife conservation and management. In recent years some restoration has been undertaken. Much more is needed. But with public support, improvement and recovery are certainly achievable.

In recognition of the public's changing priorities, BLM is moving to conserve and enhance its fish and wildlife resources, both game and nongame. Providing the public with meaningful ways to enjoy wildlife is one

step toward achieving BLM's management goals. Watchable Wildlife is a program signaling BLM efforts to balance recreation resources and wildlife habitat needs with other resource considerations.

The following pages describe some of the major habitat types and the native wildlife to be seen on BLM lands. For each habitat type, several outstanding viewing areas are highlighted with the Watchable Wildlife logo. For more information about these and many other significant viewing areas, you may contact the BLM offices listed on the next two pages.

*This binocular logo, which was designed by Oregon's Transportation Department, is being used by state and federal agencies to identify wildlife viewing locations.*



## WILDLIFE-WATCHING ETIQUETTE

With wildlife observation and photography becoming significant pastimes, it's important to keep in mind the stresses that such activities can cause wildlife. Careless intruders can threaten animals, which then become anxious and sometimes develop dietary and health problems.

For the well-being of the animals and to make the most of your time viewing them, please keep the following guidelines in mind:

▶ Watch from a distance with binoculars, spotting scopes and telephoto

lenses. If the animals you watch are watching *you*—with heads up and ears pointed in your direction—or are nervous, you are probably too close or moving too quickly. Sit quietly or move slowly away until the behavior changes. Move casually, calmly and *not directly toward* the wildlife. Allow animals to keep you in view—don't surprise them.

▶ Don't follow, chase or treat wild animals in any way that might be interpreted as harassment, which is unlawful. Keep pets in your vehicle.

▶ Use the animals' behavior as a guide. Limit the time you spend with them, just as you would when visiting any friend's home.

▶ Respect the space of others who may be viewing the same wildlife. If you approach too closely, you will ruin everyone's opportunity for natural, relaxed photographs and observation.

*Adapted with permission from "Etiquette of Wildlife Watching," Colorado Division of Wildlife.*

# WATCHABLE WILDLIFE ... A SAMPLER OF LOCATIONS

## ▶ ALASKA

- 1 F Campbell Tract Facility
- 2 C Norton Sound and the Seward Peninsula
- 3 C North Slope
- 4 T White Mountains National Recreation Area
- 5 T Dickey Lake
- 6 T Denali Highway, Paxson to Cantwell
- 7 T Mt. Pinnel Trail
- 8 R Gulkana River

222 West 7th Avenue, #13  
Anchorage, AK 99513  
(907) 271-5555



This is a sampling of BLM Watchable Wildlife areas, including the locations mentioned on the next few pages. For more information on a particular area and the wild species that live there, write or call one of the BLM state offices listed here.

Habitat types are coded as follows:

S = Shrublands and Grasslands

R = Riparian

F = Forests

D = Deserts

C = Coasts

T = Tundra

## ▶ ARIZONA

- 1 F Mount Trumbull
- 2 S Empire/Cienega Resource Conservation Area
- 3 D Gila Box Canyon
- 4 R Betty's Kitchen and Interpretive Area
- 5 R San Pedro River National Conservation Area

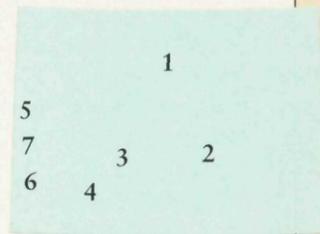
P.O. Box 16563  
Phoenix, AZ 85011  
(602) 640-5504



## ▶ COLORADO

- 1 F Georgetown Bighorn Sheep Viewing Area
- 2 S Arkansas River Canyon
- 3 S Sapinero Wildlife Management Area
- 4 T Powderhorn Primitive Area
- 5 D Rabbit Valley-Brewster Ridge
- 6 R Dolores River
- 7 R Unaweep Seep

2850 Youngfield Street  
Lakewood, CO 80215  
(303) 236-1700



## ▶ CALIFORNIA

- 1 F Butte Creek Forest Research Natural Area
- 2 S Bodie Hills
- 3 C Mouth of the Mattole River
- 4 D Desert Tortoise Natural Area
- 5 D Carrizo Plain Natural Area
- 6 R Cache Creek
- 7 R Big Morongo Canyon

