



*Citizens for Forest Health Brigade  
Forest Health Field ID Guide*

First Edition, 2014



Contents

1.0 Introduction.....3  
2.0 Plants (Flora).....4  
    2.1 Fungus.....4  
    2.2 Nonnative Plant Species.....5  
    2.3 Mistletoe.....7  
    2.4 Flowering Plants.....7  
    2.5 Shrubs.....9  
    2.6 Trees.....11  
3.0 Animals (Fauna).....13  
    3.1 Insects.....13  
    3.2 Reptiles.....16  
    3.3 Birds.....16  
    3.4 Mammals.....27

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Characterized by ever changing seasons, and molded over centuries by fire, the Ponderosa Pine Zone of Colorado is a unique and fascinating ecosystem. An outdoor enthusiast's paradise, this unique area with its fires, floods, and droughts has created an ideal landscape for biodiversity, in which naturalists can explore the different plants and animals that have adapted to this wonderful but often harsh landscape. This booklet is a guide to the several of the ecosystems most important or common species. Its purpose is to help guide both new and unexperienced observers as they explore this unique and varied environment.



Deer in Ponderosa Pine Zone (Photographer Tyler Greenly)

## 2.0 PLANTS (FLORA)

The plant or flora section of this guide covers many of the more common plant species seen in the forest. This includes trees, shrubs, common flowering plants, mistletoe, various invasive species, and fungus. Fungus are no longer considered to be part of the plant kingdom, but because of their similarities to plants we have included them within this section.

### 2.1 FUNGUS

The organisms known as fungus, including mushrooms, molds, yeasts, and mildews, range from microscopic to huge puffballs. Unlike plants they don't photosynthesize and gain the vast majority of their energy organic matter, living or dead. Many of the fungus shown within this section are parasites to other organisms, while others have formed important symbiotic relationships. Without fungus, the Ponderosa Pine forest could not exist, fungus extract essential nutrients from the soil and transfer them to the trees, they also break down much decaying matter and recycle the nutrients.



Measuring Earthstar (Astraeus hygrometricus)

Habitat: beneath pines and oaks

Season: July to September

A unique stalk less mushroom of moister understory and thick vegetation.

Photo Reference: Photographer Tyler Greenly



Artists Fungus (Ganoderma applanatum)

Habitat: Low on trunks of dead or dying trees, logs on forest floor.

Season: Year round.

Look for this fungus and rotting wood, often in moist areas.

Photo Reference: Katy J Negus. BA Hons. CG Arts & Animation: Fungi Research (Katy J Negus. BA Hons. CG Arts & Animation: Fungi Research)



Indigo Milky (*Lactarius indigo*)

Habitat: Leaf litter of Pine and Oak forests.

Season: July to October

A mushroom that specializes in decaying leaf litter, can be found in both dry and moist areas.

Photo reference: [Lactarius indigo](#) (MushroomExpert.Com) ([Lactarius indigo](#) (MushroomExpert.Com))



Rust Fungus (*Gymnosporangium clavariiforme*)

Habitat: Open limbs and trunks of trees

Season: Year Round

Rust is a parasite common seen on the branches and trunks of sick trees.

Note: Don't mistake for dwarf mistletoe.

Photo reference: Photographer Tyler Greenly

## 2.2 NON-NATIVE PLANT SPECIES

When a naturalist is observing the Ponderosa forest, they may come across species of plants that originally did not occur within the ecosystem. These are nonnative, invasive species that were most likely brought to the United States when Europeans colonized North America. Many nonnatives can be surprisingly abundant in certain areas, and often disturb and out compete the native plants within the ecosystem.



Yellow Sweet Clover (*Melilotus officinalis*)

Habitat: Open areas with direct sunlight.

Season: May to October

A very common clover of open fields, growing waist height, and attracting many insects.

Photo Reference: Photography Tyler Greenly



Common dandelion (Taraxacum officinale)

Habitat: Open fields, moist forest understory, hill sides.

Season: April to August

A plant that blooms most often in the spring, it can become quite abundant in fields of grass.

Photo Reference: Taraxacum officinale - TIDY GARDENS (TIDY GARDENS)

<http://www.tidygardens.eu/taraxacum-officinale/>



Milk Thistle (Silybum marianum)

Habitat: Open fields with direct sunlight

Season: June to September

A common thistle of open fields with long grass, beware of touching it because of its sharp spines.

