

# **Wildlife Identification**





# Introduction

The ability to recognize and accurately identify wildlife is extremely important to the hunter for legal, ethical and recreational reasons.

Hunting laws requires a hunter to accurately identify his quarry. Sometimes the hunter is also required to recognize the sexual and age characteristics.

Many animals are "protected" and must not be hunted. Some wildlife, however, are classified as game and in certain seasons may be legally hunted. A license is required to hunt game animals. Some animals which are neither game species nor "protected" wildlife may be legally hunted without a license (ground squirrels, magpies).

Game species which may legally be hunted and taken in North America are divided into five main categories...

1. Ungulates or cloven-hoofed animals
2. Carnivores
3. Upland birds
4. Waterfowl
5. Small game

## Techniques of Wildlife Identification

It takes practice to identify wildlife quickly and accurately. The more you practice, the better you will become at it. Take advantage of every opportunity available, at different times of year, to test and improve your skill at identifying the different species of wildlife. It is very helpful to spend time in the field practicing with someone who is experienced in identifying wildlife.

Many excellent wildlife identification field guides are available at libraries and bookstores. There is a list of field guide books at the end of this section. Zoos, game farms, museums of natural history and wildlife parks are excellent places to view wildlife at close range and compare different species of similar animals. Films, internet websites, television programs and photographs in magazines are also useful in learning to identify wildlife.

Binoculars are extremely useful making a positive identification, especially at long range. They will help see such details as colors, plumages and patterns of different species of wildlife.

**DO NOT USE** the telescopic sight on a firearm as a substitute for binoculars to identify wildlife. Remember—never point a firearm at anything you do not intend to shoot.

Each kind of wildlife requires a particular kind of place in which to live, a special "habitat" in which to survive. A hunter must learn which species of wildlife he can expect to find in each type of habitat. Most species of game move from one type of habitat to another on a daily or seasonal basis or



under certain weather conditions. Elk will move from open grassy slopes to heavy timber to rest during the day or to seek shelter during a storm.

Maps in this section indicate the general geographic areas where certain species of game occur in North America. Within these ranges, distribution will depend upon the availability of suitable habitat.

Evidence that a particular game species occurs in the area can be provided by certain signs such as tracks, droppings, feathers, shed antlers, trampled or browsed vegetation.

Spring is a particularly good time to practice identifying waterfowl. Often, they can be approached more closely than in the fall because they are actively involved in nesting and are reluctant to leave their nesting areas.

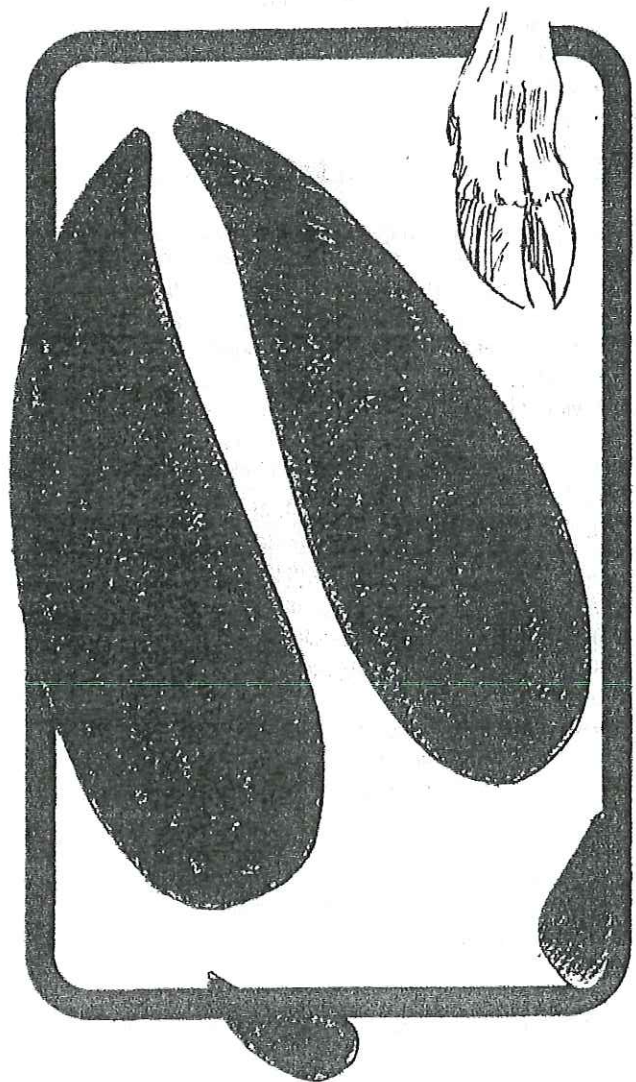
Also in springtime, male ducks display bright, breeding plumage, and they are unique and distinctive. You will be able to identify each species with certainty, observe its habitat and learn some of its behavior. Remember—it is imperative that you do not harass nesting birds or disturb their nests in any way.



## Big Game Cloven-Hoofed Ungulates

All wild ungulates classed as big game in North America are cloven-hoofed. This means that each hoof is split into two parts.

Cloven-Hoofed ungulates are also "cud-chewers" or ruminants. They have a large four-chambered stomach and must chew their food twice to digest it. These animals first chew their food as they feed. Later when the animal is resting and undisturbed, it regurgitates the food, re-chews it and swallows it again.



## Game Identification

In the sections which follow, the identification of various groups of game animals is outlined using descriptive text and illustrations.

The principal identifying characteristics of each animal are highlighted in each illustration. Illustrations depict animals as they appear in the fall. At other times of the year they may differ. These changes can be minor and involve only a slight color variation, or could be a complete change in appearance.

Animal tracks, antlers and the size and shape of scat (animal droppings) may vary seasonally.





Ruminants are usually classified as either browsers or grazers although some do both. Browsers are animals which eat mostly shrubs or woody vegetation. Most of the grazers' diet consists of herbs and grasses. Ruminants do not have upper front teeth. Instead, they have a tough pad against which the lower front teeth close.

Ungulates are divided into two major divisions—the horned animals and the antlered animals. Horned animals include bighorn sheep, mountain goats and antelope. Antlered animals include deer, caribou, elk and moose.

## Horned Animals

Horns are formed by a sheath of hard, fibrous material developing over a core of solid bone on the skull. As new growth occurs, the old horn is forced up and away from the skull. In bighorn rams, this new growth is very apparent, appearing as a new section each year. These sections can be counted to determine the age of the animal. The bony inner core continues to grow also and determines the shape of the animal horn.

Horns appear on sheep and goats by the time they are six months old and are never shed. Rams grow massive horns that curve and spiral out from the head in contrast to the small sickle-shaped horns of ewes.

Antelope are unique horned animals. Like sheep and goat, their horn forms over a solid core of bone. However, unlike the horns of sheep and goat, antelope horns are shed and regrown each year. A doe antelope's horns are small and not readily noticeable.

