

WY  
Quality  
Counts  
.org

Awareness & training  
for quality child care



Wyoming  
EXPLORER'S CLUB

# Field

G u i d e

By: .....



# DEAR PARENTS,

Did you know that exploratory learning experiences are just as vital to your kids' healthy growth as adequate nutrition and a safe place to play? Quality, daily interactions with grown-ups ensure that kids develop healthy bodies, healthy minds and healthy relationships that last their whole lives. Our goal at WY Quality Counts is to help make these opportunities easy and fun for everyone!

Because Wyoming is best explored with a kid by your side, we have developed a take-anywhere booklet of nature activities to work on together. Follow Chuck and Pepper, ambassadors of the Wyoming Explorers Club, on a voyage of discovery to learn about our state's amazing plants and animals.

*Yours far and wide,  
WY Quality Counts*

WY Quality Counts is a program of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. For more information or to connect, please turn to the inside back cover.





## HOW TO USE THIS FIELD GUIDE

Do you want fun things to do and new things to see?  
Like drawing an animal, then coloring a tree?  
Thanks to this wee book, it's your lucky day—  
The rest of this rhyme will show you the way.

At this little mark, find someone to read to you:   
And this one will show you a project to do:   
There's even a page of fun stickers inside—  
Look for the right thing to stick the right sticker beside.

Once you've done every page, be happy, not sad:  
You'll keep all you learned and the fun that you had!  
Find a new thing to try with your grown-up assistants—  
Leave boredom behind you, way off in the distance!

# MEET CHUCK

## Welcome to the Wyoming Explorers Club!

We're your guides, Chuck and Pepper, and we hope you enjoy exploring Wyoming all year, just like we do. You'll be amazed at what you can see in your own backyard, and what you can learn when you work as a team.



CHUCK

Chuck the \_\_\_\_\_  
is an expert on rivers,  
wetlands and building a  
special underwater home  
called a \_\_\_\_\_.

He moves slowly on land, but  
can carry heavy loads and  
swim as fast as a fish!



# & PEPPER!

Color our pictures, then work with a grown-up to use all the letters from this box to fill in the blanks in Chuck and Pepper's stories.

★  
ELMLKOEBEWTA  
GENDORVERDAS

PEPPER

Pepper the

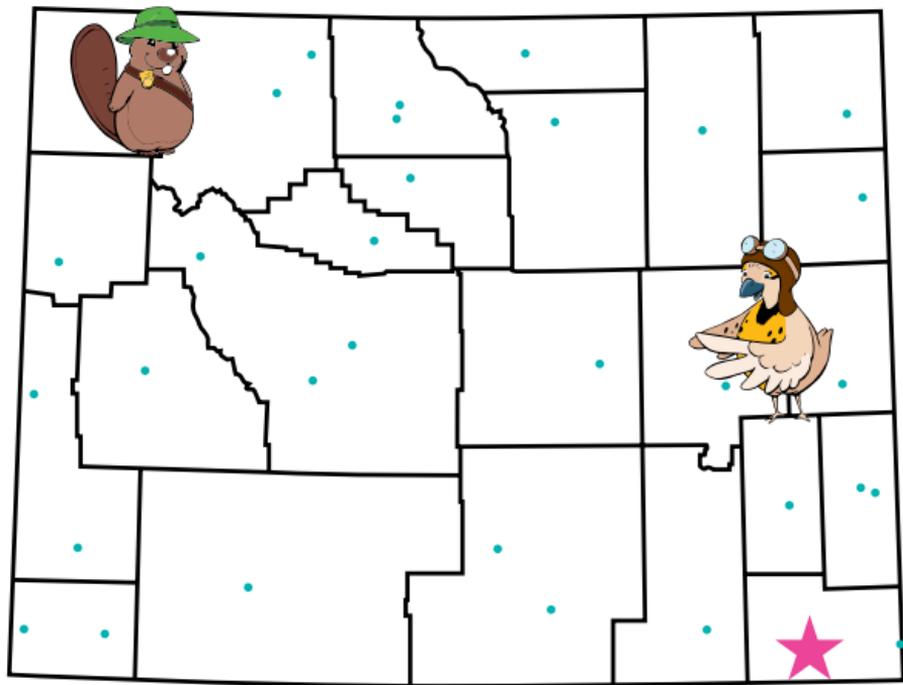
\_\_\_\_\_ is known for her beautiful song. She makes her home, called a \_\_\_\_\_, on the ground instead of in a tree, and eats bugs, seeds and berries to prepare for long flights.



# WE LIVE IN WYOMING!



**Chuck and Pepper are from opposite sides of the state.** Where are you from? Get a grown-up to help you make a mark on the map that shows where you live. Have you been to other cities in Wyoming?