2800 Cottage Way, E-2841  
Sacramento, CA 95825  
(916) 978-4746



## ▶ IDAHO

- 1 F Wolf Lodge Bay
- 2 S Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area
- 3 S Snake River Birds of Prey Area
- 4 R Snake River, South Fork
- 5 R Summit Creek

3380 Americana Terrace  
Boise, ID 83706  
(208) 334-1406



## ▶ MONTANA

- 1 S Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River
- 2 S Rocky Mountain Front
- 3 S Big Sheep Creek-Medicine Lodge Valley
- 4 R Howrey Island

P.O. Box 36800  
Billings, MT 59107  
(406) 255-2911



## ▶ NEVADA

- 1 S Brown's Knoll
- 2 S Ely Elk Viewing Area
- 3 D Goshute Mountains
- 4 D Red Rock Canyon Recreation Area
- 5 R Mahogany Creek
- 6 R Ash Springs

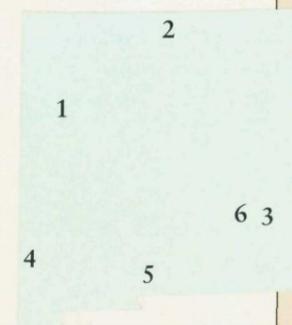
P.O. Box 12000  
Reno, NV 89520  
(702) 785-6586



## ▶ NEW MEXICO

- 1 F El Malpais National Conservation Area
- 2 S Wild Rivers Recreation Area
- 3 D Mescalero Sands
- 4 D Lower Gila Box Canyon
- 5 D Organ Mountains
- 6 R Overflow Wetland Wildlife Area

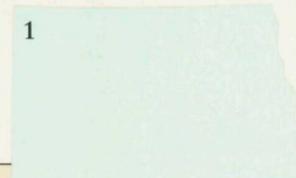
P.O. Box 1449  
Santa Fe, NM 87504  
(505) 988-6316



## ▶ NORTH DAKOTA

- 1 R Alkali Lake

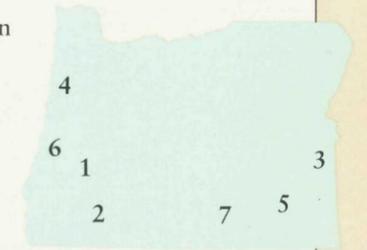
2933 Third Avenue, West  
Dickinson, ND 58601  
(701) 225-9148



## ▶ OREGON

- 1 F North Umpqua Wild and Scenic River
- 2 F Rogue Wild and Scenic River
- 3 S Leslie Gulch
- 4 C Yaquina Head
- 5 T Steens Mountain
- 6 R Dean Creek Elk Viewing Area
- 7 R Warner Lakes

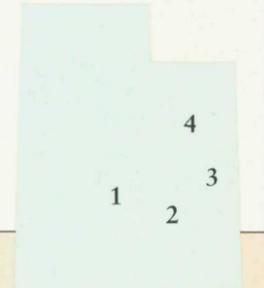
P.O. Box 2965  
Portland, OR 97208  
(503) 231-6274



## ▶ UTAH

- 1 S Parker Mountain
- 2 S Henry Mountains
- 3 D Colorado River
- 4 R Pariette Wetlands

P.O. Box 45155  
Salt Lake City, UT 84145  
(801) 539-4001



## ▶ WASHINGTON

- 1 C Iceberg Point and Point Colville, Lopez Island

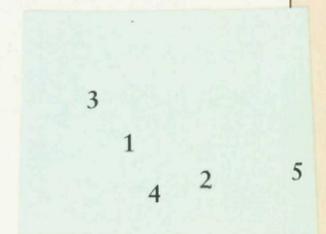
P.O. Box 2965  
Portland, OR 97208  
(503) 231-6274



## ▶ WYOMING

- 1 S Red Canyon and Sinks Canyon Area
- 2 S Seminoe Road
- 3 S Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Area
- 4 D Red Desert
- 5 R Table Mountain Wildlife Habitat Unit

P.O. Box 1828  
Cheyenne, WY 82003  
(307) 772-2334



# COASTS

Without ever straying from public land, wildlife watchers can see whales, steelhead trout and Pacific salmon, puffins, guillemots, sea lions and seals. BLM's ocean-front lands encompass tidepools, sea cliffs, marshy deltas and barrier islands, each with its own characteristic wildlife.