Photo reference: File:Milk thistle flowerhead.jpg (Wikipedia)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milk\\_thistle#mediaviewer/File:Milk\\_thistle\\_flowerhead.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milk_thistle#mediaviewer/File:Milk_thistle_flowerhead.jpg)

### 2.3 MISTLETOE

A Parasitic family of plants commonly found in forests, the mistletoe is abundant in the Ponderosa Pine Biome. It is particularly common in areas where there has been drought or high numbers of pine beetles which weaken the tree and make it easier to colonize. In our region we have one species known as the dwarf mistletoe.



Dwarf Mistletoe (Arceuthobium spp.)

Habitat: Open limbs of Coniferous trees.

Season: Can be seen year-round

This plant is parasite of sickly trees, often growing in thick clumps. Berries provide food for animals.

Note: Don't mistaken for Rust Fungus.

Photo reference: Flora montana: Dwarf Mistletoe (Flora montana: Dwarf Mistletoe)

<http://montanaflora.blogspot.com/2013/05/dwarf-mistletoe.html>

### 2.4 FLOWERING PLANTS

This section covers some of the more common flower species within the Ponderosa Pine Biome. Because flower diversity within this ecosystem is very large, with several hundred species. Because of this we have selected some of the more common and interesting species within the habitat.



Many- flowered goldeneye (Heliomeris multiflora)

Habitat: Dry, rocky slopes, washes, under Ponderosa Pine tree.

Season: May to October

A species within the aster family, this flower is often abundant in dry areas of the Ponderosa Pine biome.

Photo reference:

<http://www.jungleseeds.co.uk/contents/en-uk/d73.html>



Hoary aster (*Dieteria canescens*)

Habitat: Arid hilly slopes often with direct sunlight.

Season: April to October

Photo reference: [Dieteria canescens \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dieteria\\_canescens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dieteria_canescens)



Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)

Habitat: Open fields to forest understory.

Season: June to September

A very common native often found among bushes and tall grass.

Photo reference: [Achillea millefolium \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achillea\\_millefolium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achillea_millefolium)



Sego Lily (*Calochortus nuttallii*)

Habitat: Common in moist ground in both forested and open areas.

Season: June to August

The state flower of Utah is an indicator species for healthy soils as it only grows where there is no pollution.

Photo Reference: [\(Wikipedia\)](#)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calochortus\\_nuttallii#mediawer/File:Sego\\_lily\\_cm.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calochortus_nuttallii#mediawer/File:Sego_lily_cm.jpg)

## 2.5 SHRUBS

There are many woody shrubs of the Ponderosa Pine Ecosystem, many of which are important food sources for the animals. In the fall service berries and gambel's oak provide large sources of berries and nuts which help fatten many animals up before winter. Many species take advantage of this resource ranging from deer to parasitic wasps. The shrubs also provide cover for many of the forests smaller residents such as small birds and rodents.



### Wood's Rose (Rosa Woodsii)

Habitat: Most common in moist understory.

The fruit of this plant is edible and Native Americans used to make a tea out of it. Look for this plant in moist areas with lots of shade.

Photo Reference: Let the Blooms Begin! (Enjoy the Garden)

<http://www.redbuttegarden.org/node/246>



### Gambel's Oak (Quercus gambelii)

Habitat: Ponderosa Pine woods

Most common shrub in Ponderosa Pine forests, can grow into small tree.

Photo Reference: Utah Native Plant Society Home Page (Utah Native Plant Society Home Page)

<http://www.unps.org/index.html?hybridoak/hybridoak.html>



Utah Service berry (Amerlanchier utahensis)

Habitat: Wet areas, often near streams, forest understory.

With berries that taste sweeter than blue berries this shrub is an important food source for many migrating birds.

Photo reference: Photographer Tyler Greenly



Snow Berry (Symphoricarpos albus)

Habitat: Dry forest understory.

A very common shrub that grows in dryer soil often in the shade of Ponderosa Pine trees.

Photo Reference:

<http://polyland.calpoly.edu/overview/archives/derome/woodlands.html>



Oregon grape (Mahonia aquifolium)

Habitat: Dry forest understory

A plant often mistakenly called mountain holly, this plant is abundant in Ponderosa Pine forests.

