

# ***ANIMALS OF PARADISE***



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Mountain Goat      *Oreamnos americanus* (see cover illustration)

This goat-like antelope browses on the plants of high alpine slopes, dropping to the upper forest in winter, but always living far beyond the tracks of man. The goats move slowly across the rocks, searching for the high-country plants they love, choosing their footsteps with care and skill. Suction cup-like pads under their hooves help them to cross sheer cliffs. The band moves in single file, led by an old billy, with the young in the middle. On the meadows a sentry keeps watch while the herd browses and rests; mountain goats, like cows, spend hours relaxing and chewing their cud.

Young goats, or kids, are born in late spring. They can walk only hours after birth, and in three days they will follow their parents over anything. In a year they will be on their own; meanwhile they are frisky and playful.

The heavy woolly white coat is good insulation in arctic temperatures, though it offers little protection in wet weather. During storms goats must seek shelter under rocks or trees. Both male and female goats have graceful, curved black horns. They are the only horned animal with a habit of sitting on their haunches like a dog, which they often do to watch something interesting.



RAVEN



MARTEN



DOUGLAS SQUIRREL



## **Raven** *Corvus corax*

This great black bird is at home from the seashore to the mountain slopes, and has been seen even on the very summit of Mount Rainier. His flight is slower than that of his close relative, the crow, and his call is harsher and deeper. The raven scavenges and forages, relying on sharp eyes and wits to find food.

The Indians knew the raven's cleverness, venerated him, and wove him as a powerful figure into their tribal folklore. Today he is most often found where people are not overly abundant.

## **Marten** *Martes americana*

Graceful and agile, alert and restless as a gypsy, this little animal is one of the handsomest in the park. He hunts equally well in trees or over the ground, and can catch squirrels or hares, birds or fish, berries or honey.

Cunning as he is, the marten is becoming ever scarcer over most of his range, as the moist evergreen forests he lives in are cleared. Many martens have been captured for their soft, dense fur, making them even rarer. Their curiosity leads them too easily into traps, lured by feathers, shiny objects, or an odd smell.

Though common in the Park, martens are secretive and rarely seen except near the haunts of man, where they search on the sly for scraps of food.

## **Douglas Squirrel or Chickaree** *Tamiasciurus douglasii*

Piles of cone chips on the ground or tree stumps show where this energetic seed-eater has been at work. Cones are the squirrels' favorite food, and they strip away the bracts to feast on the seeds. Thousands of cones are cut and stored for winter food, along with caches of other nuts and mushrooms. Unlike their relatives, the chipmunks, squirrels are active all winter long.

Squirrels are shyer than chipmunks, though just as curious and far noisier. From lowland forests to above timberline one may hear their chatter and scolding, and catch a glimpse of their bushy tails and bright eyes. They need to be wary, for squirrels are the prey of martens, hawks, and many other predators.

## WHITE TAILED PTARMIGAN



### **White-tailed Ptarmigan** *Lagopus leucurus*

The white-tailed ptarmigan is best known for his changing coat of feathers. In winter white he blends into the snow, crouching low so even his shadow will be smaller and less conspicuous, and only his beak and eyes will show. Even his feet are heavily clad in white feathers which act as snowshoes and warm insulation. In summer when the snow has gone he is just as invisible, for his coat of feathers in mottled gray seems to melt into the rock and gravel of his high alpine homeland.

The white-tailed ptarmigan's color change is a great advantage, for there is little shelter in the world of tundra and ice. Hawks and bobcats would find the ptarmigan too easy game if he were not well concealed. Instead of flying in the face of danger he will freeze still, so that often one can approach quite close for a better look.