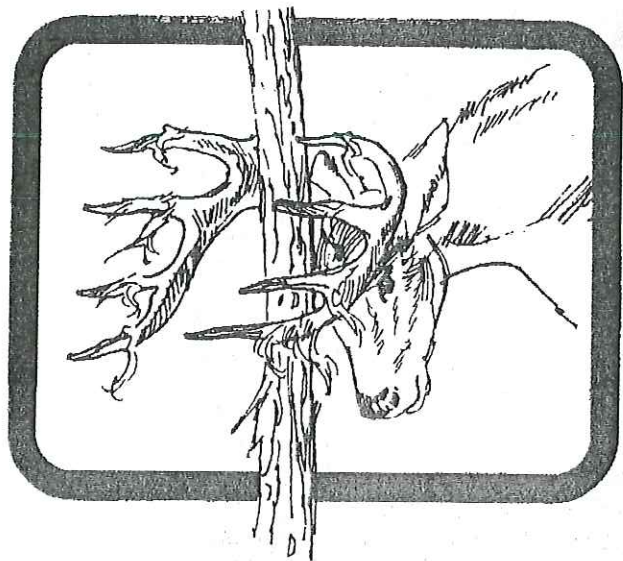
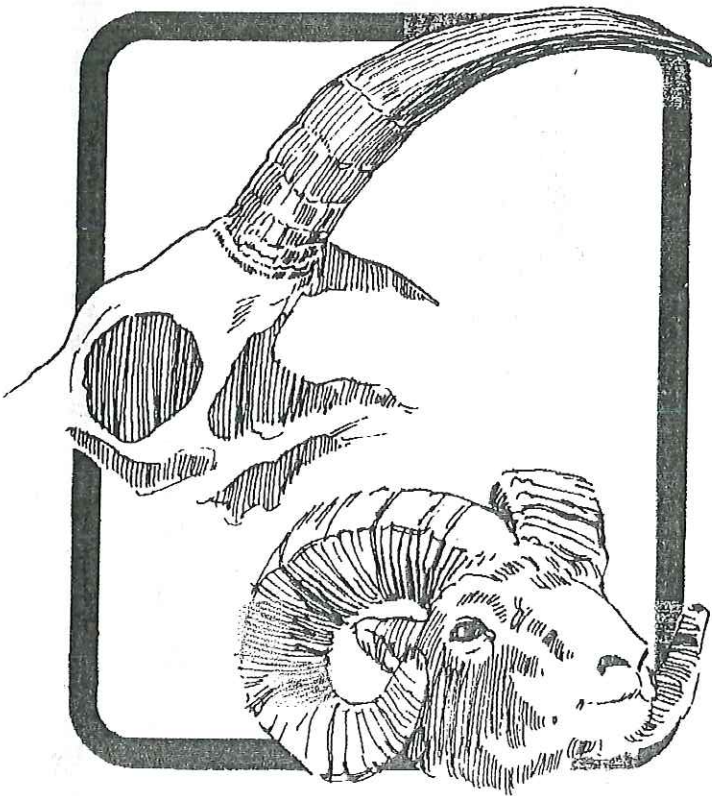
## Antlered Animals

Antlers are bone structures that grow up from short stubs on the top of the animal's skull. During growth, antlers are covered by a hairy skin called "velvet," which is richly supplied with blood vessels and nerves. Antlers grow during the spring and summer and are fully developed by fall. As growth progresses, the antlers become hard and bony. By rubbing its antlers against trees, the animal is able to remove the dead skin and polish the bony surface of the antlers. All antlers drop off or are shed each year and then regrown.

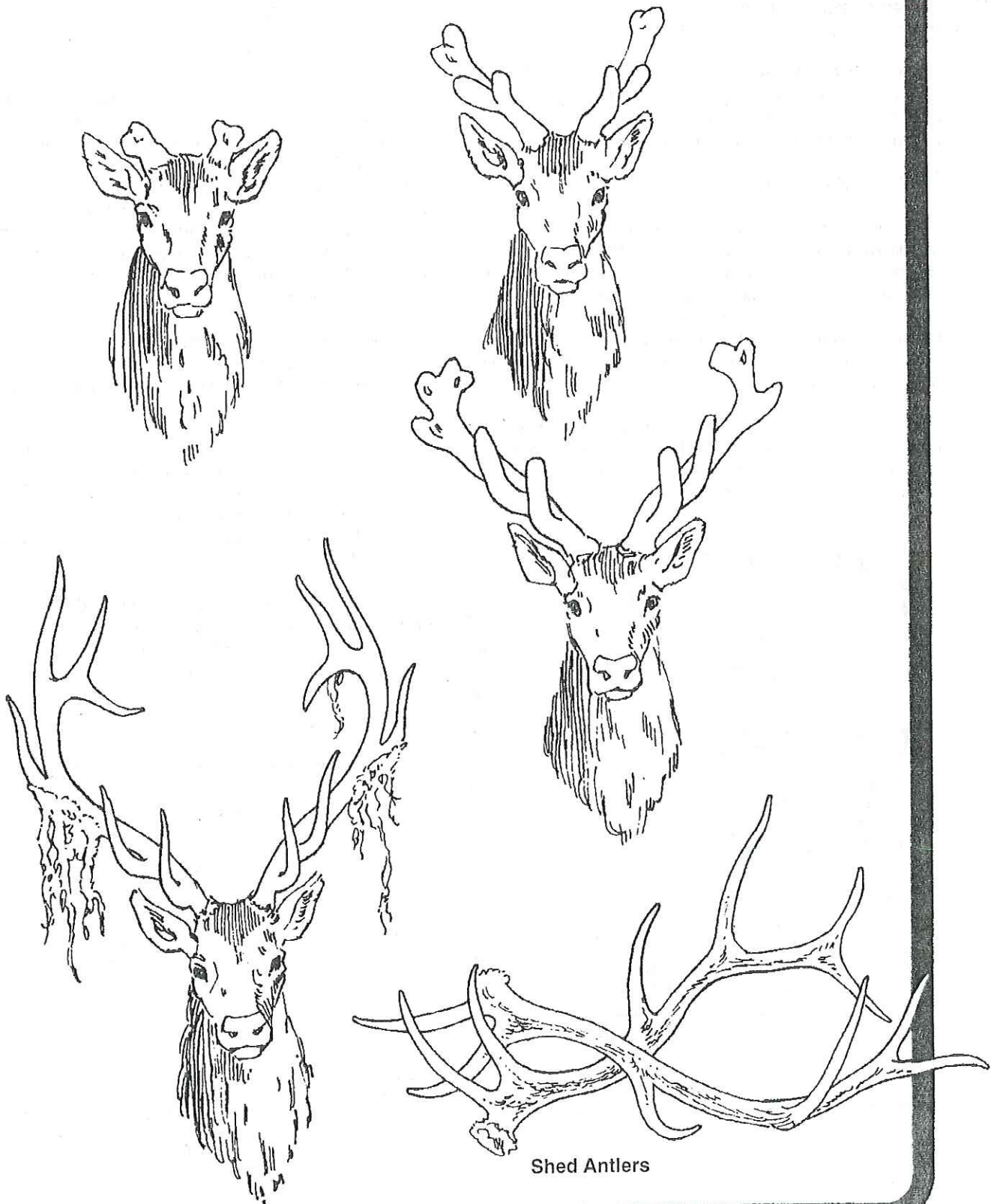
With one exception, only males of the deer family have antlers. Both sexes of caribou may be antlered but the antlers of the mature male are much larger than those of the female.