Photo Reference: Making Oregon Grape Jam (Making Oregon Grape Jam)

<http://s158336089.onlinehome.us/OregonGrapeJam/OregonGrapeJam.html>

## 2.6 TREES

The most defining component of the Ponderosa Pine biome are the trees themselves. There are several species that live in this habitat but none is more common or obvious than the Ponderosa Pine, and it is from this tree that the ecosystem gets its name. This tree is a true keystone species driving everything from soil nutrients to what birds forage in its branches to what plants grow underneath it. There are several other tree species that are found here as well and while they do not serve such a key function, they are all essential to the forests biodiversity.



### Ponderosa Pine (Pinus Ponderosa)

Habitat: Mid Elevation on slopes, flat areas, and hills.

The most common tree in this biome.

Photo Reference: Ponderosa Pine (Tree Seed Kit from Greenteam Colorado)

<http://www.greenteamco.com/ponderosa-kit.html>



### Rocky Mountain juniper (Juniperus scopulorum)

Habitat: Mountains, canyons, slopes, dry areas.

An important tree in many regions because of its vast crop of berries this tree is common in the ecosystem.

Photo Reference:

<http://swbiodiversity.org/seinet/taxa/index.php?taxon=Juniperus+scopulorum>

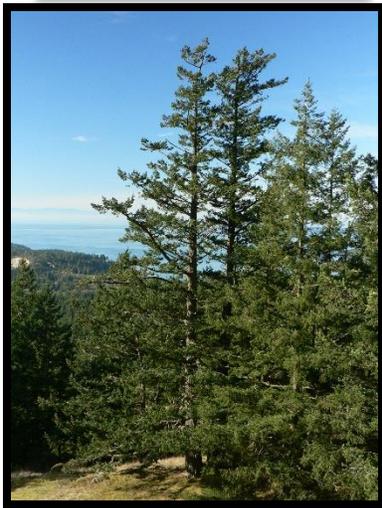


White Fir (*Abies concolor*)

Habitat: Forest understory often growing in the shadow of larger trees.

Common in overgrown areas that provide lots of shade.

Photo reference: <http://home.howstuffworks.com/white-fir-tree.htm>



Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)

Habitat: Thick shady understory, often under taller trees.

A tree that commonly grows in areas that have become overgrown.

Photo reference: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pseudotsuga>



Quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*)

Habitat: Canyons, streamside's, slopes

A tree fond of wet soil. A colonizing species often occurring in recently disturbed areas.

Photo reference:

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4e/Quaking\\_aspen\\_Populus\\_tremuloides\\_trio.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4e/Quaking_aspen_Populus_tremuloides_trio.jpg)[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4e/Quaking\\_aspen\\_Populus\\_tremuloides\\_trio.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4e/Quaking_aspen_Populus_tremuloides_trio.jpg)

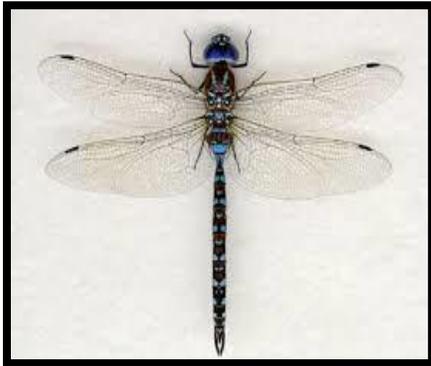
### 3.0 ANIMALS

The animals that live within the Ponderosa Pine Biome are incredibly unique and diverse. They range from huge elk, to the tiny wood ants, to twittering nuthatches. Animals are very important for the forest, as they forage the carry seeds, and recycle nutrients. Animals are important indicators for forest health, and scientists often study them to determine whether forest health practices are needed. This section of the guide is broken into several sections similarly to the plants, except that for the fauna we are following taxonomic classification, or in simpler terms most primitive to most advance.

### 3.1 INSECTS

Insects, within the class Insecta, include over three million species worldwide and are literally found everywhere. Their importance to every ecological system cannot be overstated as they are both keystone, and basal species. Insects are different from other arthropods because of their body structure. They have three body parts: a head, thorax, and abdomen. Coming off of the thorax are six legs. When identifying arthropods be aware of these characteristics. This guide will show several representative species from several orders found within the Ponderosa Pine Biome.

#### Odonata



Blue- Eyed Darner (Aeshna multicolor)

Habitat: Open areas, ponds, streams, often miles from water.

An aggressive insect that can be seen fighting with other dragonflies. The most common dragon fly can be seen in nearly any habitat.