Whether furiously pounding the headlands with storm-driven waves or gently flooding and receding in estuarine deltas, the tide constantly pulls and mixes nutrients from land and sea, creating some of the richest wildlife habitats in the nation. Sea-birds nest securely on shoreline cliffs and nearby islands; sea lions haul out on rocky ledges at low tide to rest after pursuing their prey; gray whales cruise near the coast on their annual migrations; and starfish, limpets, sea urchins and other tidepool creatures and plants unobtrusively but tenaciously live out their lives in the vortex of the mixing zone. On BLM coastal lands where salmon return to spawn, logging is often restricted along migration streams to prevent sedimentation and protect water quality.



Dramatic Yaquina Head near Newport on the Oregon coast is quite accessible. Here at the old lighthouse one can watch migrating

gray whales, which often come within a few hundred yards of shore. Visitors also can watch the antics of nesting seabirds and explore life in the tidepools.

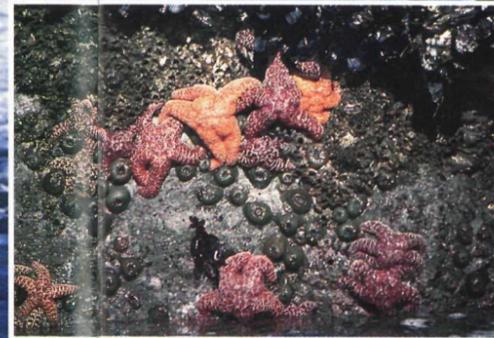
Unlike the mostly rockbound coast of Oregon, the tidal flats of the Mattole River near Petrolia, California, are particularly attractive to shorebirds, which probe the exposed muddy surface for invertebrates. Peak opportunities for observing shorebirds come during autumn migration. It's also possible to see gray whales, harbor seals and migrating salmon.

Alaska has the longest strands of BLM coastal habitat. However, getting to them usually requires flying to a remote village by chartered plane. The most extensive coastal fringes are found in the west along Norton Sound, the adjacent Seward Peninsula and the North Slope of the Brooks Range. Between Point Barrow and the Colville River delta along the Beaufort Sea, thousands of small ponds and lakes dot the tundra flats. Shallow estuaries are protected by offshore barrier islands. The wide deltas of the many rivers that empty into the sea here are summertime magnets for millions of waterfowl and shorebirds. Bowhead and beluga whales swim in nearby coastal waters and an occasional polar bear prowls the shore.

OREGON COAST AT YAQUINA HEAD, C. W. TELFORD



CALIFORNIA GRAY WHALE, FRANK S. BALTHIS



YAQUINA HEAD TIDEPOOL, C. W. TELFORD



TUFTED PUFFIN, ART WOLFE



HARBOR SEALS, FRANK S. BALTHIS

# FORESTS

Forest habitats can be dense, almost impenetrable woods on gently sloping terrain, open areas of isolated trees or scattered stands on steep and rugged cliffs and rock outcrops. Wildlife often varies with each forest type. Most BLM forest habitat—43 million acres in the intermountain and high-desert West—is savanna-like juniper-pinyon pine woodland. Smaller acreages of inland conifer forest and aspen groves are scattered on some of the higher mountains. In dramatic contrast to the juniper-pinyon forests are the large conifer forests blanketing the landscape in other regions, notably in Oregon, California, Idaho, Montana and Alaska.

The most impressive BLM forests are the old-growth stands of giant trees. On more than 2 million acres, ancient moss-covered Douglas firs, western hemlocks and other trees, some more than 800 years old, provide habitat for wildlife species that wouldn't survive without it. The northern spotted owl, pine marten, red-backed vole and marbled murrelet, a seabird that nests exclusively in ancient forests, are among more than 200 old-growth-dependent species. Large trunks lying on the forest floor provide essential nutrients for young plants and help stop soil erosion. In streams, they create fish habitat and help maintain streambank stability. These trunks and standing snags house many wildlife species. The new Animal Inn program, cosponsored by BLM and the U.S. Forest Service, encourages people not to cut down snags but to work with resource managers to protect these wildlife shelters.