## BLACKTAILED DEER



### **Black-tailed Deer** *Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*

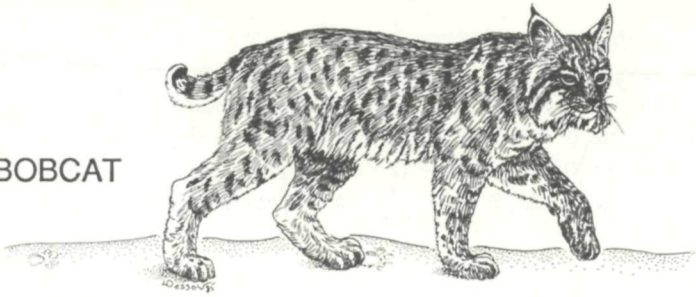
This, the most common large animal in the park, is the one you are most likely to see from the road. The deer in the park migrate, from the lowland forest in winter to follow the snowline up the mountain in summer. In fall, small herds assemble and move back down the mountain.

Most of the year black-tailed deer are fairly solitary, moving through the forest and clearings, browsing on shrubs and twigs.

The fawns, born in late May, are able to walk in a few minutes. The doe usually leaves her fawns alone during the day, and it is best not to disturb a fawn even if it seems to have been abandoned. Each doe normally gives birth to one or two young each spring, and predators such as the bobcat are needed to keep the deer population from growing too rapidly and overbrowsing the forest.



## BOBCAT

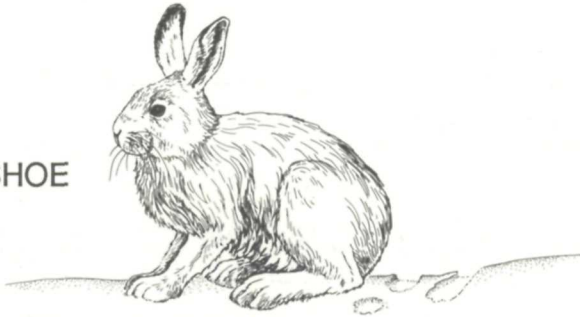


### **Bobcat** *Felis rufus*

One of the animals best able to control deer and weed out sick animals is the bobcat. Winter is the season when bobcats take the most deer; during the rest of the year they kill many more small creatures such as rats, hares, birds, and porcupines, often caching any excess food. Bobcats are very shy, avoiding people as much as they can. They look much like large housecats, but watch for the stubby or bobbed tail. They hole up in a den or tree by day and hunt by night, ranging over semi-open country where small animals are most abundant.

The kittens are usually born in spring, though they may be born any time of year. Bobcats make poor pets, wilder than their domestic cousins, and far more alert and curious.

## SNOWSHOE HARE



### **Snowshoe Hare** *Lepus americanus*

Food for coyotes, bobcats, martens and eagles, the snowshoe hare in turn grazes on herbs, grass, twigs, and bark. The name comes from his well-padded hind feet, which enable him to move more easily in soft snow. His other name, varying hare, refers to his habit of changing his coat, like the white-tailed ptarmigan, from winter white



to summer brown. This shift is very definite at Mount Rainier, while in the lowlands the hares merely turn a paler brown in winter.

The snowshoe hare comes out to feed in early morning and late afternoon, and spends the greater part of the day crouching in a depression in the ground, ever watchful. Though apparently fewer than two out of a hundred hares live to be five years old, they make up for this by giving birth to three to five litters every year, each with three or four young.

## CHIPMUNK



### Chipmunk *Eutamias sp.*

Chipmunks are well-known and easy to find throughout the park, especially where people are likely to be. They are adaptable little creatures, and live from desert to forest to mountaintop, wherever there is food. They eat a wide variety of seeds, fruits, mushrooms, and insects, sometimes burying food for times of need. Forgotten caches often sprout and grow, guaranteeing a food supply for chipmunks generations in the future.

Their home is a coconut-sized burrow lined and bedded with grasses, leaves, and bark. Here they give birth to two litters a year, and here they hibernate over the winter, venturing outside on warm days.

## GOLDEN-MANTLED GROUND SQUIRREL



### Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus lateralis*

Golden-mantled ground squirrels are larger than chipmunks and not quite so quick and graceful, and they lack stripes on their head. They prefer open, rocky hillsides and higher elevations, particularly where there are lots of people. Their enormous cheek pouches can pack surprising quantities of seeds, berries, and bulbs to where they may be stored underground.