As the animal matures, each season's antlers tend to be larger with more points or tines. In an older animal, past maturity, antlers undergo a corresponding decrease in size. Antler growth is closely related to the health or nutritional state of the animal as well as both the quality and quantity of food available.

Moose, deer and caribou may begin to shed their antlers by late December. Elk and female caribou are usually the last to shed antlers. Shedding is caused by a change which weakens the area supporting the antlers.



# Antler Growth

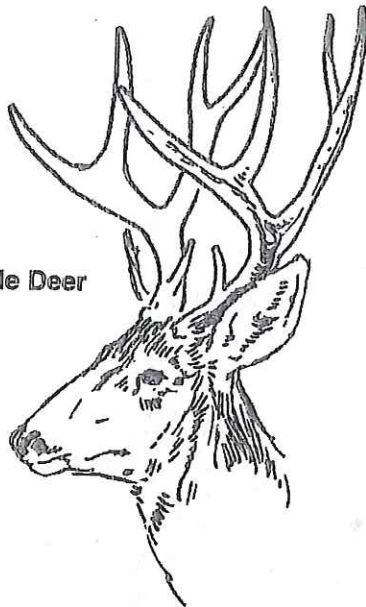




# Identifying Features

## Mule Deer/White-Tailed Deer

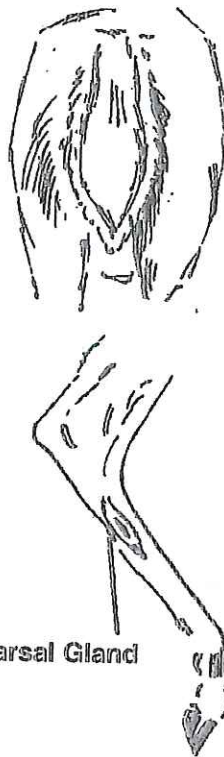
Mule Deer



White-Tailed Deer



Metatarsal Gland



# Mountain Goat



## Identification

The mountain goat is pure white except for black horns and hooves. Unlike many animals which turn color with the changing seasons, the long, shaggy coat of the mountain goat is white during all seasons.

Both sexes have long white chin hair which forms a distinctive beard. Male and female goats have short, sharp horns. The black horns are cone-shaped and grow up and slightly curved back from the head. The horns of a mature adult may be 10 inches to 12 inches (25 to 30 cm) in length. An adult male or "billie" may weigh from 175 to 300 pounds (70 to 136 kg). Females or "nannies" are slightly smaller and have shorter horns.

## Habits

Mountain goats generally stay on small home ranges high above timberline. Even in winter, the mountain goat stays

high up on mountain slopes; however, they move to areas where there is less snowfall and protection from severe storms.

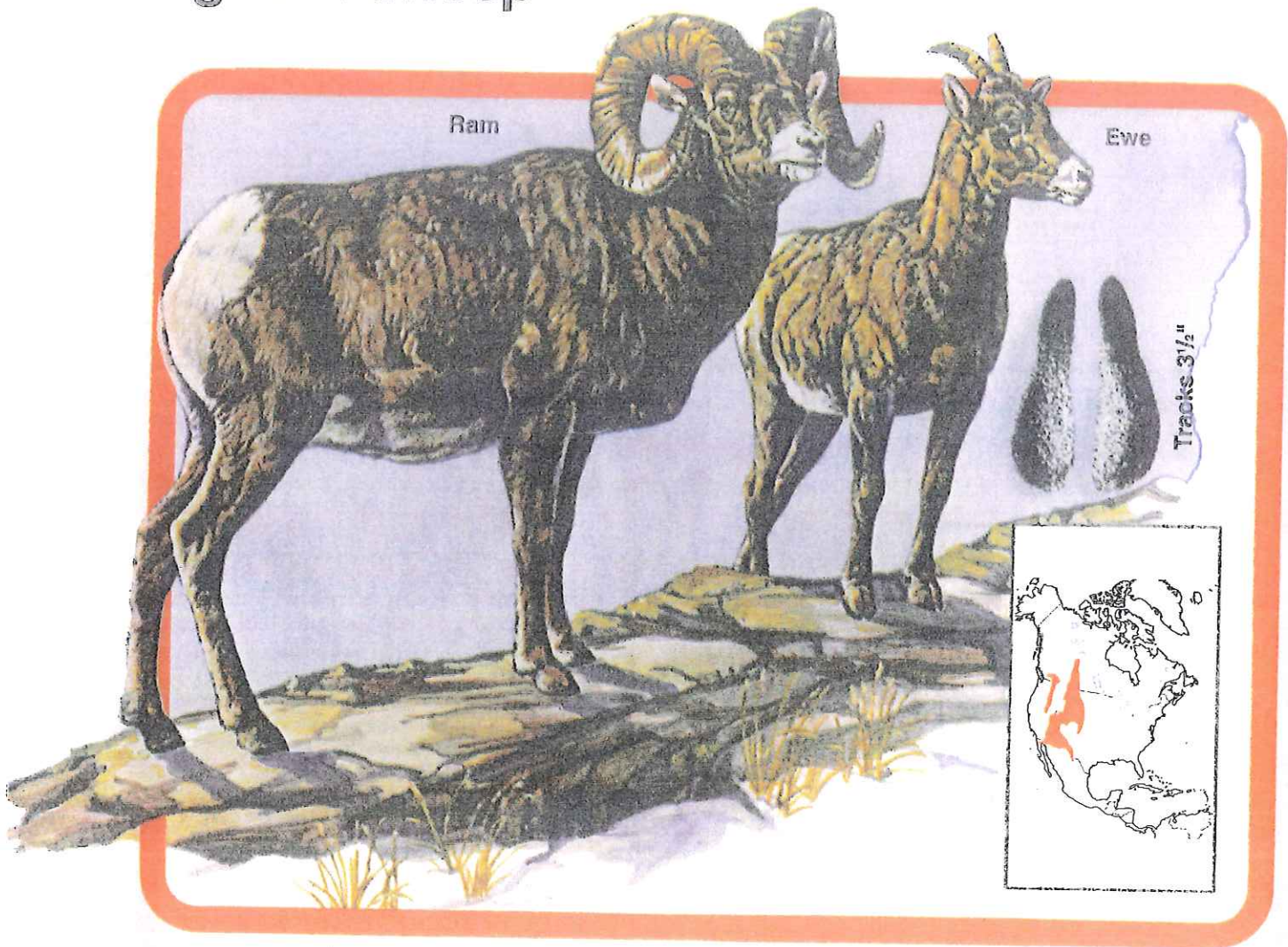
Nannies, kids and immature billies are often seen in small bands. Mature billies are sometimes seen alone and sometimes in a group with other adult males.

The goat's diet is varied. It feeds on many types of plants, including grasses, forbs and bushes, though dwarf willow is its preferred food. Like sheep, mountain goats also seek out salt-mineral licks.

The precipitous terrain utilized by this species presents an obvious challenge to the hunter. While stalking can be arduous and difficult, the prospect of retrieving a trophy from some inaccessible rock ledge on a sheer cliff can discourage all but the most dedicated and determined hunter.



# Bighorn Sheep



## Identification

The color of the bighorn sheep may vary from dark to grayish-brown, but all have yellowish-white underparts. Seen from the rear, the bighorn's creamy-white rump patch around a small brown tail is very distinctive.