The Rogue River in Oregon is flanked by stands of ancient trees reached by floating the river or hiking the riverside trail. The North

Umpqua River is followed by state Highway 138. Both are part of the national wild and scenic river system and are good places to view ospreys, bald eagles, spotted owls, goshawks, black bears, river otters, salamanders and other denizens of damp forests, as well as several species of spawning salmon. Ring-tailed cats and flying squirrels are active mainly at night.

A diverse assemblage of wildlife and habitat types beckons wildlife watchers traveling through the Big Sheep Creek-Medicine Lodge Valley south of Dillon, Montana. The 50-mile-long valley is bordered by 10,000-foot peaks and features lodgepole pine-fir forest, willow-lined creeks, aspen woodland and sagebrush rangeland. The valley's outstanding diversity of wildlife includes bighorn sheep, moose, elk, deer, black bears, bald eagles, numerous other birds of prey and many nongame animals.

In mountainous country just west of Denver, the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep viewing area at Georgetown, Colorado, offers excellent opportunities for close viewing of this species, primarily during fall and winter. Because the bighorns are often near a posted research site, visitors must stay at a distance to avoid disturbing ongoing studies.

December and January are best for watching bald eagles at Wolf Lodge Bay on northern Idaho's Lake Coeur d'Alene. Mixed stands of western larch, Douglas fir, ponderosa pine and grand fir surrounding the lake provide between-meal and overnight roosts for the 40 to 70 eagles that come here to gorge themselves on spawning landlocked kokanee salmon. Remains of the salmon that fall to the ground below the trees provide important food for opportunistic crows and ravens not adapted to capturing fish in the water.



MOOSE, TOM AND PAT LEESON



SPOTTED OWL, TOM AND PAT LEESON



BLACK BEAR, DOUGLAS H. CHADWICK



PINE MARTEN, MICHAEL S. QUINTON

OLD GROWTH DOUGLAS FIR FOREST, TOM AND PAT LEESON

# DESERTS

BLM manages large expanses in all four major U.S. deserts. Desert surfaces, even more fragile than tundra soils, take centuries to recover from harsh human activity. To protect larger portions of the desert, BLM restricts intensive recreation to certain areas.

Many resident animals burrow underground during the daytime, hence wildlife watchers will get more sightings early and late in the day. Waterholes attract animals such as mule deer or bighorn sheep.

The Great Basin, largest of the four deserts, covers much of Nevada, eastern Oregon, southern Idaho, western Wyoming, western Colorado and some of Utah. Situated mostly above 4,000 feet, it is considered the only "cold" U.S. desert. Winters in this sagebrush habitat are typically snowy. In warmer months, annuals and bunchgrasses grow among the shrubs. The area includes the West's most important winter ranges of mule deer, elk, pronghorns, bighorns, bison and sage grouse.

In southern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona, the Chihuahuan Desert gets rain in summer and cool, dry weather in winter. Sneed pin-cushion and Lloyd's hedgehog cacti grow here, as do the yucca, agave, ocotillo, mesquite and creosote bush.

The Sonoran Desert, to many the "classic" desert, covers southwestern Arizona and the southeastern tip of California. Receiving both summer and winter precipitation, its low elevations make freezing temperatures rare. This climate supports the well-known saguaro cactus, as well as many kinds of small trees such as the paloverde, ironwood and mesquite.

Northwest of the Sonoran, in southeastern California and southern Nevada, is the Mojave Desert. The familiar Joshua tree flourishes here, fed by winter precipitation.



The Carrizo Plain Natural Area west of Bakersfield, California, features a remnant alkali lake, interior coastal saltbush scrub habitats and annual grasses. Endangered or threatened wildlife living here includes the San Joaquin kit fox, giant kangaroo rat, blunt-nosed leopard lizard and San Joaquin antelope squirrel. Up to 6,500 sandhill cranes winter in the Carrizo in January. Prairie and peregrine falcons, golden eagles, ferruginous and rough-legged hawks, burrowing owls and other birds of prey also frequent the plain.