The golden-mantled ground squirrel hibernates, too, and his food stores will come in handy when early summer arrives, before berries and nuts are ripe. His extensive burrow systems help aerate and mix the soil, a job to which many small animals and insects contribute.

## GRAY JAY



### Gray Jay *Perisoreus canadensis*

Helped by a downy, thickset coat of feathers, the gray jay joins the ptarmigan and the mountain goat in staying year-round at high elevations, from timber to snowline. He is another who is well acquainted with man and his habit of leaving scraps and crumbs. Backpackers in remote country hardly pitch their tent before two or three jays glide silently into camp. They will eat nearly anything, hiding an oversupply in nearby trees to find later.



## STELLER'S JAY

### **Steller's Jay** *Cyanocitta stelleri*

A streak of blue and a raucous screech means the Steller's jay is around and curious. Close cousins to the gray jays, the Stellers too are common and bold, though not so numerous in the park, and keeping generally to the lower forest. Jays are vocal birds and masterful imitators of various sounds, from coarse bird calls to squeaking doors. They are especially fond of the good pickings of human society, and there is little they won't eat.

Not always bold and loud, Steller's jays can be quiet and shy if something disturbs or intrigues them; then suddenly the whole forest may ring with their jarring cry, warning everyone around of danger.

**Pika** *Ochotona princeps*

Even in the depths of winter, the pika is awake and active in the rock slides under the snow. Instead of hibernating, pikas spend their summer and fall gathering the alpine plants into little hay piles, adding a layer at a time so the vegetation has time to dry and cure in the sun. Should rain threaten, they will drag their haystack underground until the storm is passed. These piles will keep them well-fed all winter long, when most animals are either asleep or searching hard for food.



PIKA

Though he looks more like a guinea pig, the pika is actually related to the rabbit. His ears are short, thus less likely to freeze, and even the soles of his feet are furred. This gives him nonskid traction on the rocky slopes where he makes his home.



## MEADOW VOLE



### **Meadow Vole** *Microtus sp.*

There are several kinds of voles or mice in the park, found wherever there is good grassy cover and some water. They construct a labyrinth of narrow runways in the matted grass, which may connect with a network of underground tunnels. In winter they are busy under the snow, burrowing tunnels that run along the surface of the ground. As the snow melts back in spring, their winter quarters are exposed, leaving their snow tunnels and round grasslined nests in full view. Voles are active by day and night, eating plants, seeds, bark and insects; they in turn are the mainstay in the diet of many predators.

### **BLUE GROUSE** (*Male displaying*)



### **Blue Grouse** *Dendragapus obscurus*

In spring and early summer one is bound to hear a constant, deep hooting sound. No, it is not an owl, but the male blue grouse courting a female. In a tireless display, he inflates a pair of large yellow air pouches on his chest as he hoots, pauses for a moment, then hoots again. When he finds a lady (or she finds him), he fans out his tail and struts along after her like a little turkey.

Eight to fifteen chicks appear behind their mother later in the season, two or three surviving to grow to full size by fall. Blue grouse, like their close relatives the white-tailed ptarmigan, eat the flowers, fruit, and leaves of alpine plants, as well as insects.

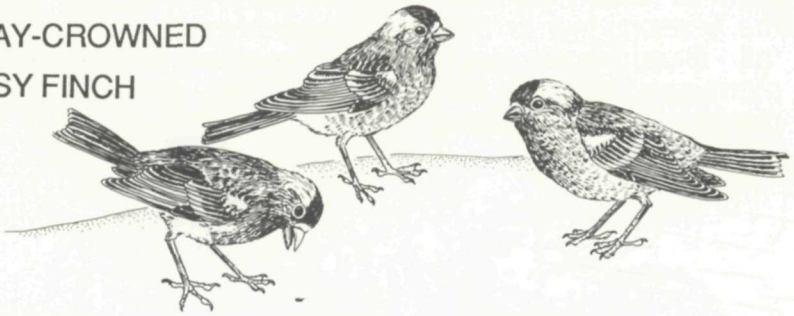


CLARK'S NUTCRACKER

### **Clark's Nutcracker** *Nucifraga columbiana*

The Clark's nutcracker has the habits of a crow, the colors of a jay, and is in fact cousin to both. The most forward of all our birds, he will steal food off the picnic table under your very nose. He too remains in the high elevations of the park year-round, preferring the open forests just below timberline. Despite his begging tendencies, the Clark's nutcracker survives on berries, cones, and seeds, which he stores for provisions over the winter months. Neglected caches often sprout and grow to new trees, so the Clark's nutcracker is not only harvester but planter as well.