Season: May- October

Photo Reference:

<http://web.gk12.net/homes/mberg/GHS%20Summer%20Research%20Biology.htm>

## Diptera



Giant Robber Fly (Proctacanthus rocdecki)

Habitats: Open forest and fields.

Seasons: June- September

An efficient predator of flies, bees, beetles and other insects. It catches this with swoops and dives often hawking them from flowers.

Photo Reference: [http://www.whatsthatbug.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/giant\\_robber\\_fly\\_ingrid.jpg](http://www.whatsthatbug.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/giant_robber_fly_ingrid.jpg)

## Hymenoptera



Harvester Ants (Pogonomyrmex species)

Habitat: Nearly any habitat.

Season: Warm months

Most common ant in this zone. An opportunist that hunts other insects, gathers nectar, raises aphids, and gathers seeds and other vegetation.

Photo Reference:  
<http://peppysdevelopments.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/ant-pavement.jpg>



Mountains bumblebee (Bombus sonorus)

Habitat: Open fields and woodland.

Season: warm months

The true native bee of the mountains, the honey bee was introduced, this species can be seen gathering pollen and nectar from native floral species.

Photo reference: <http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-8KekNY1izZo/To1ap1wFTyI/AAAAAAAAABGk/VA1fOwVcVEs/s1600/bumble-bees.jpg>

**Lepidoptera**



Two- tailed swallow tail butterfly (Papilio multicaudatus)

Habitats: Open woodlands and fields

Seasons: March- October

The most common large butterfly. Look for a butterfly that has a preference for wild sunflowers.

Photos Reference:

<http://www.statesymbolsusa.org/IMAGES/Arizona/Two-tailedSwallowtailFlickr.jpg>



Mourning cloak (Nymphalis antiopa)

Habitat: Riparian Habitats.

A large butterfly that is common among cottonwoods and willow. It tends to prefer shady areas for habitat.

Season: February- November

Photo reference:

<http://i1.ytimg.com/vi/JUjfxP98Kmk/maxresdefault.jpg>



Underwing moths (Catocala species)

Habitat: Woodland edges, Riparian Areas.

Season: May- September

A diurnal moth that often spends its day camouflaged against the trunks of trees.

Photo reference:

<http://bugguide.net/images/raw/BL7ZOL7Z1L0ZVLKZDLRZDZHZELZZ9LFLJZPROLQZ1LJL2LQRTZKRDZHZPLJLVLIZNLKREL3LBLGRZH.jpg>

### 3.2 REPTILES

Members of the class Reptilia, reptiles are cold blooded, their body temperatures varying with their environment. because of this reptiles are rare within the Ponderosa Pine biome due to the cold winters and deep snow. The few species that do live in this habitat are highly adaptable and spend their winter hibernating underground. Look for the lizards and snakes that live here during the warmer months of summer.



Short-horned lizard (Phrynosoma douglassi)

Habitat: Pine Forest with undergrowth

A common lizard of the forests found in nearly every area off it. This is the lizard famous for bleeding out of its eyes.

Photo Reference: <http://images.summitpost.org/large/531503.jpg>



Eastern fence Lizard (Sceloporus undulates)

Habitat: Common on slopes with exposed rocks and logs for basking.

This is the blue bellied lizard of the forest whose tail with fall off if you grab it. Look for this lizard on sunny slopes with plenty of basking spots.

Photo reference:

[http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/reptiles/lizards/eastern-fence-lizard/sp\\_eastern%20fence%20lizard%20\(Sceloporous%20undulatus\)001.jpg](http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/reptiles/lizards/eastern-fence-lizard/sp_eastern%20fence%20lizard%20(Sceloporous%20undulatus)001.jpg)

### 3.3 BIRDS

Birds are the members of the class Aves, and are the only animals to possess feathers. Like their reptile ancestors they lay eggs, birds also have excellent eyesight and hearing. Many birders enjoy birding in the Ponderosa Pine Zone due to its diversity of species and its open forests. When looking for the different species look all around you, from the open skies to the thick canopy to the ground. Also look for snags which often have hollows suitable for nesting. When looking for birds it's advisable to bring a pair of binoculars.

## Diurnal Birds of Prey



### Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura)

Habitat: Sours over all habitats

This is one of the most common birds of prey seen in the Ponderosa Pine Zone. It is most often spotted soaring over the forest with wings bent up.

Note: Don't mistaken for similar soaring species such as ravens and eagles.

