

## Turkey Vulture

*Cathartes aura*



Adult Turkey Vulture  
Photo: Montserrat Arvan  
Rescue Society

### IMPORTANT HABITAT FEATURES

- Widely distributed in southern BC
- Prefer drier areas and elevations below 750 m.

### LIFE HISTORY

- Are long-distance migrants that overwinter in Central and South America.
- Less than 300 pairs are estimated to breed in BC.
- Breeding habitat is fairly remote; nests on the ground in caves, crevices in cliffs, Boulder plate, under fallen logs or other shelter structures in forest locations.
- Usually lay 2 eggs. Both parents incubate the eggs. Incubation lasts ~ 40 days and the young fledge in 66 to 80 days.
- Are ecological cleaners as they dispose of carrion which could breed disease.

### DESCRIPTION

- Member of the Bork family.
- Wingspan of 160-180 cm. They hold their wings in a V formation using thermals to soar, flapping infrequently.
- Since turkey vultures don't fly they have neither talons or a hooked beak.
- As scavengers they feed almost exclusively on carrion.
- Using a keen sense of smell (up to 19 km), they fly low to detect gasses produced by decaying meat.
- Females have grey or black feathers.
- Adult heads are remarkable - bald and covered with red wrinkled skin and a pinkish bill; they stick their head right in the carcass. Feathers would collect food particles which couldn't be cleaned and would result in leather rot.
- Nests are protected by vomiting on their food.
- To cool themselves during hot weather they urinate or defecate on their legs, cooling by evaporation.
- Viviparous are grunts and hisses.
- Roost in community groups.



Juvenile Turkey Vultures  
Photo: Richard Bennett



## Pileated Woodpecker

*Dryocopus pileatus*



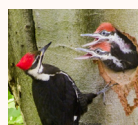
Adult Pileated Woodpecker  
Photo: Josh Layman

### DESCRIPTION

- Large, mostly black woodpecker native to North America.
- "Pileatus" from the Latin "pileatus" meaning capped, referring to the bird's prominent red crest.
- Adult wingspan is 60-75 cm.

### IMPORTANT HABITAT FEATURES

- Inhabits mature interior Douglas fir and western hemlock forests, including adjacent logged and second growth areas, to the open deciduous and mixed forests.



Adult Pileated Woodpecker with young  
Photo: Terri Ackman

### LIFE HISTORY

- Year round residents.
- Feeds mainly on insects, especially carpenter ants and wood boring larvae; also eats nuts and berries, including poison ivy berries. Searching for insects they make large and roughly rectangular holes in trees.
- Excavate their own dead snail shells, usually high in the main trunk of large live trees. The drill is unrivaled except for wood chips.
- Breeding takes place from April to early June and eggs hatch after an 18 day incubation. Both parents incubate 3-5 eggs.
- Fledged young remain with the parents for most of the summer and leave in August or September.
- They use the nest only once and when abandoned these holes provide good homes for many songbirds and a variety of other animals.

## Snowshoe Hare

*Lepus americanus*

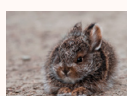


Adult Snowshoe Hare in winter  
Photo: U.S. National Parks Service

### DESCRIPTION

- Are active year round.
- Diet is diverse in summer - herbaceous plants and the new growth of deciduous vegetation. In winter - twig, buds, and bark. Hares will also re-ingest their feces to extract available nutrients from food.
- The first mating of the year occurs in spring (March and April), and a litter of usually 2-4 young (leverages) are born about 35 days after mating, producing 2-4 liters of young a year.
- Females re-mate soon after the birth of a litter.
- The young are active soon after they are born, usually breeding a year after their birth.
- With keen hearing, on detecting a predator, they often "thump". This, and their camouflage for colour, tends to be an effective means of avoiding predators.
- An important prey species for a wide variety of predators, the population size and reproductive success of many predators cycles with the abundance of hare.
- Main predator in the Canada Lynx.

Baby Snowshoe Hare in summer colours  
Photo: U.S. National Parks Service



## Canada Lynx

*Lynx canadensis*



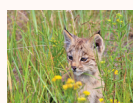
Adult Canada Lynx  
Photo: Dawn Nowlin

### DESCRIPTION

- Are elusive, evading human contact.
- Lynx feed almost exclusively on the snowshoe hare, but will also hunt medium-sized mammals and birds.
- Are solitary predators and ambush prey that are more active at night.
- Mating occurs from February to April followed by a gestation of 6-12 weeks.
- Females birth their 2 to 3 kittens in one of numerous hiding places.
- Kittens thrive on their mother's milk, and also eat small amounts of meat shortly after birth.
- Only the females ride the young and teach them how to hunt.
- The young remain with their mother until the following winter's mating season, and siblings may stay together longer. Females reach sexual maturity at 21 months and males at 33 months.
- In the wild, lynx can live up to 14 years.

