

Coniferous Forests



WHAT IS A CONIFEROUS FOREST?

A coniferous forest is dominated by coniferous, or cone-bearing, trees. These include pine, spruce, and fir. In Wyoming, the coniferous forests are found in the mountains rather than down on the plains.

WHY ARE CONIFEROUS FORESTS IMPORTANT?

Conifers survive drought and short growing seasons better than trees that shed their leaves, so they are the most important trees in the Rocky Mountain West. These trees produce a steady supply of oxygen into the atmosphere through photosynthesis, and they keep the soil in place with their roots. They provide most of the lumber used for homes and furniture, plywood and the pulpwood for the various manufactured wood products. Many species of Wyoming wildlife utilize the habitat provided by conifer forests. People like forests too. They give us a place to play and a sense of peace and serenity.

HOW ARE CONIFEROUS FORESTS DOING?

In Wyoming, coniferous forests are suffering from years of drought. A lack of water weakens the trees, exposing them to insect attack and forest fires. After a fire, there is a flush of new growth. This is a natural cycle. The future of our forests depends on how we manage fire and timber cutting. provide food, water and shelter for over 80% of Wyoming's wildlife.

Coniferous Forest Flashcards

Black Bear



Porcupine



Uinta Chipmunk



Townsend's Big-eared Bat



Northern Flicker



Western Tanager



Coniferous Forest Flashcards

Dusky Grouse



Downy Woodpecker



Northern Saw-whet owl



Army Cutworm Moth



Mountain Pine Beetle



Lodgepole Pine



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Ponderosa Pine



Douglas-fir



Buffaloberry



Arrow-leaf Balsamroot



The Sun



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Black Bear

Name: Black Bear
Scientific Name: *Ursus americanus*
Predators: Humans, other bears
Prey or Food: Berries, moths, seeds, leaves, roots, small mammals, garbage

Did you know? To prepare for its winter slumber, a bear must eat thousands of calories each day.

Porcupine

Name: Porcupine
Scientific Name: *Erethizon dorsatum*
Predators: Humans, vehicles, Great-horned owls
Prey or Food: Leaves, twigs, buds, and bark

Did you know? Porcupines don't "throw" their quills, rather they lash their tails at a would-be predator.

Uinta Chipmunk

Name: Uinta Chipmunk
Scientific Name: *Tamias umbrinus*
Predators: Raptors, mammals, snakes
Prey or Food: Conifer seeds, nuts, berries

Did you know? Chipmunks get their names from the different calls or "chips" they communicate with.

Townsend's Big-eared Bat

Name: Townsend's Big-eared Bat
Scientific Name: *Plecotus townsendii*
Predators: Owls, nocturnal mammals
Prey or Food: Moths, other flying insects

Did you know? In addition to their mouths, these bats can also catch insects with their "wing" membranes.

Northern Flicker

Name: Northern Flicker
Scientific Name: *Colaptes auratus*
Predators: Raptors, mountain lions, bobcats, fox
Prey or Food: Insects, some fruits and berries

Did you know? Flickers excavate nest holes in dead or diseased tree trunks that other animals will use once they abandon it.

Western Tanager

Name: Western Tanager
Scientific Name: *Piranga ludoviciana*
Predators: Raptors, mammals, snakes
Prey or Food: Insects, fruit

Did you know? Tanagers get their red color from the food they eat.

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Dusky Grouse

Name: Dusky Grouse
Scientific Name: *Dendragapus obscurus*
Predators: Large Mammals including humans, raptors
Prey or Food: Conifer needles, insects, seeds

Did you know? Dusky grouse males "display" by clapping their wings, hooting, hopping and strutting with their tail feathers fanned to impress females.

Downy Woodpecker

Name: Downy Woodpecker
Scientific Name: *Picoides pubescens*
Predators: Raptors, mammals, snakes
Prey or Food: Mainly beetle larvae, other insects, seeds, nuts

Did you know? Woodpeckers have long, pointy, rigid-tipped tongues used for probing under bark on tree trunks for insects.

Northern Saw-whet owl

Name: Northern Saw-whet owl
Scientific Name: *Aegolius acadicus*
Predators: Other raptors
Prey or Food: Mammals

Did you know? Owls swallow their prey whole, digest the flesh and cough up the bones and fur in a tightly packed "pellet".

Army Cutworm Moth

Name: Army Cutworm Moth
Scientific Name: *Euxoa auxiliaris*
Predators: Bears, owls
Prey or Food: Nectar (adults), leaves (young)

Did you know? These moths are also known as "miller moths".

Mountain Pine Beetle

Name: Mountain Pine Beetle
Scientific Name: *Dendroctonus ponderosae*
Predators: Woodpeckers, bats, mammals
Prey or Food: Ponderosa Pine

Did you know? Once the larvae kill a tree, adults will emerge to infest another tree.

Lodgepole Pine

Name: Lodgepole Pine
Scientific Name: *Pinus contorta*
Predators: Birds, mammals (seeds)
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? Heat from fire opens lodgepole pinecones, releasing the seeds.

Ponderosa Pine

Name: Ponderosa Pine
Scientific Name: *Pinus ponderosa*
Predators: Birds, mammals (seeds)
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? Across the Rocky Mountain region, Ponderosa Pines are being infected and killed by Mountain Pine Beetles.

Douglas-fir

Name: Douglas-fir
Scientific Name: *Pseudotsuga menziesii*
Predators: Birds, mammals (seeds)
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? Douglas-firs are often used as Christmas trees.

Buffaloberry

Name: Buffaloberry
Scientific Name: *Shepherdia argentea*
Predators: Birds, mammals (including humans)
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? Most everything in the forest enjoys eating buffaloberries.

Arrow-leaf Balsamroot

Name: Arrow-leaf Balsamroot
Scientific Name: *Balsamorhiza sagittata*
Predators: Birds (seeds)
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? In the spring, whole mountainsides can be covered with these sunflowers.

The Sun

Plants use the sun's energy to grow through a process known as photosynthesis. Because plants are the beginning of all food chains, all plants and animals transfer the sun's energy when they eat.