Both sexes have horns but the horns of the ewe are seldom longer than 12 inches (30 cm). The spiraled horns of an old ram are massive and may measure up to 45 inches (115 cm) along the front curve and weigh as much as 80 pounds (36 kg). Sheep horns are never shed. Each year the horns grow longer and are marked with a new growth section. The age of a bighorn is determined by counting the growth sections on its horns. Rams may weigh 300- 350 pounds (136 to 158 kg); ewes generally weigh about 15 percent less.

## Habits

Mountain sheep generally roam the high meadows and rock outcroppings of the mountains. They are usually seen in

herds, segregated according to their sex or age. A solitary sheep is usually sick or injured. Sheep feed on mountain grasses, forbs, and small bushes such as dwarf willow. They are attracted to salt-mineral licks.

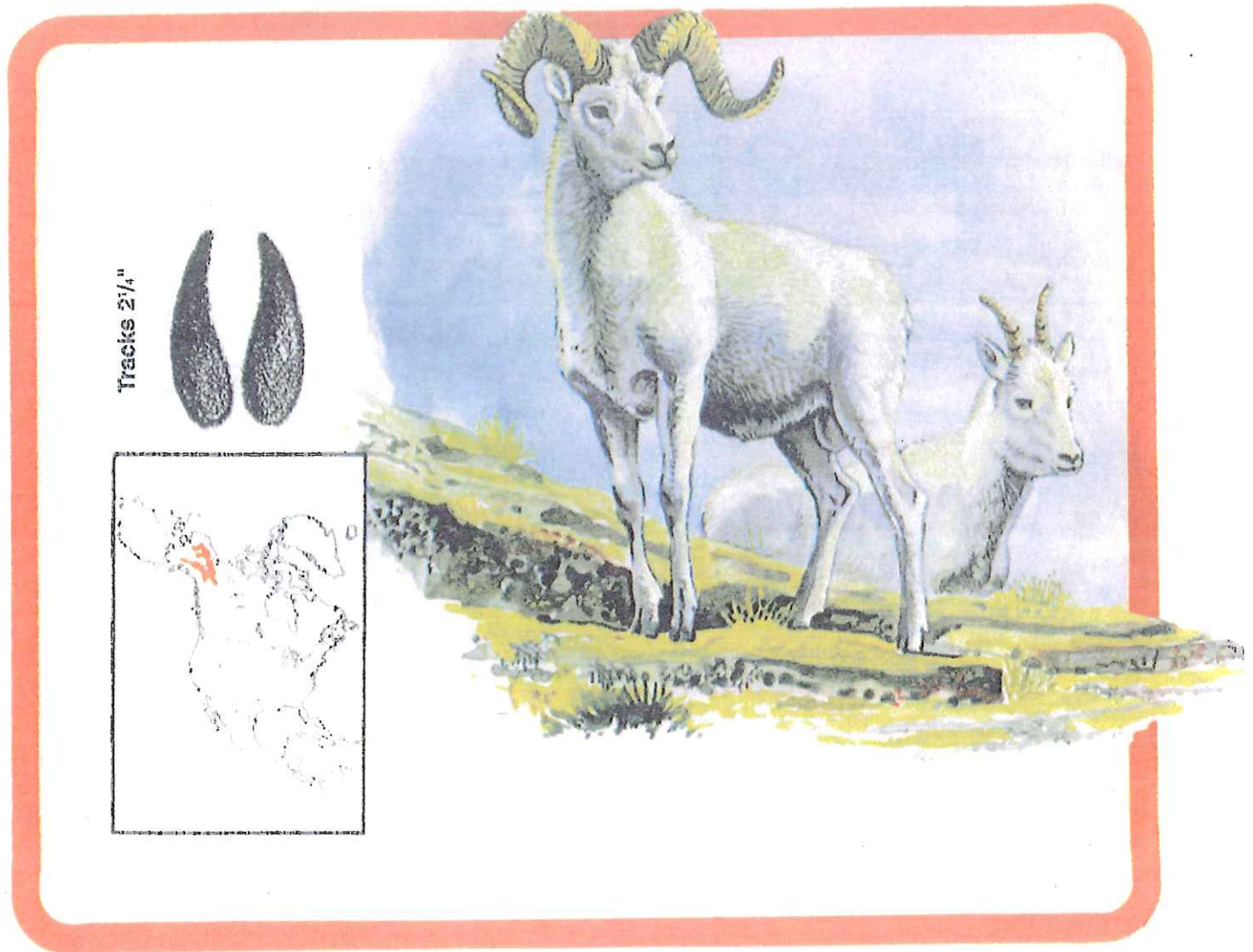
In the fall, rams compete for the attention of ewes by violently crashing horns head-on, battering at each other until one gives up.

To obtain food during the winter, bighorns usually move to south or southwest slopes which are wind-swept and have little snow. Some herds will go down to the lower foothills and valleys and congregate on snow free areas or winter ranges.

The generally rugged but open terrain along with the difficulty encountered in approaching rams undetected, can make sheep hunting an arduous and challenging experience. Those few hunters who are successful will have expended a considerable effort in pursuit of their trophies.



# Dall's Sheep



## Identification

Dall's sheep and its subspecies, Stone's sheep, are known as "thin horns." Dall's sheep are pure white at all seasons of the year. They have amber-brown horns which are much thinner than those of big-horn sheep. Though lighter in build than the bighorn, the thick pelage of Dall's sheep makes it look heavier.

Both rams and ewes have horns but those of the rams are massive at the base and taper to a fine tip. Outside diameters of the curls of adult rams average 10.5 inches (27 cm) and the average length of a full-curl ram's horn is 35.5 inches (90.1 cm). Horn sizes vary among different sheep populations. Mature ewes average 105 pounds (48 kg) in weight while rams average 180 to 220 pounds (82 to 100 kg).