GRAY-CROWNED  
ROSY FINCH



**Gray-crowned Rosy Finch** *Leucosticte tephrocotis*

Every spring this finch migrates from the plateaus and plains up to the high rocky ridges of the mountains, along with the water pipits and horned larks. They move in restless flocks across the snowfields, glaciers, and rocks, picking up benumbed insects, seeds, flowers, and leaves. Here they nest, far above timberline, and raise their families, to return to the plains in the fall.

HORNED LARK



**Horned Lark** *Eremophila alpestris*

Another bird of the dry plains, the horned lark, also travels to the meadows and grassy slopes above treeline. Here the larks nest and raise their brood on the abundant summer insects and seeds, returning to the arid plateaus below after their summer visit.



## HOARY MARMOT

### **Hoary Marmot** *Marmota caligata*

A long shrill whistle in the alpine meadow alerts you to the presence of the hoary marmot—and alerts all the marmots around to your presence, too. You may spot the whistler, standing straight and attentive. If you are quiet, he will flip his tail and go about his business, eating more of the alpine flowers that he loves.

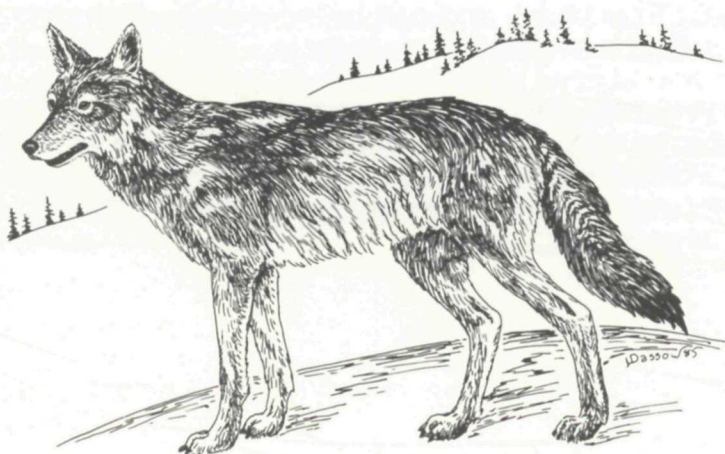
Though hoary marmots look fat and lazy, spending hours sprawled ruglike on a sunny rock, most of their bulk is thick warm fur, and all their senses are fine and alert.

In winter, this flower-eating, sun-worshipping rodent retires to the dark warmth of the den, to drop into a deep death-like sleep.

During hibernation, body temperature falls to near-freezing; the marmot stays inert like this for over half the year, from September to April. The bright summertime belongs to the hoary marmot, who leaves the dark, cold months of other seasons for others to endure.



## COYOTE



### **Coyote** *Canis latrans*

The slender and graceful coyote ranges across the park from boundaries to timberline. They too are shy of man and seldom seen, though people often hear their high-pitched, wild howl at sunset or moonlight, a signal to call the pack together. Coyotes prefer open country and timberline ridges, where they can find an abundance of their favorite prey-rabbits, mice, chipmunks and marmots. Without coyotes to keep their numbers down, these small animals would mow the grass and croplands to the ground.

The coyote survives despite a century of intensive trapping and hunting, a tribute to his cunning and adaptability. The pups are raised in a den underground or in a rock crevasse, which is kept scrupulously clean. At summer's end the half-grown coyotes leave home to find their way in a difficult world.

## Black Bear *Ursus americanus*

The wild black bear is normally a timid animal, vicious only when he has been half-tamed by people with well-intentioned but ill-informed handouts. Bears soon learn to expect free meals, and can become angry and dangerous when food is not freely given to them.