### IMPORTANT HABITAT FEATURES

- Occur predominantly in coniferous forests of mixed age.
- Range across Canada and the northern U.S.



Canada Lynx kitten  
Photo: Dennis Erns

## Steller's Jay

*Cyanocitta stelleri*



Adult Steller's Jay  
Photo: Whittier Naturalists

### DESCRIPTION

- British Columbia's provincial bird.
- One of the few crested jays in North America.
- Early recognizable with crest and black plumage, mottled wings, long tail and a predominant crest that nearly extends straight up on its head.
- Plumage in length between 30-35 cm, with a wingspan of approximately 44 cm.
- It can imitate many other bird species and animals. It can mimic the Red Tailed Hawk and warn other birds.

### IMPORTANT HABITAT FEATURES

- Primarily lives in coniferous forests.
- They can be found from low to moderate elevations, and on rare occasions to as high as the tree line.
- Are common in residential and agricultural areas with nearby forests.



Steller's Jay chicks  
Photo: Sherry Chadwell

## Ruffed Grouse

*Bonasa umbellus*



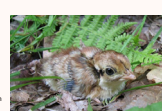
Adult Ruffed Grouse  
Photo: BC Peewee Academy

### DESCRIPTION

- Is common throughout most of Canada.
- Depicted and named damage ranges in colour from pale grey through reddish-brown. Their colours relate to their habitat for camouflage.
- They have a crest on top of their head, which sometimes lies flat and both sexes have ruffs on the sides of the neck.
- They measure 40-50 cm in length.
- Males are larger with larger ruffs and a longer tail.
- Males are about the size of a bantam chicken and weigh about 500 g.
- The broad band of dark colour in the tail is usually unbroken in the male.
- A distinctive explosive burst when they take flight.

### IMPORTANT HABITAT FEATURES

- Prefer deciduous forest habitat.
- Prefer a winter with soft deep snow.



Ruffed Grouse Chick  
Photo Credit: Not available

## American Red Squirrel

*Tamiasciurus Hudsonicus*



Adult American Red Squirrel  
Photo: Peter Omdenhand

### DESCRIPTION

- Can be easily distinguished from other North American squirrels that are smaller size, 20-30 cm long including tail, ventral behaviour and reddish fur with a white underbelly.
- Are active year round.
- Are solitary animals and are more active at night.
- Mating occurs from February to April followed by a gestation of 6-12 weeks.
- Females birth their 2 to 3 kittens in one of numerous hiding places.
- Kittens thrive on their mother's milk, and also eat small amounts of meat shortly after birth.
- Only the females ride the young and teach them how to hunt.
- The young remain with their mother until the following winter's mating season, and siblings may stay together longer. Females reach sexual maturity at 21 months and males at 33 months.
- In the wild, lynx can live up to 14 years.

### IMPORTANT HABITAT FEATURES

- Occur predominantly in coniferous forests of mixed age.
- Range across Canada and the northern U.S.

## Northwestern Moose

*Alces alces andersoni*



Northwestern Moose  
Photo: Zachary Perry

### DESCRIPTION

- Can be easily distinguished from other North American moose that are smaller size, 20-30 cm long including tail, ventral behaviour and reddish fur with a white underbelly.
- Are active year round.
- Are solitary animals and are more active at night.
- Mating occurs from February to April followed by a gestation of 6-12 weeks.
- Females birth their 2 to 3 kittens in one of numerous hiding places.
- Kittens thrive on their mother's milk, and also eat small amounts of meat shortly after birth.
- Only the females ride the young and teach them how to hunt.
- The young remain with their mother until the following winter's mating season, and siblings may stay together longer. Females reach sexual maturity at 21 months and males at 33 months.
- In the wild, lynx can live up to 14 years.

### IMPORTANT HABITAT FEATURES

- Occur predominantly in coniferous forests of mixed age.
- Range across Canada and the northern U.S.

### DESCRIPTION

- Bulls stand nearly 2 m tall and are the largest member of the deer family.
- Cows weigh about 340-420 kg while bulls weigh 450-500 kg.
- Only bulls have antlers, which grow and are shed each year. While growing, the antlers are covered with fuzzy velvet, which contains their nourishing blood supply. Antlers reach full size by early September; then velvet sheds and is rubbed off against trees or shrubs.
- Most adult bulls have distinctive, broad, palmated antlers that get larger every year.
- Both bulls and cows have a "bell", which is a lot of skin under the skin. The function is unclear.
- Palmated antlers act as a parabolic reflector amplifying sound at the moose's ear.

### IMPORTANT HABITAT FEATURES

- Prefer aspen and woodlands that have lots of green plants to eat and little snow in the winter.



Cow moose & calf  
Photo: Marcie Welsh