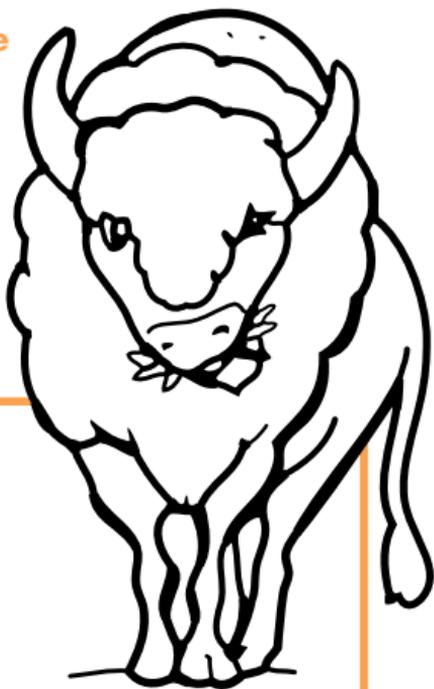


# WHO ELSE LIVES HERE?



**Did you know that there are more animals that live in Wyoming than people?**

There are 121 different kinds of mammals—animals that usually have fur—that live here. Let's meet some!



## MY BEST GUESS

Wyoming's biggest mammal:

\_\_\_\_\_

How much do you think one weighs?

\_\_\_\_\_ lbs

Wyoming's fastest mammal: \_\_\_\_\_

How fast do you think one can run? \_\_\_\_\_ mph

Wyoming's only flying mammals: \_\_\_\_\_

How many kinds do you think there are in our state? \_\_\_\_\_ species



# NATURE IN MY BACKYARD?



**Chuck says you don't have to go very far to find wild mammals in Wyoming.** Take his rodent cousins, the squirrel family. They're everywhere! Altogether, the squirrel family in Wyoming includes 16 different species: regular tree squirrels, ground squirrels and chipmunks—even marmots and prairie dogs are part of the squirrel family!

STICKY STUFF



I spotted a **SQUIRREL** or squirrel relative today!



I found **SQUIRREL TRACKS** today!



## WORK OF ART



Draw a funny squirrel family portrait in this box.  
Be sure to include the chipmunk and prairie dog relatives.



# OH DEER!

## WHAT KIND ARE YOU?



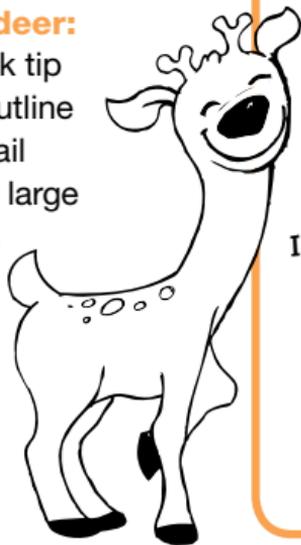
**According to Pepper's detailed flight observations, two kinds of deer live in Wyoming:** white-tailed deer and mule deer. Use your own sharp eyesight—plus Pepper's wildlife identification tips—to tell them apart:

### White-tailed deer:

- white tail
- medium-sized ears

### Mule deer:

- black tip or outline on tail
- very large ears



STICKY STUFF



I spotted a **DEER** today!

I found **DEER TRACKS** today!



## WORK OF ART

Draw a white-tailed deer or mule deer in this box.



# RUN RABBIT RUN!

Have a grown-up measure your best long jump in the yard.



feet!



**Chuck says you don't have to go very far to find wild mammals in Wyoming.** Chuck can run about as fast as you can do a somersault, but a jackrabbit can run as fast as a car—up to 45 miles per hour! Chuck can't really hop, but a snowshoe hare can jump 10 feet—longer than the length of your bed.

Legend has it that an even faster animal lives in the prairie near Douglas: a combination jackrabbit and antelope—with a pheasant's tail—called a jackalope.



STICKY STUFF

I spotted  
a **RABBIT**  
today!



I found **RABBIT**  
**TRACKS** today!



## WORK OF ART



In this box, draw what you think a jackalope might look like. Show your creation to a grown-up. How does it compare to what they imagine?



HERE A BIRD, THERE A BIRD, EVERYWHERE

# A BIRD-BIRD!



**Enough about mammals!** Pepper wants to introduce you to some of her feathered friends: the birds of Wyoming. Our state has a lot of open space for birds to nest, fly, forage and hunt. With hundreds and hundreds of different species, Wyoming is a bird-watcher's paradise. Of more than 50 types of water birds (such as ducks, geese, swans, pelicans, herons, and more), the largest is the trumpeter swan. In fact, the trumpeter swan is the largest bird of any kind in Wyoming.

