FISH DIORAMA DISPLAY – In the diorama, you will see the arrangement of a variety of fish species in their natural habitat. The diorama attempts to depict where each species is commonly found in local lakes and streams.

PEEL TREES – These peel trees have been found on Wild Horse Island, a unit of Flathead Lake State Park. The interpretive signs explain the importance of cambium from Ponderosa Pine to native people.

ENFORCEMENT

There are 86 field wardens who patrol Montana. This equals one warden per every 1,730 square miles of land and water. On average, each warden's district is the size of Delaware. In Region One, 11 wardens patrol our lands and waters.

Wardens in Montana issue about 5,000 citations per year. This includes all violations such as fishing without a license and trespass while hunting or fishing.

The model in the lobby illustrates the multi-faceted responsibilities of today's warden. Wardens speak to Hunter Education classes, work on game damage reports, handle nuisance bears and other wildlife, and enforce boating regulations in addition to their standard patrols.

PARKS

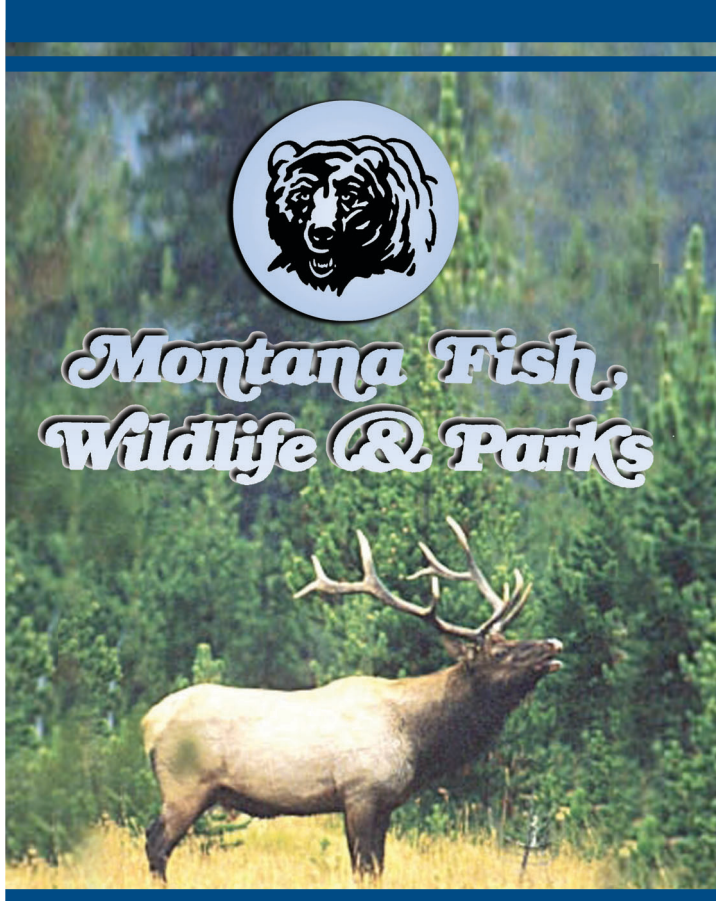
Montana's state parks and fishing access sites are popular, hosting about 6 million visitors each year. There are 42 state parks, 13 other lands, and 320 fishing access sites. Thompson Chain of Lakes, Montana's largest fishing access site, is located west of Kalispell. Wild Horse Island, a unit of Flathead Lake State Park, is the largest inland island in the west.

Northwest Montana offers 11 state park units. Flathead Lake State Park includes Wild Horse Island, Big Arm, Finley Point, Wayfarers, West Shore, and Yellow Bay. Other parks include Lone Pine, Logan, Lake Mary Ronan, Thompson Falls, and Whitefish Lake. Most of these beautiful parks offer fishing and boating.

In the lobby, take time to view the panorama of state parks photo and to play our parks game, where you can arrange your favorite activities in order.

And don't forget to visit our interpretive center at Lone Pine State Park (755-2706), just 5 miles south of Kalispell.

Brochure compiled by Jeff Perry,
Flathead Valley Community College Service Learning Student



A Guide to the Region One Interpretive Center, FWP, Kalispell

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 North Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901-3854
406-752-5501

Unless specifically stated, wildlife died from natural or unknown causes.