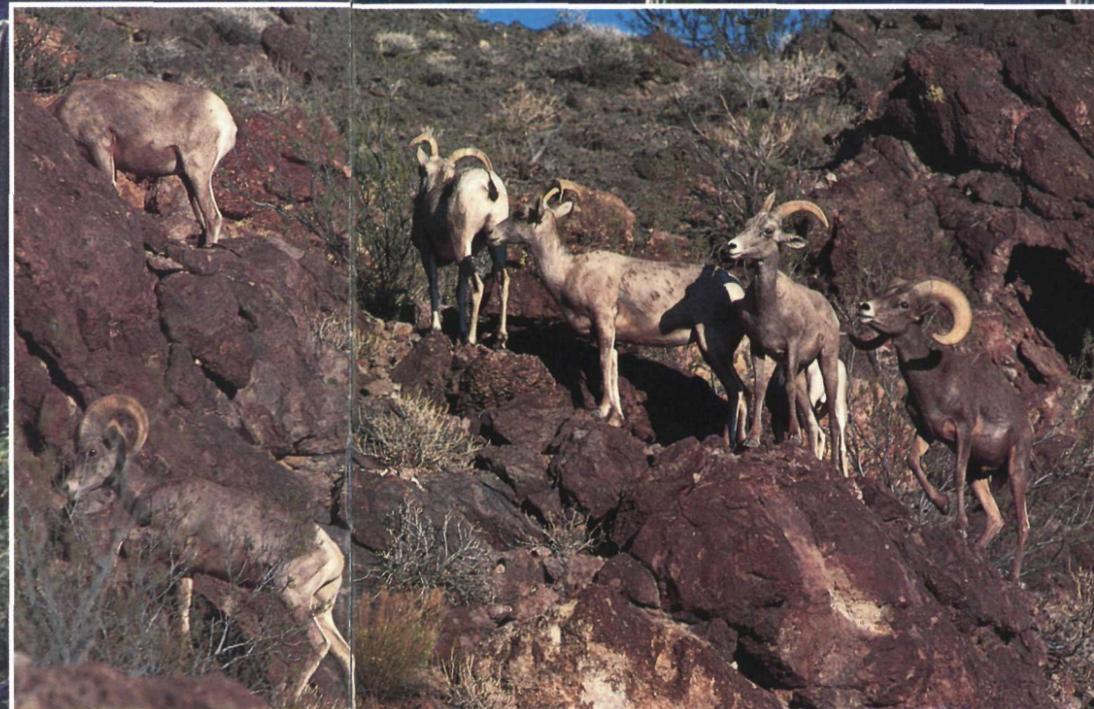
Desert tortoises can be seen in the BLM-designated Desert Tortoise Natural Area near California City in Kern County. Near Las Vegas, Nevada, the Red Rock Canyon Recreation Area offers year-round opportunities to see and photograph desert bighorn sheep on a large sandstone escarpment. The sheep, which inhabit the cliff faces and talus slopes between 3,000 and 6,000 feet above sea level, are accustomed to the presence of humans.

The spectacular Organ Mountains near Las Cruces, New Mexico, are a good place to see Chihuahuan Desert wildlife. Plants on the lower slopes and higher-elevation oak-pinyon and ponderosa pine forest support a wide variety of birds, mammals and reptiles.

The Chihuahuan and Sonoran deserts meet in a transition zone in western New Mexico and eastern Arizona. One of the best areas to see plants and animals of both deserts is along the Gila River. Both the Gila Box Canyon in Arizona and the Lower Gila Box Canyon in New Mexico are excellent locales to look for mountain lions, coatis, javelinas, yellow-billed cuckoos, roadrunners, black and zone-tailed hawks and several endangered fish species.



SAN JOAQUIN ANTELOPE SQUIRREL, M. A. CHAPPELL/AA



DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP, JEFF FOOT



PEREGRINE FALCON, R. & D. AITKENHEAD/AA



BLUNT-NOSED LEOPARD LIZARD, JOHN GERLACH/ANIMALS ANIMALS

SAGUAROS IN ARIZONA, JOHN GERLACH/EARTH SCENES

# RIPARIAN LANDS

Though they comprise less than one percent of the land area in the West, riparian areas harbor the greatest animal and plant diversity of any habitat. These plant communities often grow in narrow strips along streambanks, seeps, lakes, marshes and large springs. Many consider them the single most important wildlife habitat type. One recent study in Arizona and New Mexico found that four fifths of all native vertebrate species were at least partly dependent on riparian habitat.