Photo Reference: <http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-R-bZeh5LjFg/UCfM7kBWcl/AAAAAAAAAC1A/O6jWGY7eRXs/s1600/Turkey+Vulture+12-1.jpg>



### Northern Goshawk (Accipiter gentilis)

Habitat: Mainly thick, remote, mountain forests

A powerful, rare and elusive forest raptor, this powerful predator is can be seen flying swiftly after passerines and other forest birds. Sightings are often very brief due to its shyness, and speed of exit.

Photo Reference:  
[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/81/Northern\\_Goshawk\\_ad\\_M2.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/81/Northern_Goshawk_ad_M2.jpg)



### Red- tailed hawk (Buteo jamaicensis)

Habitat: Seen flying over any habitat type from grassland to thick mountain forest.

This is the most commonly seen buteo hawk in the United States often seen soaring from great hieghts as it searches for its prey of small rodents, lagomorphs and birds. When identifying this species be aware of its red tail.

Note: Juvenile red tailed hawks don't have a red tail.

Photo Reference:  
[http://www.lakecountyaudubon.org/images/RedTailFlying\\_EmmaEngland.jpeg](http://www.lakecountyaudubon.org/images/RedTailFlying_EmmaEngland.jpeg)



American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)

Habitat: Open grassland, Open woodland

A small common falcon that preys chiefly on voles and mice that is spots from hovering or high perches. Often looks dove like when flying swiftly and directly.

Photo Reference:

[http://leesbirdblog.files.wordpress.com/2008/08/american-kestrel-93437520\\_byln72gu\\_dsc\\_6971w.jpg](http://leesbirdblog.files.wordpress.com/2008/08/american-kestrel-93437520_byln72gu_dsc_6971w.jpg)

Woodpeckers



Northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)

Habitat: Open woodlands

A common woodpecker that forages chiefly on the ground. Hikers often startle this bird when it is foraging for ants and other insects.

Photo Reference:

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/5c/Northern\\_Flicker\\_%28Red-shafted%29.jpg/800px-Northern\\_Flicker\\_%28Red-shafted%29.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/5c/Northern_Flicker_%28Red-shafted%29.jpg/800px-Northern_Flicker_%28Red-shafted%29.jpg)



Lewis's woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*)

Habitat: Open areas with pine trees

A bird of pine forests, it can be seen foraging in the trees and on the ground. This bird's flight is very similar to that of a jay or nutcracker. One of the most beautiful birds in the Ponderosa forest its feathers often shine iridescent in the sun.

Photo Reference:

[http://farm6.staticflickr.com/5285/5354098042\\_84a38df512\\_z.jpg](http://farm6.staticflickr.com/5285/5354098042_84a38df512_z.jpg)

**Passerines**



Western wood- pewee (Contopus sordidulus)

Habitat: Open Pine forest

The most common tyrant flycatcher in the Ponderosa Pine zone. This bird can be seen hawking for flies, gnats and other airborne insects. Look for a graceful, small bird flitting through the air or sitting on an exposed branch.

Photo Reference:

[http://birds.audubon.org/sites/default/files/imagecache/bird-full/species\\_images/Western\\_Wood-Pewee\\_m50-5-102\\_1.jpg](http://birds.audubon.org/sites/default/files/imagecache/bird-full/species_images/Western_Wood-Pewee_m50-5-102_1.jpg)



Common Raven (Corvus corax)

Habitat: Flies over every habitat

A common bird often seen flying over the woods. Be sure not to mistake it for a hawk or vulture for it is as large as them.

Photo Reference: <http://earthworkprograms.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Raven-common-soaring-300x201.jpg>



Steller's jay (Cyanocitta stelleri)

Habitat: Coniferous Forests

Although not particularly common in pine forest this bird can be found on westward facing slopes where fir and spruce trees abound. This bird has a harsh call that is unmistakable. Look for blue feathers high in the trees.

Photo reference: <http://www.vannatabros.com/12-03/sjay-2.jpg#stellers%20jay%202000x1352>



Violet- green swallow (Tachycineta thalassina)

Habitat: Open forests, with plenty of snags with holes for nesting.

A species that benefits from the construction of woodpeckers, this swallow is the most common aerial forager in the Ponderosa Pine Zone. Look for a bird soaring high up with long winged and a white underside.

Photo Reference:

[http://farm5.staticflickr.com/4021/4534320098\\_eb69d119da\\_z.jpg](http://farm5.staticflickr.com/4021/4534320098_eb69d119da_z.jpg)



Mountain chickadee (Poecile gambeli)

Habitat: A species that is very particular to pine and coniferous forests.