## Habits

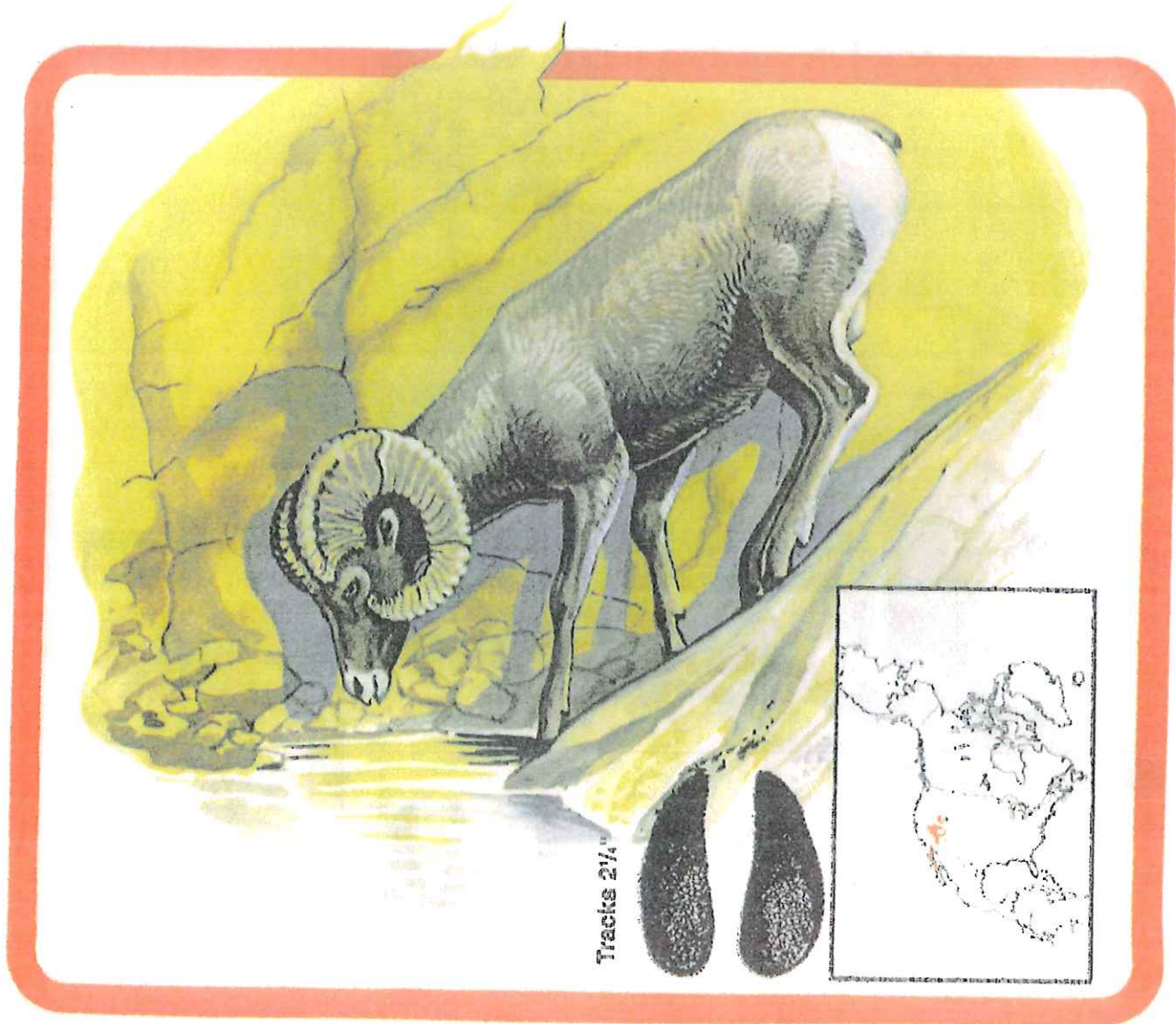
Dall's sheep is found in Alaska, the Yukon, Northwest Territories and extreme northwest British Columbia. These Sheep generally are most active during daylight hours. Their senses of sight and smell are extremely acute.

In the fall, rams compete for ewes but after the breeding season, the rams and ewes spend the remainder of the year in separate groups; the ewes and their young stay apart from the rams. During the move to the spring range, yearling rams leave the groups of ewes and lambs to follow the older rams.

Hunting Dall's sheep is difficult chiefly because of the steep, alpine slopes, mostly above timberline, which the sheep inhabit. Hunting this species, where permitted by federal regulations, is a challenging experience.



# Desert Sheep



## Identification

The desert sheep is a subspecies of the bighorn sheep. It inhabits the high, arid lands of southwestern United States and Mexico. Desert sheep are smaller, have larger ears and longer legs and are a darker color than the Rocky Mountain bighorn. White areas on the rump patch and along the rear edges of all four legs also are smaller in the desert sheep. The horns are proportionally larger and have a more open curl than those of Rocky Mountain bighorns.

Adult desert rams weigh 127 to 190 pounds (57.6 to 86.2 kg) and ewes weigh 74 to 114 pounds (33.6 to 51.7 kg). Average horn length is 40.3 inches (1022.8 millimeters) and the base circumference is 15.8 inches (402.3 millimeters).

## Habits

The range of desert sheep extends from Southern California and Southern Arizona to Nevada and New Mexico.

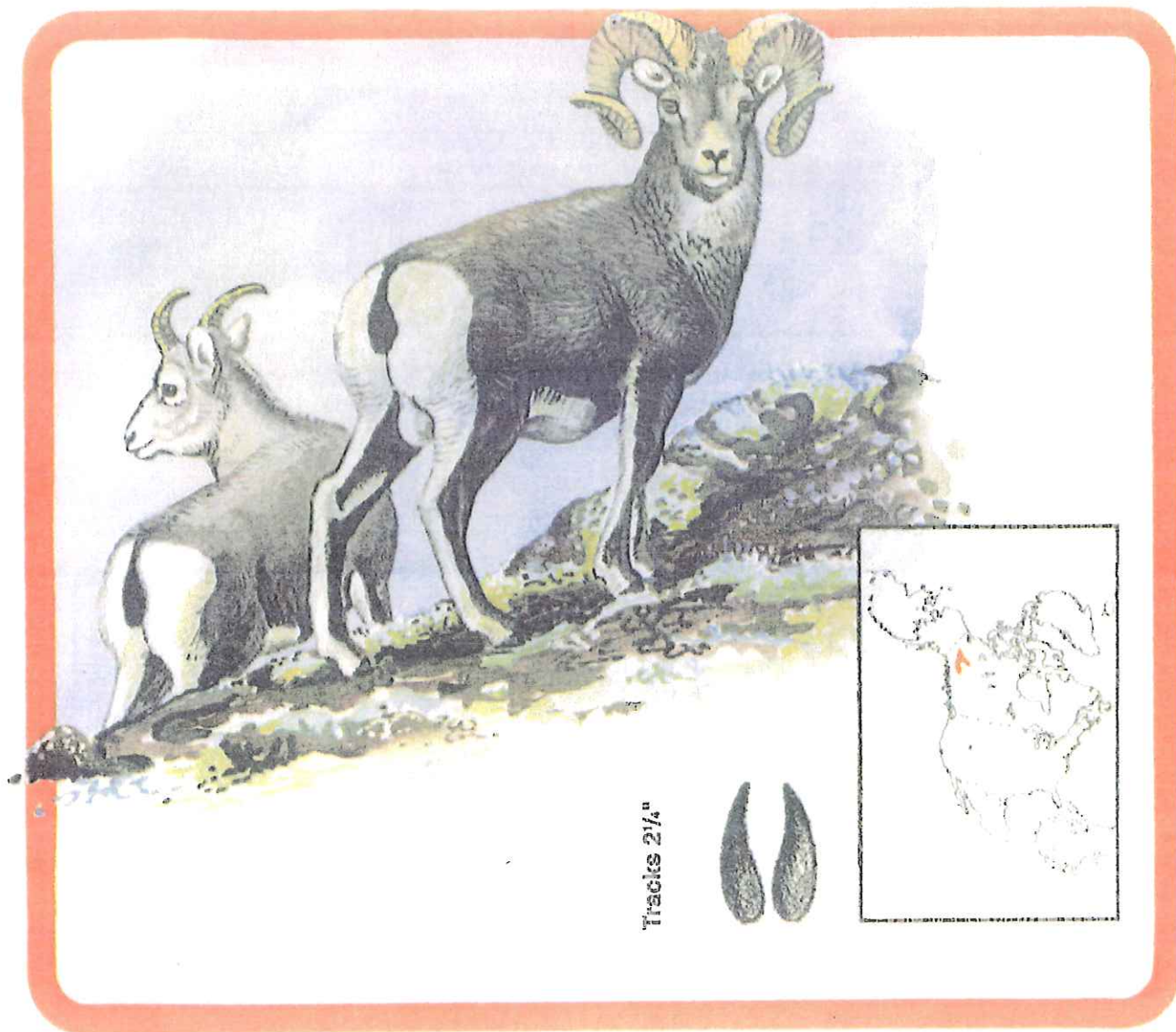
Both male and female desert sheep mature at 18 months of age, although most ewes do not breed until 2 ½ years of age. The gestation period is 175 to 180 days. Lambing occurs from January to June and single lambs are the rule. Life expectancy for a desert bighorn is 10 to 12 years.