When not feasting free on unfortunate donations, the black bear eats a broad variety of food. For him the kind of food is no problem, only getting enough of it. Berries and toads, clover and bumblebees, mice and skunk-cabbage roots are all good fare.

### BLACK BEAR



Female with cubs

Instead of trying to feed his enormous bulk all winter long, the black bear drops into a deep sleep in some sheltered cranny. This sleep is not a true hibernation, for the bear will be out on warm days.

The mother gives birth in the depths of the winter to a pair of cubs that are tiny and helpless. By mid-June they are the size of small dogs, and they love to wrestle and box. These cubs are expert climbers, and the mother often sends them up a tree while she scouts around or takes a rest from their antics. They will den with their mother that winter, though in spring she forces them out to shift for themselves.

## WHERE CAN I SEE ANIMALS?

**Mountain Goat** are numerous in the park, but rarely seen by the casual visitor, as the goats usually stay in the high ridges, peaks, and meadows. In summer, they are often seen in Van Trump Park, on Stevens Ridge, and Mount Wow; also above Indian Bar, and near Fremont Lookout near Sunrise. In winter, check Tum Tum Peak four miles west of Longmire.

**Ravens** are seen throughout the park, soaring on air currents or perched on tree tops, often in groups calling hoarsely back and forth.

**Marten** though normally hidden in the deep forest, martens are most often found near buildings; they occur regularly at the Nisqually Entrance, Longmire, Paradise, and White River. Watch for them (as for most animals) in the early morning or in the evening.

**Douglas Squirrels** listen for their chatter anywhere in the forested areas of the park.

**White-tailed Ptarmigan** found only at high elevations, in meadows or rocky areas. In summer they are commonly seen above Indian Henry's Hunting Ground, at Panorama Point near Paradise, and at Sunrise.

**Black-tailed Deer** common almost anywhere in the park, especially along the road from Longmire to Paradise, and around Reflection Lake; in winter large numbers congregate around the Nisqually Entrance.

**Bobcats** are not often seen anywhere, but most often reported on the road at night between Tahoma and Kautz Creek.



**Snowshoe Hare** are found throughout the park, but most often noted in the general Paradise area, and at Ohanepecosh.

**Chipmunk** very common in all the campgrounds and visitor center areas, and frequently seen in forests and meadows, too.

**Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel** abundant, like the chipmunk, in all areas of visitor concentration; prefers open areas at the higher elevations.

**Gray Jay** can be found in many locations, parkwide, especially around campgrounds and picnic areas.

**Steller's Jay** prefers the lower regions, and, like the gray jay, are frequently found where people gather to camp or picnic.

**Pika** are seldom seen below 4,500 feet; above that elevation pikas are common in rock slides throughout the park.

**Meadow Vole** any forest or grassy area, wherever it is not too dry, is likely to have its population of voles.

**Blue Grouse** are very common above 4,000 feet; their peculiar call is heard from early spring through August.

**Clark's Nutcrackers** are seen in the higher elevations, especially on the general east side of the park, particularly campgrounds and picnic areas. Paradise, Sunrise and Sunrise Point have thriving populations.

**Gray-crowned Rosy Finch** are found from snow fields to open forest, everywhere in the park near treeline.

**Horned Lark** most frequently are in the high, dry and open areas of the park, above treeline; Burrough's Mountain is a likely place.

**Hoary Marmot** are frequently seen and heard on rocky hillsides near meadows, at higher elevations. Marmot colonies are present at Paradise, on the Stevens Canyon Road, and on the Sunrise Road.

**Coyote** are much more often heard than seen; coyotes have been reported most often around Carbon River, Kautz Creek, near Paradise, from Backbone Ridge, around Three Lakes and Mystic Lake.

**Black Bear** range throughout the park, concentrated at campgrounds and in the high autumn meadows when the blueberries are ripe. Near Paradise, Cougar Rock is a good place to watch for bears. Several color phases occur here, from pale brown through black.

**Note:** Please do not feed deer, or any other wild animal. Although they very much like being fed, it can cause them serious health problems, often leading to the animal's death.

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