A sociable species, of pine forests, that is especially prevalent in winter. Little for lots of chattering in the canopy and chances are you will find this energetic species. Its close relative the black- capped chickadee is found mainly in deciduous forests.

Photo Reference:

[http://farm9.staticflickr.com/8097/8434091288\\_f66d77fce3\\_z.jpg](http://farm9.staticflickr.com/8097/8434091288_f66d77fce3_z.jpg)



Pygmy nuthatch (Sitta pygmaea)

Habitat: Specialized for dry pine and conifer forests.

Common Year round in the Ponderosa Pine forest and often the most abundant species seen, especially in winter when flocks fly down from higher ground. Like the white- breasted nuthatch creeps up and down trunks of trees.

Photo Reference:

[http://ibc.lynxeds.com/files/pictures/DSC\\_0085A.jpg](http://ibc.lynxeds.com/files/pictures/DSC_0085A.jpg)



White breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*)

Habitat: Common in a variety of habitats.

Often the most common nuthatch in the forest, be aware for a bird that looks like a small woodpecker creeping up and down the trunks of trees. The white head and breast of this species distinguishes from other nuthatch species.

Photo Reference:

[http://sdakotabirds.com/species\\_photos/photos/white\\_breasted\\_nuthatch\\_1.jpg](http://sdakotabirds.com/species_photos/photos/white_breasted_nuthatch_1.jpg)



Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*)

Habitat: Common in any type of forest.

A little inconspicuous bird that while common is difficult to spot. This bird is specialized to finding insects and sap on the trunk and exposed branches of trees. The best time to see this bird is in the winter months.

Photo Reference: [http://media-cache-](http://media-cache-ec0.pinimg.com/736x/9b/f0/e1/9bf0e1b5181e12c6c52c38e76fe32707.jpg)

[ec0.pinimg.com/736x/9b/f0/e1/9bf0e1b5181e12c6c52c38e76fe32707.jpg](http://media-cache-ec0.pinimg.com/736x/9b/f0/e1/9bf0e1b5181e12c6c52c38e76fe32707.jpg)



House wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)

Habitat: Areas of thick shrubbery.

A little bird with a beautiful voice, listen for its warbles, and gurgles early in the morning. A fast breeder that can have three clutches a summer. This little bird migrates out of the mountains for the winter.

Photo Reference:

[http://birds.audubon.org/sites/default/files/imagecache/bird-full/species\\_images/House\\_Wren\\_w27-4-011\\_l.jpg](http://birds.audubon.org/sites/default/files/imagecache/bird-full/species_images/House_Wren_w27-4-011_l.jpg)



Ruby-crowned kinglet (*Regulus calendula*)

Habitat: Forages in thick canopy in coniferous woodlands.

A migratory species that arrives in May to breed. A vireo like bird that forages mainly for insects by gleaning twigs and leaves and by fly catching aerial species.

Photo Reference: <https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/-SMDSUlvt1ZM/TX9OCNwRdEI/AAAAAAAAAij0/KDYqtGC8UGQ/s1600/Ruby-Crowned+Kinglet.jpg>



Western bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*)

Habitat: Open woodlands in the mountain.

A cavity nester that hawks insects in open forests. Pairs have several clutches of young over the four month breeding season. Flocks migrate south in the fall.

Photo Reference:

<http://m7.i.pbase.com/g2/44/316244/2/149251767.lwUfyUtz.jpg>



Yellow-rumped warbler (*Dendroica coronata*)

Habitat: In the summer this species breeds in Coniferous woodlands, but in winter it migrates to winter in shrub land.

The most common warbler in the ponderosa pine zone, that feeds largely on insects. Most easily identified when flying away showing a yellow spot above the tail.

Photo Reference:

[http://www.tringa.org/images/8951\\_Yellow-rumped\\_Warbler\\_06-30-2010\\_0.jpg](http://www.tringa.org/images/8951_Yellow-rumped_Warbler_06-30-2010_0.jpg)



American Robin (Turdus migratorius)

Habitat: Woodlands with grassy areas and open fields.

Common in many different habitats it is often seen foraging in fields for insects. Groups of this bird can be very aggressive when defending young and they will actively mob magpies, ravens, and even bears.

