

COLORADO WILDLIFE

from A to Z

Hippies, devoted conservationists or animal fanatics — call us what you will, but Coloradans aren't ashamed to fess up to loving our wild neighbors. Get to know some of Colorado's nonhuman inhabitants alphabet-style, and come fall in love with them yourself. Learn more at COLORADO.com/Wildlife.

Abert's Squirrel

These notable inhabitants of Rocky Mountain National Park are recognized by their ear tufts, which are more prominent in the winter and almost disappear in the summer.



Bighorn Sheep

The skull and horns of Colorado's state animal can weigh up to 40 pounds. About 7,000 live in Colorado — more than any other state.



Columbine

Colorado's state flower is one of many species of wildflowers that blanket our alpine meadows. In eastern Colorado, wildflowers begin blooming in April or May; in western Colorado, they often don't pop up until July or August.



Deer

Mule deer have no upper teeth, only a hard palate. You might find them feasting on a variety of vegetation, including shrubs, grasses and buck brush.



Quiet

Shhhhh ... When viewing wildlife, it's best to get away from noisy roadsides, sit quietly and observe and listen. For more wildlife-viewing tips, visit cpw.state.co.us.



Rocky Mountain National Park

The park covers 415 square miles with Estes Park on the east and Grand Lake on the west. Inhabitants include elk, bighorn sheep, mule deer, moose, bats, white-tailed ptarmigans, otters, Steller's jays, golden eagles, pikas and prairie falcons.

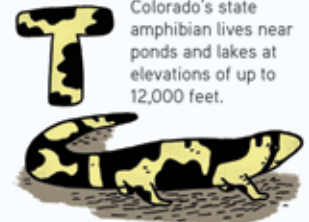
Sandhill Crane

Visitors from around the world flock to the San Luis Valley every spring for the Monte Vista Crane Festival to see the more than 25,000 cranes that stopover at the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge on their flight back to Canada after a winter spent nesting in Mexico.



Tiger Salamander

Colorado's state amphibian lives near ponds and lakes at elevations of up to 12,000 feet.



Elk

Listen for barks, chirp, meows and squeals from elk, who are known to vocalize with one another to signal danger — and make general conversation.



Falcon The Peregrine falcon, the fastest bird in the world, can reach speeds of more than 200 miles per hour during an aerial drive. Keep your eye out for them in Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Dinosaur National Monument.



Greenback Cutthroat Trout

Colorado's state fish was presumed to be extinct by 1937, but a population was discovered in Colorado's South Platte and Arkansas basins in the late 1950s.



Hummingbirds

Spy them dining on the nectar of Colorado's wildflowers during the summer. Their nests, which are reinforced by spider webs, are the size of walnut shells, while their eggs are the size of Tic-Tac breath mints.



Karval Mountain Plover Festival

Spectators head to Karval for this April festival to see plovers nest in the short grass prairies of the eastern plains.



Lark Bunting

Not categorized as a lark or a bunting, Colorado's state bird is actually a sparrow that inhabits the Great Plains.

Upland Game Birds

One small-game species license is all that's needed to hunt upland game birds, including band-tailed pigeons, mourning or Eurasian-collared doves, English or house sparrows and dusky grouse. Get yours at cpw.state.co.us.



Viewing Areas for Wildlife

Colorado has many viewing areas for wildlife, including high mountain pass roads where you can easily drive up and spot high-altitude inhabitants such as mountain goats, white-tailed ptarmigan, pikas, elk and bighorn sheep. Visit cpw.state.co.us for locations.



White-Tailed Ptarmigan

The smallest of the grouse species, these feathered beauties reside at high elevations year round. To blend in with the scenery, they are mottled brown and gray in the summer and turn snow white in the winter.



Idaho Springs

The historic mining town is situated at the start of Mount Evans Scenic Byway, the highest paved road in North America. At Mount Evans' summit, you can spot mountain goats, bighorn sheep, pikas and marmots.



Steller's Jay

A noted vocal mimic, the Steller's jay can imitate birds, squirrels, cats, dogs, chickens and even mechanical objects.



National Parks

Colorado has four national parks, seven national monuments and 11 national forests. Add Rocky Mountain National Park, Mesa Verde National Park, Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, and Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park to your bucket list.



Owls

Colorado is home to 13 owl species, including the great horned, burrowing, boreal, eastern and western screech and northern pygmy.

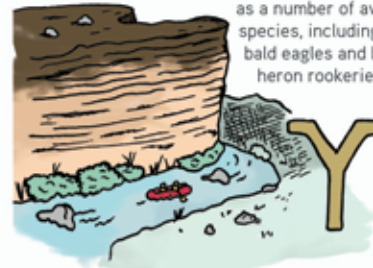
Western Painted Turtle

Colorado's state reptile can be found in and near bodies of water throughout western Colorado. They can live to be 15 to 25 years old and roam within several miles of their homes along streams.



Yampa River State Park

Located in the Yampa Valley west of Steamboat Springs, the park is home to elk, deer and antelope, as well as a number of avian species, including bald eagles and blue heron rookeries.



Zoos From gator farms to butterfly pavilions, you can take a walk on the wild side at Colorado's many zoos and aquariums. Highlights include the Denver Zoo in Denver, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs, Pueblo Zoo in Pueblo and Colorado Gators Reptile Park in Mosca.

Mountain Goats

Well-suited for climbing steep, rocky slopes, mountain goats' feet have inner pads that provide traction, cloven hooves that can spread apart, and sharp, non-slip dewclaws on the tips of their feet.



Colorado issues almost 1 million fishing licenses and more than 540,000 hunting licenses each year; funds from license sales support wildlife management. Get yours at cpw.state.co.us.

Colorado has an abundant population of beavers, who have four self-sharpening front teeth due to hard orange enamel on the front of the tooth and a softer dentin on the back.



Colorado is home to 493 bird species, and the Colorado Birding Trail can guide you to more than 400 avian species across the state.



Find out the best places to view Colorado wildlife at COLORADO.com/Wildlife.

Colorado's bachelor colony of Brazilian Free-Tail bats spend the summer in the abandoned Orient Land Trust mine in the San Luis Valley. A short hike to the mine for the evening fly out allows visitors to stand at the cave entrance while nearly 250,000 bats exit over their heads.



Black bears can be black, but in Colorado they're just as likely to be brown, cinnamon or even blonde.