Desert sheep feed on a wide variety of grasses, sedges and forbs. In desert habitat, shrubs and trees are the major foods.

The terrain inhabited by desert sheep is extremely rough and barren, so hunters who seek this sheep must be in excellent physical condition and be able to withstand the harsh conditions of the animals' habitat.



# Stone's Sheep



## Identification

Stone's sheep is a subspecies of Dall's sheep. It is darker colored and has thin, amber colored horns that in the ram spiral outward from the head. Body color varies from light gray to nearly black with the rump patch, underparts and rear edge of the hind legs white. Ewes are similar in color but smaller.

Stone's rams are very similar in size to Dall's sheep but have slightly larger horns which average 35.6 inches (90.5 cm) long. Horns of ewes are shorter, smaller and straighter and are oval in cross section while those of rams are more triangular. Average weight of Stone's rams is 220 to 230 pounds (100-104 kg).

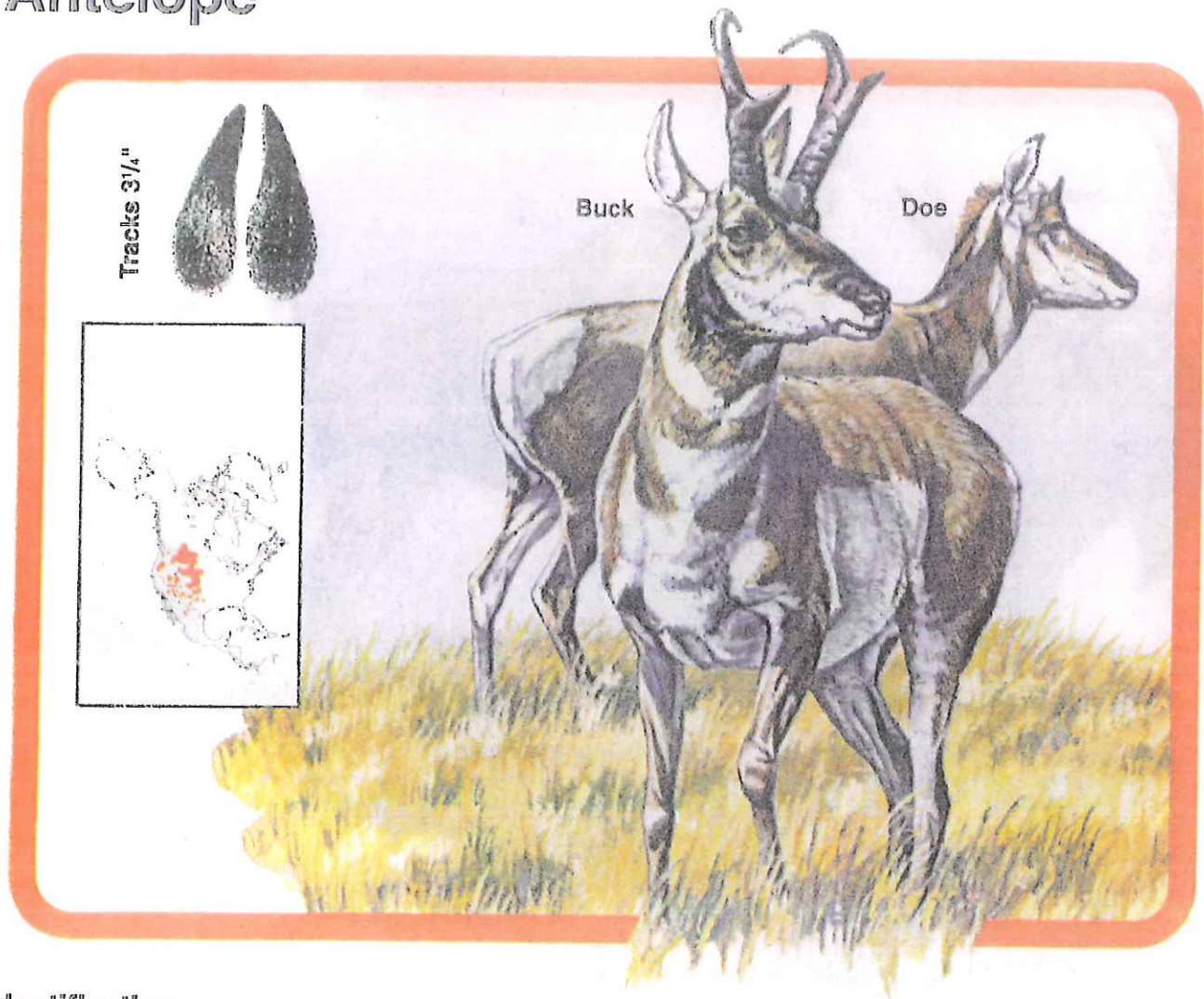
## Habits

Stone's sheep occupy a more limited range than Dall's sheep. They inhabit the western part of British Columbia and the southern part of the Yukon Territory. Their diet consists of sedges, bunchgrass, willow, moss and lichens. Herds of rams as well as those of mixed ewes and lambs move to higher feeding grounds for the spring and summer. At that time the sheep also visit mineral licks. They are heaviest and in their best condition at the end of the fall.

Hunting Stone's sheep for most people is a once-in-a-life time experience. Breathtaking scenery and hard physical work are part of the hunt, and hunters must be in trim physical condition. Their equipment and clothing also must be suited to the long trip, thin air and rough footing of the high altitudes.



# Antelope



## Identification

Pronghorn antelope are a tan color with distinct dark muzzle and white cheeks. In both sexes, the flashing white rump patch is a reliable identification feature.

Both bucks and does have simple pronged horns which are shed each year. The horns of the doe are generally shorter than the ears, while those of the bucks are commonly longer than the ears. The black horns are erect, curved at the tip and have a single wide "prong" which faces forward. After the horns are shed, a skin covered bone core remains. New horns develop over this bony core.

Both buck and doe pronghorns weigh about 110 pounds (50 kg).

## Habits

Small and resembling deer, the pronghorn is capable of running as fast as 50 miles (80 km) an hour.

The distribution of pronghorn antelope is shown in the map

inserted above. Antelope populations can be drastically affected by severe winters or unfavorable spring weather conditions. Although herds generally remain in local areas, they may sometimes move a hundred miles or move to escape the effects of a very severe winter.