Photo Reference: [http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-xGi1P\\_hLHY/URkWotfQmXI/AAAAAAAAAEss/YFk8g\\_dH56g/s1600/American+Robin+Images+07.jpg](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-xGi1P_hLHY/URkWotfQmXI/AAAAAAAAAEss/YFk8g_dH56g/s1600/American+Robin+Images+07.jpg)



Western tanager (Piranga ludoviciana)

Habitat: Mountain forests.

Said to be the most colorful and vibrant bird in the Colorado Rockies, look for the male singing from a high perch. Pairs are highly territorial during the summer when nesting takes place.

Photo Reference:  
<http://www.zuropak.com/photogallery/western-tanager/Western-Tanager-239.jpg>



Chipping sparrow (Spizella passerina)

Habitat: Woodland Edges.

The most common sparrow in the forest, it is often seen foraging on the ground for insects. Migrates to deserts in the winter.

Photo Reference: <http://blog.duncraft.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/chipping-sparrow5R.jpg>



Vesper Sparrow (Pooecetes gramineus)

Habitat: Open fields and grassland.

An aerial and graceful sparrow that is very lark like. In winter large flocks gather in areas that have a lot of grass seeds and on the Great Plains it is often seen feeding on milo and other grains.

Photo Reference:

[https://c2.staticflickr.com/4/3762/9631154919\\_6a6a06b72c\\_z.jpg](https://c2.staticflickr.com/4/3762/9631154919_6a6a06b72c_z.jpg)



Evening Grosbeak (Coccothraustes vespertinus)

Habitat: Mixed woodlands

A sporadic species in its occurrence in the woodland, this species may be completely absent some years in perfectly suitable habitat and abundant in other years. Breeds only in years of ideal conditions.

Photo reference:

[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/\\_jL6GluBnx8g/TSeijGzJIMI/AAAAAAAd5I/4\\_GKJs-xZ0/s1600/EveningGrosbeak\\_20110106\\_6543.jpg](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_jL6GluBnx8g/TSeijGzJIMI/AAAAAAAd5I/4_GKJs-xZ0/s1600/EveningGrosbeak_20110106_6543.jpg)



Black-headed grosbeak (Pheucticus melanocephalus)

Habitat: Thick mountain forests often near streams and meadows.

A bird that can be very sporadic. Only produces one clutch in the spring and then becomes migratory moving through habitat in flocks in search of seeds and other food sources.

Photo Reference:

[http://farm5.staticflickr.com/4027/4455490427\\_a6842a191f\\_z.jpg](http://farm5.staticflickr.com/4027/4455490427_a6842a191f_z.jpg)



Western Meadowlark (Sturnella neglecta)

Habitat: Open fields and grassland.

The most common bird in open grassland and pastureland. A chubby creature that's flight is relatively ungainly, they can often be seen singing from fence posts.

Photo Reference:

<http://www.larkwire.com/static/content/images/ipad/LBNA1/WesternMeadowlark.jpg>



White-crowned sparrow (Zonotrichia leucophrys)

Habitat: Common in forests and thickets.

A specialized feeder of grass seeds, this pretty sparrow is a ground forager that is seen on the ground in flocks. In winter they migrate to southern deserts.

Photo Reference:

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/92/White-crowned-Sparrow.jpg>

### Dark-eyed Junco



### Gray-headed Junco



### Pink-sided Junco



#### Dark- eyed junco (Junco hyemalis)

Habitat: Wood Lands, Shrub land.

There are three varieties of junco that live in the San Juan Mountains, the Pink- sided Junco, the Oregon Junco, and the Gray- headed Junco. In the summer it is the Gray- headed junco that prevalent the Ponderosa Forests, but in the winter it migrates to the mountains of Arizona, and the Oregon and Pink- sided juncos migrate to spend the winter in our mountains. When searching for junco in the woods listen for a very slight peep as this is their alarm call.

#### Photo Reference:

##### Oregon junco picture

[http://torreypinesreflections.files.wordpress.com/2010/06/9106\\_dark-eyed\\_-oregon- junco\\_12-27-2006\\_5.jpg](http://torreypinesreflections.files.wordpress.com/2010/06/9106_dark-eyed_-oregon- junco_12-27-2006_5.jpg)

##### Pink sided junco picture

[http://www.tringa.org/images/9106\\_Dark-eyed\\_-Pink-sided- Junco\\_04-01-2009\\_0.jpg](http://www.tringa.org/images/9106_Dark-eyed_-Pink-sided- Junco_04-01-2009_0.jpg)