MAMMALS

BLACK BEAR (Ursus americanus) - This black bear was hit by a car on Hwy. 200 near Thompson Falls in September of 1990. He weighed an estimated 300 pounds Black bears range in color from black to blond. On average males weigh 180-250 lbs., females weigh 120-180 pounds. Black bears inhabit forests, and riparian areas from central to western Montana. Black bears are omnivores, eating everything from grass, to ungulates to garbage. Black bears are typically nocturnal. They live in small dens and can climb trees with ease. Black bears breed in June to July and cubs are born in the den during the winter. Females typically breed for the first time at 2.5 to 3.5 yrs. of age. Hunters in Region One typically harvest about 500 black bear per year.

GRIZZLY BEAR (Ursus arctos)- The pictured male grizzly was killed illegally on May 15, 1989 in the Paola Creek drainage of the Middle Fork of the Flathead River. He was 9 yrs. old and weighed 400 lbs. The grizzly can be found in a range of colors from blonde to almost black, but their fur is silver-tipped. They have a distinctive hump on their back, along with a dished face. The weight of males ranges from 300-600 pounds and in females from 200-300 pounds. Grizzlies inhabit coniferous forests, along with alpine meadows and snow chutes in Northwest Montana and a portion of South Central Montana. A grizzly's diet ranges from grass to ungulates. Typically, grizzlies are most active in the early morning and late evening. They dig large dens in steep terrain. Breeding occurs in June or July and cubs are born in the den during winter. A female typically breeds for the first time at 4-6 years of age.

MOUNTAIN LION (Puma concolor) - Mountain Lion coats vary from gray to yellowish/reddish brown. Their eyes are set forward on their head for sight hunting. They have a long tail with a black tip. Males weigh from 150-190 lbs., while females range from 70-120 lbs. Lions inhabit mountainous and foothill areas, or any area with ample food, cover, and solitude. Lions are very solitary. Females den in caves, crevices or brush piles. Hunting is done by stealth at night; lions will take prey from the size of a grasshopper to a moose. Females may be breed any time of the year after they reach 2-4 yrs. of age, but kittens are most commonly born in May. Lions are common in western Montana, and appear occasionally in eastern Montana. Hunters take about 130 mountain lions per year in northwest Montana.

MULE DEER (Odocoileus hemionus) - A local hunter harvested the pictured mule deer in the Bridger Mountains. He was aged at 10+ yrs., and is a prime example of a declining buck. Once bucks reach their prime at 5-6 yrs. of age, their antlers can begin to decline and palmate. Mule deer are gray in color during the winter months and reddish brown in the summer months. Their forehead and brisket are dark, while the chin, throat, and rump are white. Their tails are short and white with a black tip. Mule deer inhabit all of Montana, ranging from the prairie to rugged alpine meadows. Mule deer eat grasses along with a variety of browse. They feed mostly early or late in the day. Mule deer breed in November. A doe's first breeding cycle occurs at 16-17 months of age. They typically give birth to spotted twins. Bucks shed their antlers from December thru February each year.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN BIG HORN SHEEP (Ovis canadensis) - This Bighorn Sheep was killed by an automobile on Hwy. 200 near Thompson Falls. He was six years old at the time of death. Sheep run grayish-brown in color with yellowish/white under parts and rump. Males have massive horns and weigh about 300 pounds. Females have small (6-13 inch) horns and seldom exceed 150 pounds. Habitat for sheep range from rolling hills to vertical cliffs. Sheep typically eat bunchgrasses and shrubs in winter, along with a variety of forbs, sedges, and grasses in the summer. Sheep are very sociable animals, living in groups according to sex and age. Breeding takes place in November, and females typically give birth to one offspring in the spring. Although sheep populations remain low, they are now stable and scattered in small areas throughout Montana. The bighorn sheep herd near Thompson Falls is comprised of about 200 animals.