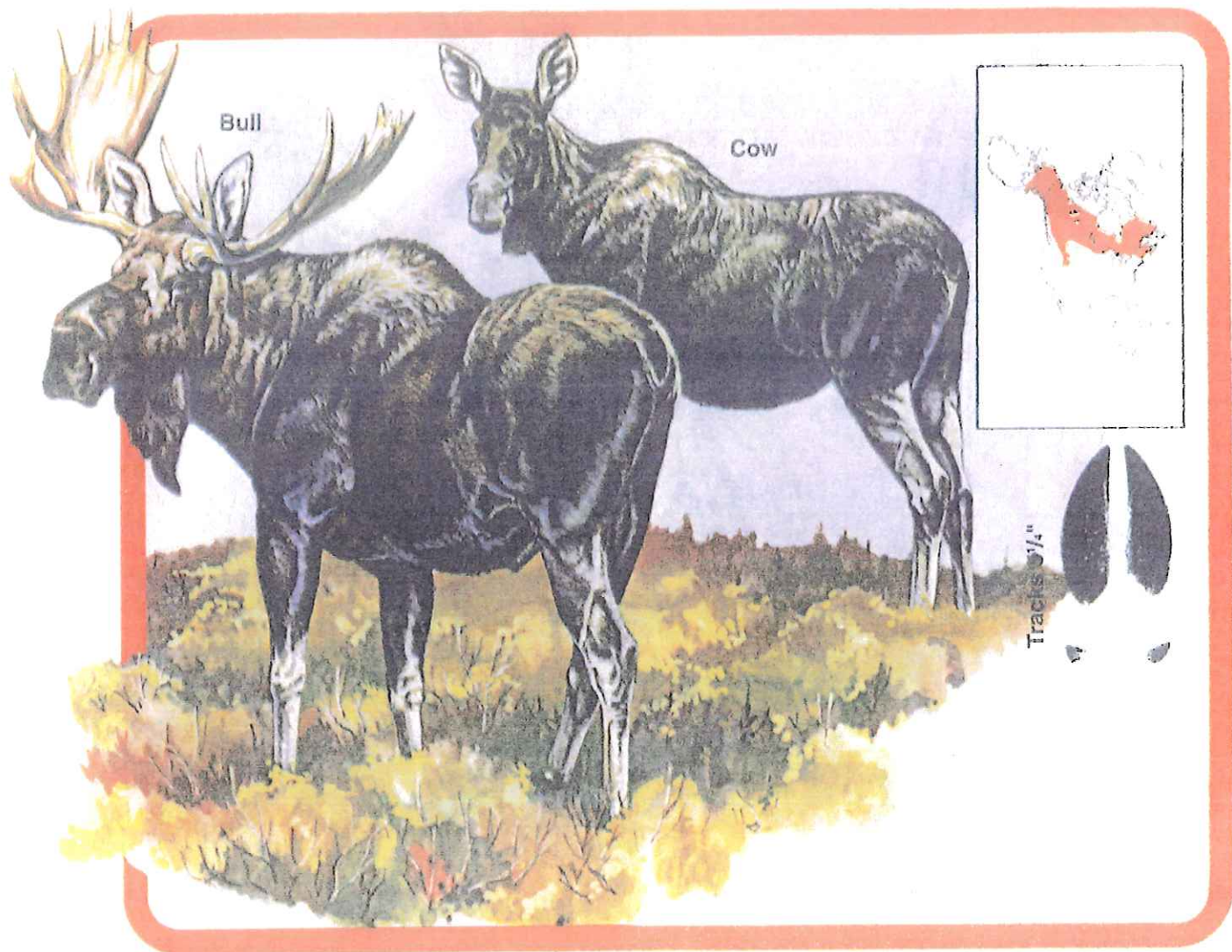
Most antelope occur and are hunted on privately-owned or leased public land. Management and harvest of the species is largely dependent on the cooperation of ranchers and livestock operators. Since antelope use rough browse and forbs such as sage for food, there is little competition with the cattle that share their range.

Antelope have extremely keen eyesight. Stalking the pronghorn can be a challenging exercise. The hunter must take advantage of hills and low ground for cover to remain hidden from view.

Antelope are curious animals and this characteristic can be used to advantage by the hunter. A handkerchief or piece of cloth left fluttering in the open may bring the antelope into range as it comes to investigate.



# Moose



## Identification

The moose is the largest member of the deer family in North America. Moose are dark brown in color and have prominent humped shoulders and a large nose. Bull moose, have large, heavy antlers which are wide, flat and rise slightly up and backwards. Hanging under the chin of both bull and cow moose is a piece of loose skin called a "bell."

Moose run with a distinctive long-paced swinging stride.

A mature bull may weigh 1000 pounds (450 kg) or more. Cows weigh 800-900 pounds (380 kg).

## Habits

Moose are usually found in those areas shown in the map insert. They browse for food and eat mostly new growth from bushes and trees. Increased access brought about

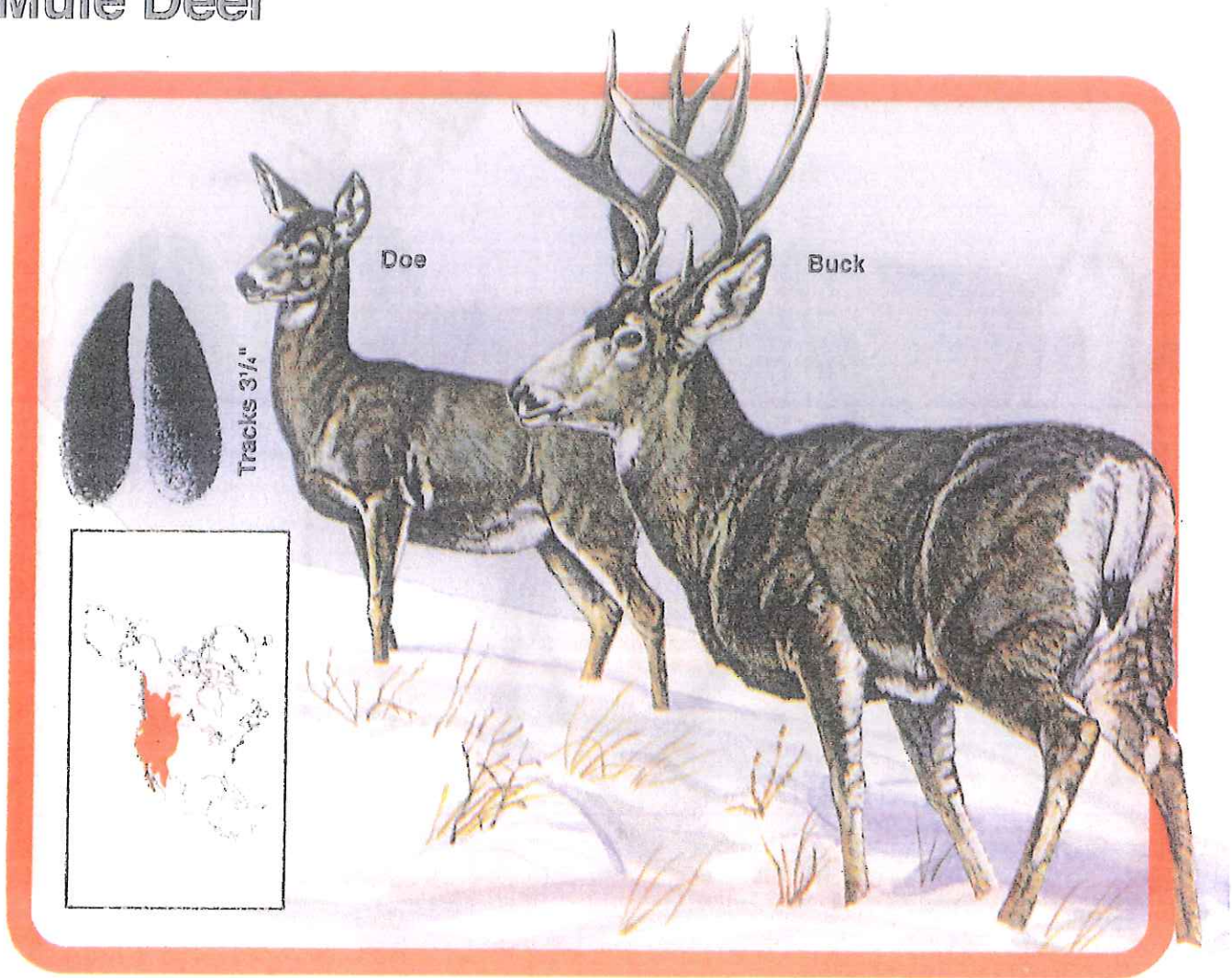
by land development and associated road construction have increased the susceptibility of the species to hunting. Since moose are normally not a far ranging species, local populations may be quickly depleted because of easy access.