River otters and beavers live in many riparian settings. Alaskan grizzly and brown bears forage there for berries, roots and salmon. Ducks and geese need these habitats for nesting and migration stopovers. In Arizona, red bats feed and roost in riparian zones. For some desert pupfish species, the sole habitat is one or two specific springs.

Riparian areas are among the most impacted of wildlife habitats. Only about three percent of Arizona's original riparian endowment, for example, remains relatively pristine. Even in states where impacts have been less severe, these zones still may be substantially depleted. Some experts consider pristine stands of water-dependent cottonwood-willow, once widespread in the West, our rarest natural forest community.

Yet riparian areas are amazingly resilient. BLM's objective is to protect and restore many of these areas. In some locations, BLM has created new wetlands. The 9,000-acre Pariette Wetlands in Utah and 1,700-acre Table Mountain Wildlife Habitat Unit in Wyoming are two of these where BLM also provides nesting platforms for Canada geese.



The San Pedro River National Conservation Area, an outstanding ecosystem southeast of Tucson, Arizona, is the nation's only congressionally designated riparian conservation area. Established to preserve the best broadleaf riparian ecosystem in Arizona, it harbors more than 350 bird species, including the rare western yellow-billed cuckoo and green kingfisher, as well as half the known U.S. population of gray hawks.

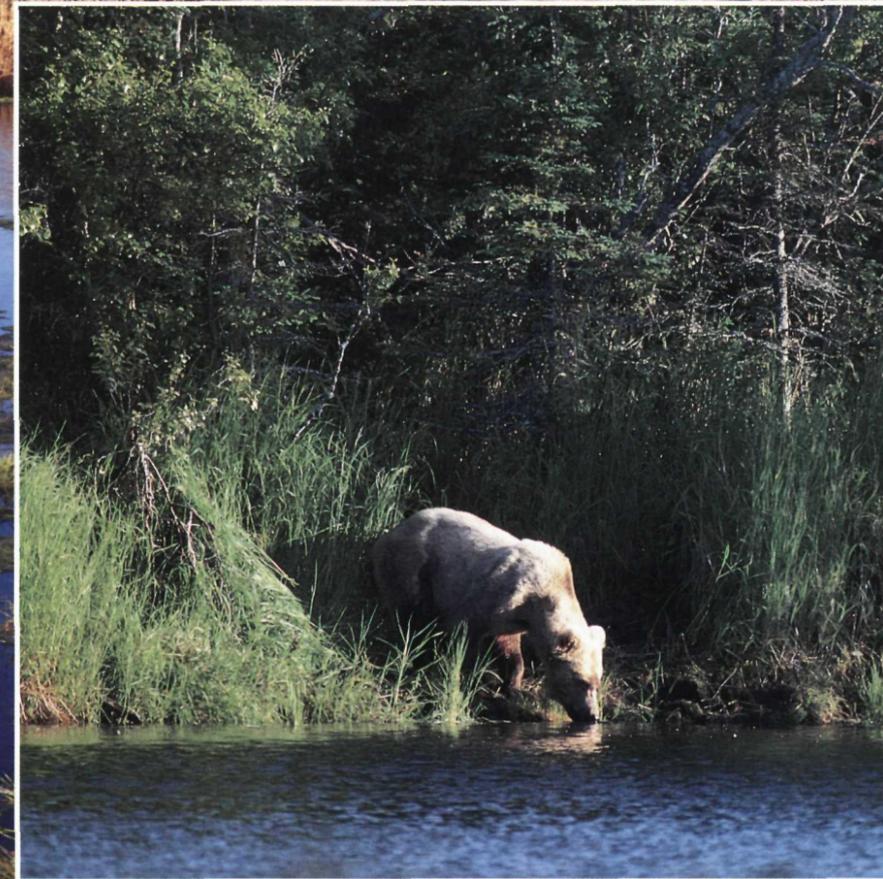
Springtime visitors to the Mahogany Creek drainage in northern Nevada's Humboldt County watch pronghorn antelope, mule deer, mountain quail and sage grouse. Spawning cutthroat trout are readily visible in the creek. Early in the morning, campers in the aspen groves are awakened by thousands of songbirds.