MAMMALS
CONTINUED

SHIRAS MOOSE

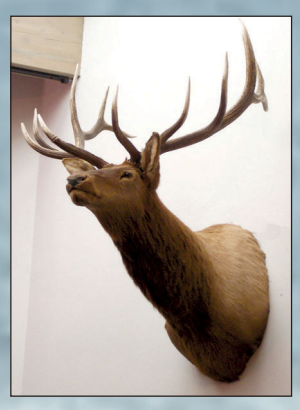
(Alces alces) – Bull Moose rank as the largest antlered animal in the world, weighing in from 800-1,200 lbs. Females are slightly smaller at 600-800 lbs. Moose habitat can range from high mountain meadows to swampy marsh areas. Moose feed upon browse and aquatic vegetation. They tend to be solitary animals, except during the rut or harsh winters. Moose are excellent swimmers; they can swim several miles, and submerge up to 4 min. Moose breed in late September, and females typically have 1-2 russet brown offspring. Hunters harvest about 70 moose per year in northwest Montana's Region One.

WHITETAIL DEER

(Odocoileus virginianus) – Whitetail range from reddish-brown to grayish-brown in color. Typical antlers consist of one main beam with 3 to 5 tines projecting from it. Mature males can weigh in at 250-275 lbs., while females can weigh from 160-180 lbs. Whitetail prefer dense cover, such as that found in brushy river bottoms or forested mountainsides. Feed can include everything from twigs, fruit, browse, to forbs. Solitary and secretive describe the whitetail very well. They have small home ranges, and typically only form groups around good feeding areas. Whitetails breed in late November, and give birth to 1-2 spotted fawns. Whitetail are very numerous in good habitat. They are the most popular big game animal in northwest Montana.

NORTHWEST MONTANA ELK

(Cervus elaphus) - Elk are yellowish brown in color, with legs and neck being darker than the rest of the body. Bulls have massive antlers, and can weigh up to 1,000 lbs. Cows range from 500-600 lbs. Habitat in Northwest Montana for elk typically consists of coniferous forest interspersed with clearings (either man made or natural). Elk prefer to feed upon Grasses, sedges, forbs, deciduous shrubs, and young trees, and conifers during winter. Elk have strong herding instincts; an old cow typically leads a herd of other cows, calves, and yearling bulls during the summer. Elk breed in September. Bulls gather large harems, and bugle challenges to one another. Elk are on the increase throughout the state, making it possible for a variety of hunting seasons. In some areas of Region One hunters are restricted to taking brow-tined bulls.



TRAPPING DISPLAY

- While viewing the trapping display you will find pelts, and/or mounts of: Beaver, Fisher, Lynx, Marmot, Marten, Mink, Red Fox, Weasel, and Wolverine. Information is provided on the history of trapping, along with photographers showing the equipment used and the men whose livelihood depended on trapping.

BIRDS

BALD EAGLE

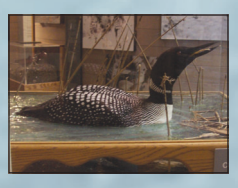
(Haliaeetus leucocephalus) – Be sure to look up, or you may miss this awe-inspiring predator. The Bald Eagle is probably one of the most recognizable animals in the country. One look at an eagle shows beauty, grace, and sheer power. It is no wonder these birds were chosen as our national symbol. Eagle sightings are now much more frequent in northwest Montana, thanks to strong conservation efforts. Eagles migrate short distances from winter to summer, but can typically be found near water. The majority of their diet consists of fish, with small mammals filling in the rest.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING

(Bombycilla garrulus) – Waxwings tend to gather in large flocks around trees with abundant fruit. Waxwings typically migrate only small distances, but tend to form large flocks to do so. Waxwings are winter residents in northwest Montana.

BOREAL OWL

(Aegolius funereus) – Boreal owls are found at high elevations, typically above 5,000 ft. Their call resembles "To, to, to…." in rapid succession. Boreal Owls feed mostly on small mammals, along with a small assortment of songbirds. The Saw-Whet Owl is the most commonly confused with the Boreal Owl. The best way to distinguish between them is the Boreal Owl has a brown face, with a darker bill, and a defined border around its face.



COMMON LOON

(Gavia immer) – Loons are large diving birds, reaching lengths of 24 inches. Loons inhabit many local lakes. They are typically found in pairs with 1 to 2 young. Nesting loons are very sensitive to disturbance from boat wakes. Loons are often found diving long distances to prey upon fish and some invertebrates.