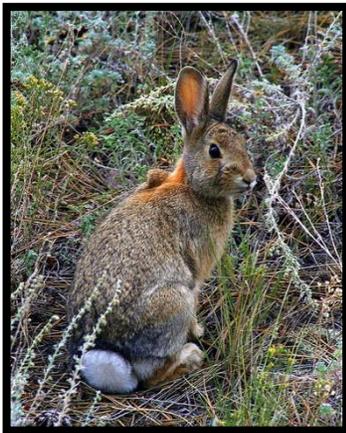
##### Gray- headed junco picture

[http://www.tringa.org/images/9106\\_Dark-eyed\\_-Gray-headed- Junco\\_03-14-2008\\_2.jpg](http://www.tringa.org/images/9106_Dark-eyed_-Gray-headed- Junco_03-14-2008_2.jpg)

### 3.4 MAMMALS

Warm-blooded and able to maintain a constant body temperature, mammals within the class Mammalia have colonized nearly every corner of the planet and are the most dominant vertebrates within most ecological systems. Mammals show an amazing array of diversity, ranging from inch long shrews to 100 foot long blue whales, to gazelles and other ungulates to monkeys and other arboreal primates. Mammals within the Ponderosa Pine Zone show amazing diversity. When exploring this ecosystem watch the trees for squirrels, and the ground for chipmunks and ground squirrels, and the fields for deer and elk. Mammals can be elusive so also be aware of any tracks within the area. The mammals shown within this guide are the most common species within the forest and the ones most likely to be seen.

#### Lagomorphs



Mountain cottontail (Sylvilagus nuttallii)

Habitat: Shrubby country, often in gambel's oak.

The most common rabbit in this habitat, they are often seen only when they are running away.

Photo Reference: <http://icons-ak.wunderground.com/data/wximagenew/c/crazylarry/577.jpg>

#### Rodents



Least Chipmunk (Tamias minimus)

Habitat: Juniper and pine woodland.

The most commonly seen chipmunk in this forest; the closely related Colorado Chipmunk lives here but is not as common. Chipmunks hibernate in the winter and are only seen during the summer months. During this period of activity they forage for seeds, berries, and vegetation, fattening up for winter.

Photo reference: <http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-I7GTRFrksn8/T - cTwDwm I/AAAAAAAAABAc/f0EHd49XvPk/s1600/Least-Chipmunk-0001-GWL-08000.jpg>



Abert's squirrel (Sciurus aberti)

Habitat: Ponderosa Pine forests

A pine ponderosa specialist that feeds only on the inner cambium layer under the bark and on the pine cones of this tree. A healthy forest will have many abert's squirrel and so it can be used as an indicator species.

Photo Reference:

[http://farm3.staticflickr.com/2680/4089029578\\_ca7818f6cd\\_z.jpg?zz=1](http://farm3.staticflickr.com/2680/4089029578_ca7818f6cd_z.jpg?zz=1)



American red squirrel (Tamiasciurus hudsonicus)

Habitat: Coniferous Forests.

The most common squirrel in the Rocky Mountains, they are most often seen chatting in the tree when you hike by.

Photo Reference:

[https://c1.staticflickr.com/9/8482/8255845804\\_f86bd6ee87\\_z.jpg](https://c1.staticflickr.com/9/8482/8255845804_f86bd6ee87_z.jpg)

## Ungulates



### Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)

Habitats: Found throughout the Ponderosa Pine Forest.

The most common hoofed animal in the region, this deer bounds with a stiff legged gait. In winter they form small herds on wintering grounds. Buck grow antlers in the spring and summer for the rut and then shed them in March. Does don't have antlers.

#### Photo Reference:

Summer mule deer (Buck)

<http://cdn.c.photoshelter.com/img-get/i0000bm3XYZEBAM8/s/870/Mmdr5175.jpg>

Winter mule deer (Doe)

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d0/Mule\\_deer\\_doe\\_backlit.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d0/Mule_deer_doe_backlit.jpg)

### Elk (*Cervus elaphus*)

Habitat: Found throughout Ponderosa Pine Forest. Alpine herds migrate down during the winter.

A Herd animal that migrates from summer and wintering grounds. This large animal is surprisingly nimble when it comes to running through the woods.

#### Photo Reference:

Summer elk (Bulls)

<http://gallery.photo.net/photo/9715808-md.jpg>

Winter Elk (Cow)

<http://gallery.photo.net/photo/8454152-md.jpg>