Proposed for national scenic river designation, a 30-mile stretch of the Dolores River corridor in southwestern Colorado is a complex of riparian, montane, foothill, upper Sonoran and salt desert shrub habitats. The river flows between ponderosa pines, cottonwoods and box elders in a canyon with walls as high as 2,000 feet. Here are river otters, mule deer, elk, desert bighorns, black bears, turkeys, chukars, waterfowl, bald and golden eagles and peregrine falcons.

The year-round presence of water at Big Morongo Canyon in the Mojave Desert of southern California creates a lush habitat that provides excellent birdwatching opportunities. Vermillion flycatchers, ladder-backed woodpeckers, Bell's vireos, summer tanagers and 29 species of wood warblers have been seen here. Noteworthy migrants include the black-throated blue warbler and American redstart.



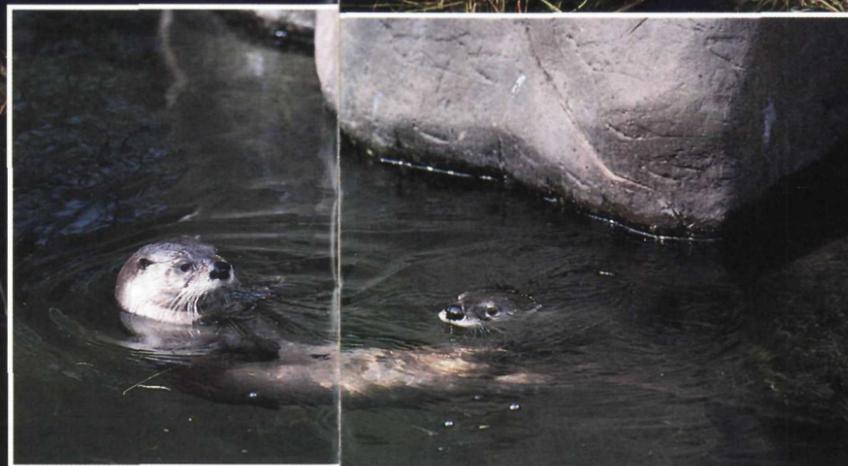
VERMILLION FLYCATCHER, G. C. KELLEY/TSA



GRIZZLY BEAR, JOHNNY JOHNSON/ANIMALS ANIMALS



BEAVER, TOM AND PAT LEESON



RIVER OTTERS, TOM AND PAT LEESON

# SHRUBLANDS *and* GRASSLANDS

Many types of habitat make up the vast western shrublands. They range from plant communities of high-elevation mountain shrubs with thick bunchgrass and forb understories to expanses of sagebrush and shadscale carpeting lower elevations in the Great Basin.

Windswept grasses dominate BLM lands in southeastern Arizona, eastern New Mexico, eastern Montana and eastern Wyoming. But grasslands scattered throughout the remainder of the West also include mountain uplands and grassy desert as well as prairie-plains grasslands. Prey species lack screening cover and are especially quick to take flight or dive underground when they feel threatened. Wildlife watchers can see them but must be patient and quiet.

 In eastern Montana, the Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River winds through 149 miles of Great Plains grassland prairie, wide riparian bottoms, rugged badlands and steep cliffs. The river is floatable and open to the public, and secondary roads provide abundant vantage points for land-based viewers. In these habitats, prairie dogs, pronghorn antelope, elk, mule and whitetail deer, bighorn sheep, ferruginous hawks, sharp-tailed grouse, bobcats, badgers, horned larks, eastern cottontails and prairie rattlesnakes are species likely to be encountered.

High burrowing rodent and rabbit populations make some of these areas ideal for observing birds of prey. The 483,000-acre Snake River Birds of Prey Area near Boise, Idaho, is a complex of shrubs, grasslands and

cliffs that supports the greatest nesting density of raptors in North America, including 200 pairs of prairie falcons. Each year, nesting raptors include more than 600 pairs of 14 species of eagles, hawks, falcons and owls. Another ten species winter in or migrate through the area.

