

# 10 WILD WYOMING

Home to more than 100 mammal species and 400 bird species, Wyoming is the ultimate wildlife-watching hot spot. Keep your eyes peeled for these cool critters.

## OBSERVE FROM A DISTANCE

For the safety and comfort of both animals and people, stay at least 100 yards away from bears and wolves and 25 yards away from all other animals. If an animal changes its behavior or seems nervous at your presence, it's time to back away.



**BALD EAGLES**

**Fun Fact:** our national bird isn't actually bald; their white-feathered heads just gleam in contrast to their brown bodies and wings.

**Where to Spot Them:** bald eagles arrive to feast on salmon every fall at National Wildlife Refuge in Green River, but many of the majestic flyers spend all year at the refuge, where you'll also find shiras moose, river otters and sage grouse. Hundreds of bald and golden eagles also spend winter at Casper Mountain; see them while you enjoy the snowshoeing trails.



**BISON**

**Fun Fact:** Wyoming's state animal can run up to 30 miles per hour.

**Where to Spot Them:** Yellowstone National Park is the only place in the U.S. where bison have lived continuously since prehistoric times. Discover them sunning next to geysers all over the park year-round, particularly in Hayden and Lamar valleys. Or visit the resident herd at Hot Springs State Park in Thermopolis. In the fall and winter months, there's a daily bison feeding at 8:30 a.m.



**BOBCATS**

**Fun Fact:** the most common wildcat in North America, the bobcat is named for its short tail.

**Where to Spot Them:** look for the cats in forested areas across Wyoming. Sightings along the Snowy Range Scenic Byway, which encompasses a high-mountain stretch of Highway 30 between Laramie and Saratoga in the Medicine Bow National Forest, are common. You might also catch glimpses of moose, black bears and coyotes.



**WILD HORSES**

**Fun Fact:** Wyoming has one of the nation's largest herds of wild horses.

**Where to Spot Them:** connecting Green River and Rock Springs, the 24-mile-long Pilot Butte Wild Horse Scenic Loop is one of the best places in the country to view a galloping herd. Or visit the Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center east of Lovell, where you'll find information about where Pryor Mountain's wild horses — rumored to be descendants of colonial Spanish horses — are currently roaming.



**ELK**

**Fun Fact:** a bull (male) elk's antlers can grow up to four feet tall, so the mammal can tower more than nine feet tall.

**Where to Spot Them:** from southeast Wyoming's Medicine Bow National Forest and the Wind River Range to the west, you can count on seeing elk all over the state. Winter elk watching is unbeatable at the National Elk Refuge in Jackson, where more than 5,000 migrating elk spend the cold-weather season. Since the mammals move to surrounding mountain meadows and forests during the spring and summer, winter is prime time to spot the herd.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: BALD EAGLE: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE/JACOB W. FRANK; BISON: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE/NEAL HERBERT; ELK: INSTAGRAM/SDOVONNE713; WILD HORSES: CLAIRE THOMAS; BOBCAT: JEFF VANUGA

# RESIDENTS TO SPOT



**PRONGHORN**

**Fun Fact:** with the ability to run at speeds up to 55 miles per hour, the pronghorn is North America's swiftest land animal.

**Where to Spot Them:** the six million acres of sand dunes and buttes at Wyoming's Red Desert are inhabited by 350 species of wildlife, including the largest migratory herd of pronghorn in the lower 48. They journey 150 miles from the Upper Green River Basin to Grand Teton National Park every spring and back in the fall. Other Red Desert creatures you might encounter include rare desert elk, the black-footed ferret and pygmy rabbit.



**BEARS**

**Fun Fact:** Yellowstone National Park is one of the few areas in the U.S. where black bears and grizzly bears coexist.

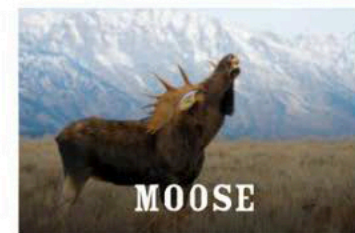
**Where to Spot Them:** Yellowstone's Tower and Mammoth areas are favorite hangouts of the black bear, who feed on the park's grasses, rodents and cutthroat trout in the spring, summer and fall. Meanwhile, the grizzly bear population is much smaller (there are only about 150 in the park), but in the spring, they often spend time at Yellowstone Lake or in Hayden and Lamar valleys.



**BIGHORN SHEEP**

**Fun Fact:** bighorn sheep are equipped with curved horns that can weigh up to 30 pounds.

**Where to Spot Them:** the largest wintering herd of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep reside at Wyoming's Whiskey Mountain. Learn all about the hearty mammals at the National Bighorn Sheep Center in Dubois and embark on a self-guided or reserve a guided tour of the area from November through March. Or go hiking or biking in northeast Wyoming's Bear Lodge Mountains for great chances to see bighorn sheep, as well as mountain goats and elk.



**MOOSE**

**Fun Fact:** a flap of skin known as a bell sways beneath each moose's throat. Scientists still aren't sure of its purpose.

**Where to Spot Them:** for the best chances to observe these gigantic mammals (they can weigh up to 1,800 pounds), spend some time in Grand Teton National Park. Drive the Moose-Wilson Road in the Moose District or visit Oxbow Bend east of Jackson Lake Junction, where you could see a moose grazing on the lush meadows at the water's edge.



**TRUMPETER SWANS**

**Fun Fact:** these pearly white birds require a 100-yard runway for takeoff.

**Where to Spot Them:** the swans nest in a variety of wetlands, ponds, lakes and rivers. Look for them floating gracefully in the waters at Seedskaadee National Wildlife Refuge in Green River, in wetlands around Jackson Hole and in Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks.

Learn more about wildlife watching in Wyoming at [TravelWyoming.com/things-to-do/wildlife-viewing](http://TravelWyoming.com/things-to-do/wildlife-viewing).

## WY INDEED

"Bring your high-quality binoculars and spotting scopes — that's very important for safe and ethical viewing. And check in with the local visitors' centers; they typically have up-to-date information about what species have been seen where."

— Taylor Phillips, owner of EcoTour Adventures in Jackson, a company that hosts wildlife-viewing tours