MY BEST GUESS

Guess how big a trumpeter swan is, then ask a grown-up to help you fill in your own height and weight. How do you measure up to this real-life big bird?

## TRUMPETER SWAN:

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ inches Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ lbs

## ME:

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ inches Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ lbs

## WORK OF ART



Color and name this bird.



# FAST FOOD?

## ANIMALS THAT HUNT TO EAT.



**High up in the sky, Chuck can often see a hawk or eagle flying in circles.** What is it doing up there?

Some birds, known as raptors, get their food by hunting it. They watch for smaller animals like mice, rabbits, snakes or other birds, then swoop down to catch their prey with their sharp toenails, called talons. Owls are raptors that hunt at night, relying on super hearing and silent wings in addition to their sharp vision.

STICKY STUFF



I spotted a **RAPTOR** today!

I found a **RAPTOR** feather today!



## WORK OF ART



Draw a raptor circling in the top half of this box, then draw the small animal it might be hunting on the ground below. Cover the bottom half of the drawing and ask someone to guess what the bird is hunting.

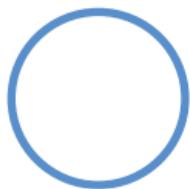


# THE ORIGINAL SNOWBIRDS



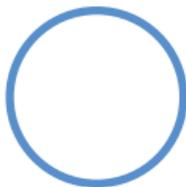
**Pepper's friends the Canada geese are known for migrating as a big group:** they fly south for the winter and north for the summer. Depending on the weather and their destination, Canada geese may travel just a few miles or up to a thousand miles every year! Geese fly in a V shape to save energy. The bird flying at the point of the V works the hardest, so they all take turns being the leader.

STICKY STUFF



I spotted a **GOOSE** today!

I found a **GOOSE**  
**FEATHER** today!



## WORK OF ART



Has your family ever taken a long trip? Where did you go?  
How did you get there? Who went with you?  
Draw a memory from your trip in this box.



# PINE, SWEET PINE

 Wyoming has many different types of trees, but one of its most famous trees has provided shelter for many creatures over thousands of years. The lodgepole pine is home to a variety of bugs, birds, and small rodents. Beavers like Chuck often use lodgepole pines to build their lodges and dams. In fact, the first human residents of this area—the Lakota, Shoshone and Crow people—used these trees to build their tipis, and we still use them for building today!



I spotted a  
**PINE TREE**  
today! →



← I found a  
**PINECONE**  
today!

**STICKY STUFF**

**MY BEST GUESS**

Lodge Pole pines can grow to over \_\_\_\_\_ feet tall. That's about equal to \_\_\_\_\_ people standing on each other's shoulders.

The Plains tribes used Lodgepole pine for building because it is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.



# COLOR ME COTTONWOOD!

 In Pepper's many flights across the state, she's seen thousands of tall, twisting cottonwood trees along Wyoming's rivers and streams. Cottonwoods get their name from the fluffy, cotton-like seed pods that drift on the wind every spring. Did you know that the cottonwood is Wyoming's official State tree?

## WORK OF ART

Cottonwood trees change color dramatically from summer to fall. Ask a grown-up to color the tree below in one season; you color the other one:



Summer leaves are \_\_\_\_\_.

Fall leaves are: \_\_\_\_\_.

## STICKY STUFF

I spotted a  
COTTONWOOD  
TREE today!

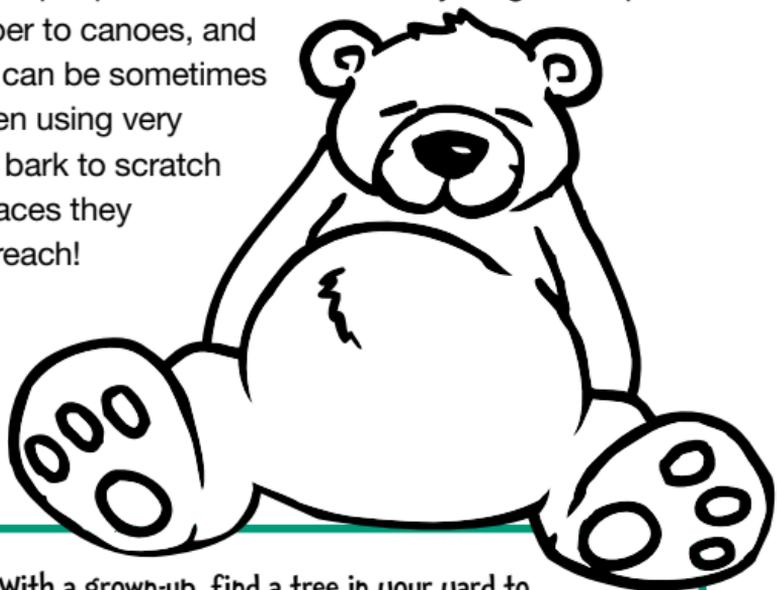


← I found a  
COTTONWOOD  
LEAF today!