Southern Utah's Henry Mountains have seven major vegetation zones—warm desert shrubs, cool desert shrubs, pinyon-juniper woodland, scrub oak-mixed mountain brush and ponderosa pine, montane forest, subalpine forest and grassland, and alpine highlands. The wildlife inhabiting the Henrys is equally varied, but visiting these remote mountains requires more than casual planning. Wildlife watchers find it rewarding, though, to watch some of the 300 wild and free-roaming bison, the largest herd outside a national park.

A drive north along Wyoming's Seminoe Road from the town of Sinclair to a fishery-rich stretch of the North Platte River known as the Miracle Mile traverses a number of life zones. Habitat along the route, nominated as a BLM National Back Country Byway, provides good views of pronghorns, mule deer, bighorns, hoary marmots, bald and golden eagles, ferruginous hawks, white pelicans, waterfowl and many other species.

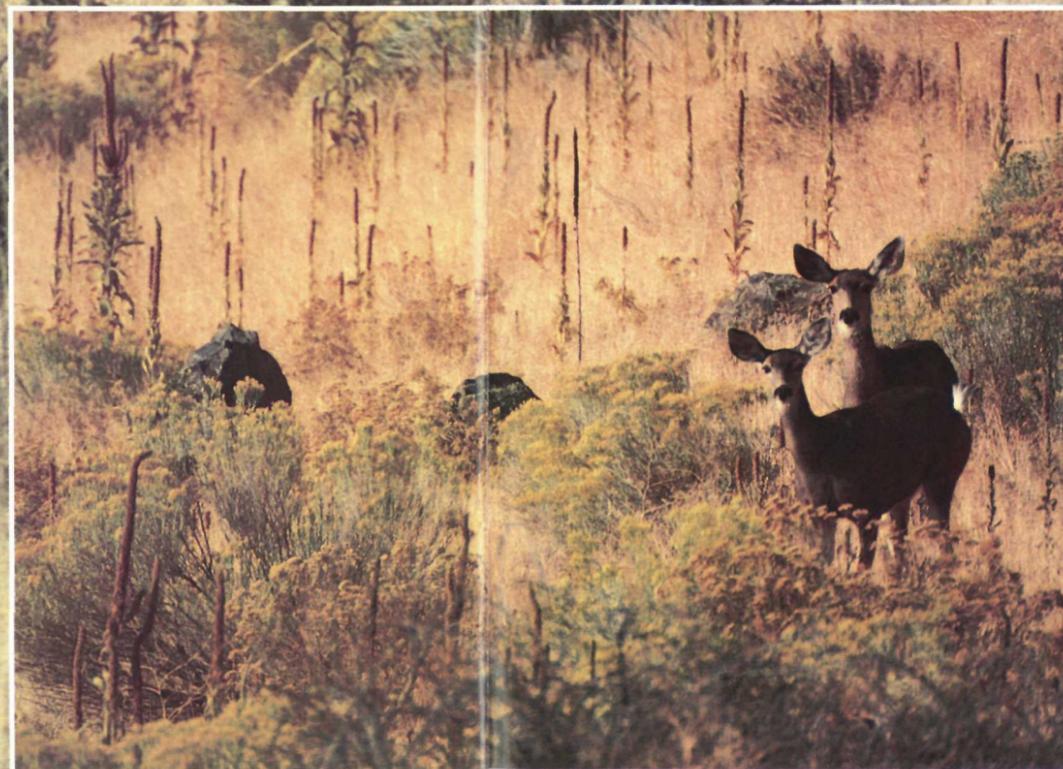
Shrublands and grasslands are among the plant communities most susceptible to fire and invasion by alien plants. BLM has treated some ranges to protect their productive values. Along Highway 50, ten miles southeast of Ely, Nevada, are prime reseeded feeding areas for readily seen elk bands. Though elk numbers peak during spring and summer, some are present throughout the year.



BISON, JOE MCDONALD/ANIMALS ANIMALS



BALD EAGLE, HAROLD E. WILSON/ANIMALS ANIMALS



MULE DEER, R. KOLAR/ANIMALS ANIMALS



BLACK-TAILED PRAIRIE DOGS, BATES LITTLEHALES/ANIMALS ANIMALS