CANADA GOOSE

(Branta canadensis) – Around 12 subspecies of the Canada goose exist. They range in size from around 3lbs. up to 12+lbs. Their call resembles a very loud her-onk, her-onk…. Large flocks can be found in spring and fall gathering in agricultural fields and large bodies of water, preparing for their long migration north (in the spring) or south (in the fall).

GREAT GREY OWL

(Strix nebulosa) – Great Grey Owls inhabit moist forests, with small openings for hunting. Their diet consists of mostly small mammals. They have a loud low toned call sounding like, "Woooo, woooo, woooo…which fades from beginning to end. Great Grey Owls are slightly larger than Great Horned Owls, and lack the ear tufts of the Great Horned Owl, making it easy to distinguish between the two.

GREAT HORNED OWL

(Bubo virginianus) – Great Horned Owls habitat ranges from river bottoms to tree line. Their diet primarily consists of small mammals. They are one of the largest owls in Montana, and can be found in the state year round. Identification is easy due to their distinctive call of "Whoo, whoo whoo whooo, whooo- whooo, along with their dished face and ear tufts.

BELTED KINGFISHER

(Megaceryle alcyon) – Kingfishers are solitary birds. They perch on limbs overlooking clear waters in hope of seizing a hapless minnow.

NORTHERN SAW WHET OWL

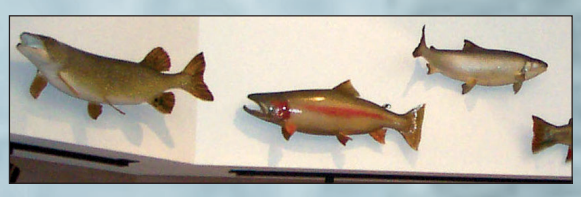
(Aegolius acadicus) – Northern Saw Whets prefer coniferous forests, but sometimes inhabit deciduous forests near water. Their call sounds like, "Toot, toot, toot…." in very rapid succession. Their diet consists mostly of small mammals, with a few song birds mixed in.

SHARP SHINNED HAWK

(Accipiter striatus) – Sharp Shinned Hawks inhabit Montana year-round. They live in or near forests, and feed mostly upon songbirds.

SHORT-EARED OWL

(Asio flammeus) – These owls can be found in open areas, including grasslands, plains, and agricultural areas. Their call makes a "Hooh, hooh, hooh…..." sound, which is mixed with audible wing claps when courting a mate. Short-Eared Owls hunt mostly at dawn and dusk, feeding upon small mammals.



FISH

BULL TROUT

– The large Bull Trout was caught in the late 1970's; with a length of 35.5 inches and a weight of 22 lbs. Bull Trout are native to northwest Montana, where they typically inhabit large cool lakes and streams. Bull trout may migrate up to 140 miles to spawn in these streams.

KOKANEE SALMON

– Kokanee were introduced to Montana waterways legally, and they have done extremely well in its cool, clear lakes and reservoirs. Lake Koocanusa and Lake Mary Ronan are kokanee fishing hot spots in Region One for this popular game fish.

LAKE SUPERIOR WHITEFISH

– Lake Superior Whitefish came to Flathead Lake in 1890 through legal introduction. They have thrived in the deep cold lake, and are now sought after by many anglers for both sport and profit.

LAKE TROUT

– Lake Trout are native in Elk, Twin, St. Mary, and Waterton lakes. They were introduced to many deep cold lakes in Northwest Montana. Lake Trout came to Flathead Lake in 1905 through a legal introduction. Lake trout may reach 30 or more years of age. The state record weighted 42 pounds and was caught in Flathead Lake.

NORTHERN PIKE

– Pike are native to the St. Mary River drainage. They prefer slow moving water, such as backwater sloughs or lakes. Pike came to the Flathead drainage illegally in the 1960's. Pike live in 61 northwest Montana lakes.

RAINBOW TROUT

– the Red Band Rainbow are native to the Kootenai River of Northwest Montana. Other populations of rainbow trout have been introduced from coastal stocks. Rainbow prefer cool, clean lakes and streams.

ARCTIC GRAYLING

– Arctic Grayling are a native fish species of Montana. Originally, they inhabited pristine streams, but now they can be found in mountain lakes. Rogers lake, west of Kalispell is a top local lake for these fish.