# THE BARE NECESSITIES



**Did you know that a tree's bark is like its skin, protecting the softer tissues inside from bugs, sun, drought and fire?** Bark is also useful for people and animals: deer use it as food during cold winter months, people have used it for everything from spices to paper to canoes, and bears can be sometimes be seen using very rough bark to scratch the places they can't reach!



With a grown-up, find a tree in your yard to use as a bear back-scratcher. Lean your back onto an area of the tree with no branches, then rub back and forth, up and down. It's a natural massage!

## WORK OF ART



Make a bark rubbing by holding your paper across the tree bark and lightly rubbing a crayon over the bumpy surface. Take extra paper and a grown-up and record a variety of different types of tree bark from your yard, a park or the forest.



# PAINTING THE PRAIRIE



**On her flights between June and September, Pepper can see large patches of bright red-orange from high in the air.**

This is Wyoming's State flower, the Indian Paintbrush, which is also sometimes called Prairie Fire because of the way the color seems to burn its way through the grasses and mountainsides.

What are some of your other favorite colors? What is something that comes in that color? Ask a grown-up to help you color and name the following boxes with colors, starting with a bright scarlet for Indian Paintbrush.



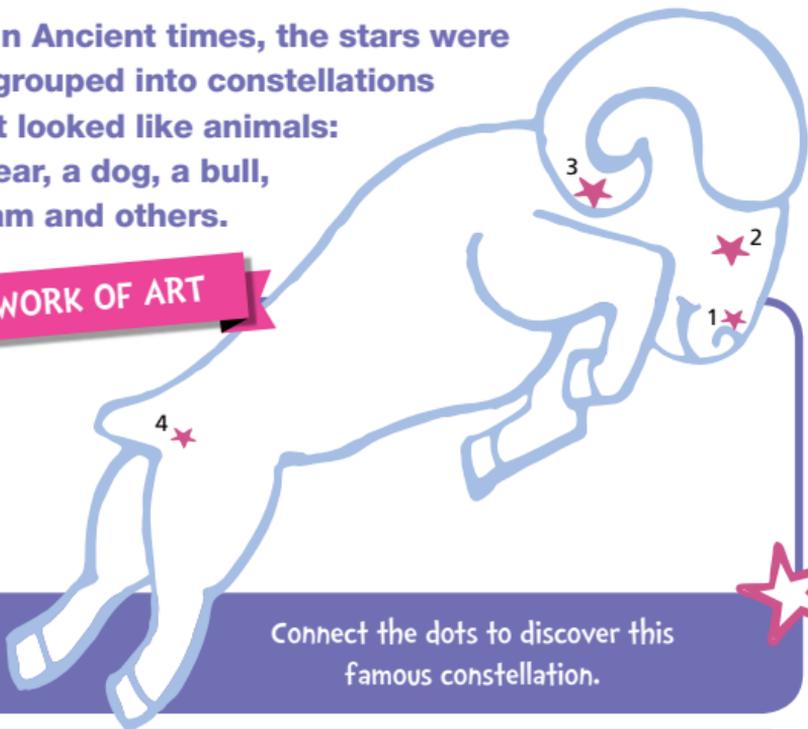
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# FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

 In Ancient times, the stars were grouped into constellations that looked like animals: a bear, a dog, a bull, a ram and others.

**WORK OF ART**



Connect the dots to discover this famous constellation.

 Now with a grown-up, check out a stargazing book from your local library, or find a constellation map on the Internet. Take it with you on a backyard camping trip. Spread out your sleeping bag or blanket, stick your head and shoulders out the door of the tent (if you're using one) and see how many constellations you can find!

# CONGRATULATIONS EXPLORER

I completed my **Wyoming Field Guide** today! →



## EXPLORER HIGHLIGHTS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Check your answers!

- 2.** beaver, lodge. **3.** meadowlark, nest. **5.** bison (a.k.a. buffalo), 700-2200 lbs, pronghorn (a.k.a. antelope), 55 mph, bats, 19 different kinds.  
**12.** the average male trumpeter swan might measure 60" and weigh 26 lbs.  
**13.** heron. **18.** 120 ft, 24 people, long, straight. **19.** green, gold.

# CONNECT WITH US!

Parents and providers—connect with WY Quality Counts and others in your community to share child care resources, fun ideas, helpful hints, and activities on the go.

If you want to know more about WY Quality Counts and our programs, visit [www.wyqualitycounts.org](http://www.wyqualitycounts.org) today.



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The WY Quality Counts Program is housed in  
the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services.