In winter, particularly in years of deep snows, moose tend to concentrate in the willows and shrubs along river valleys or other low areas. At other times of the year moose are solitary although calves will remain with cows for a year or more.

Recognizing this, wildlife managers sometimes create new moose habitat by controlling burning and clearing of old trees. During the fall mating, or rutting season, bull moose will grunt and bellow. Both bulls and cows will respond to a hunter's skillful imitation of these sounds.



# Mule Deer



## Identification

Mule deer are usually a brownish-gray in color. In late fall and winter their color tends to be more gray than brown. They get their name from their ears which are large and prominent like those of a mule. The mule deer's forehead is dark and its chin and throat are white. The tail of the mule deer is narrow and mostly white except for a solid black tip. The antlers of the buck are tree-like in appearance with tines that are forked or "Y" shaped.

Mule deer bucks average between 200 and 250 pounds (90 to 114 kg) but sometimes weigh as much as 450 pounds (205 kg). Does are much smaller rarely exceeding 160 pounds (75 kg).

When running, mule deer move with stiff-legged bounds with the tail held down.

## Habits

Mule deer browse on a wide variety of brush and trees. They depend heavily on the early stages of forest growth

found at the forest edge. Regeneration of plants following forest fires and timber cutting can benefit the species.

Mule deer range further and travel more extensively than do white-tail. They are also more gregarious and will form larger winter bands or herds than white-tail.

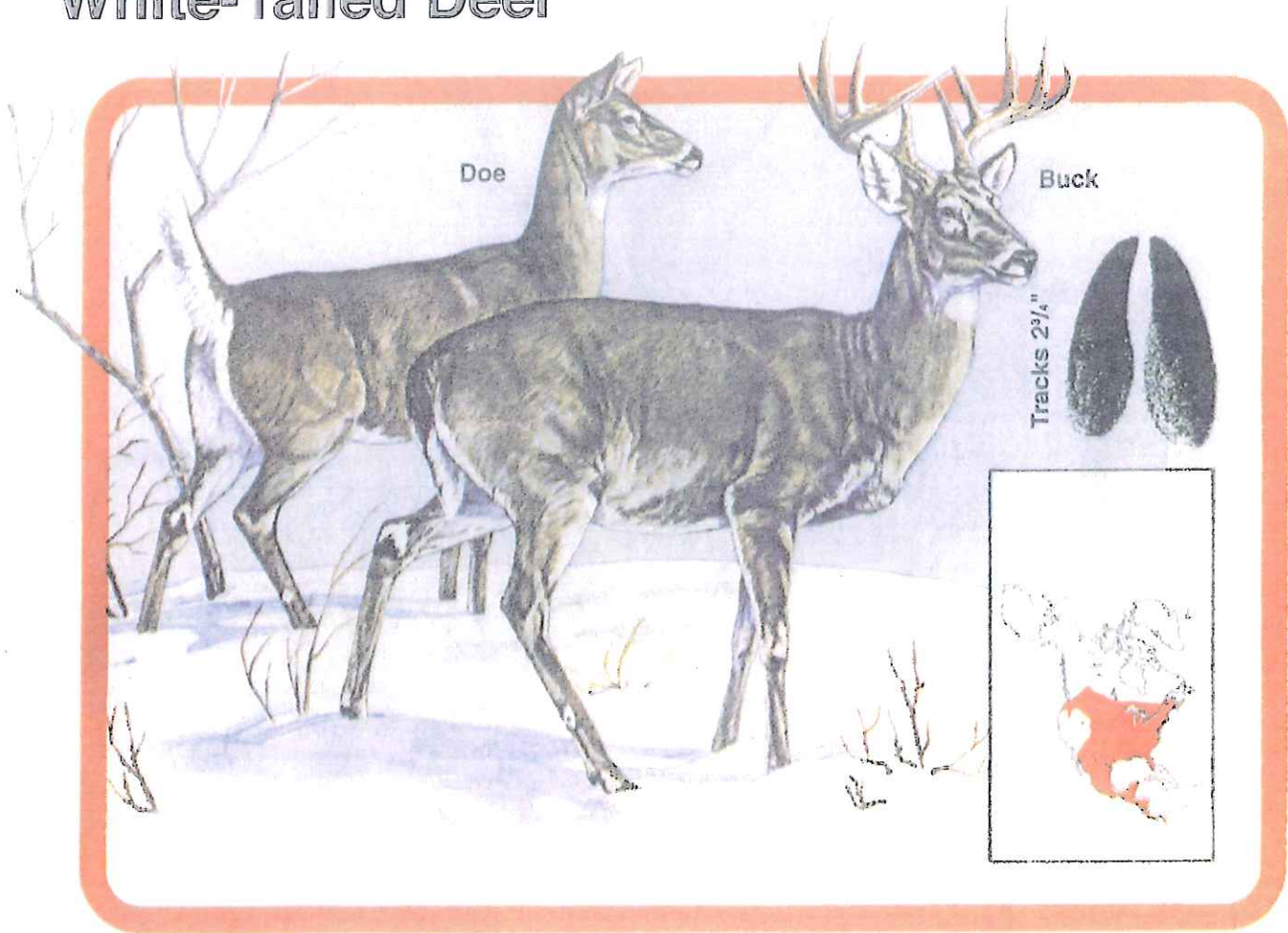
Mule deer are more curious than the white-tailed deer and are often seen in open areas. When running for cover, they often pause to look back, giving the hunter a good opportunity for a standing shot.

During the fall rut or mating season bucks compete for and will mate with several does. The rattling of antlers at this time can attract bucks into the area.

Mule deer are most numerous in the mountains and foothills but are also found in many other areas of the west. In the semi-arid southwest they are usually found in the brush areas along rivers and coulees.



# White-Tailed Deer



## Identification

The body color of the white-tailed deer changes with the seasons varying from gray in winter to reddish brown in summer. However, the underside of its tail, from which this deer gets its name, is always white. When alarmed or running, the deer flashes its tail up showing this solid white underside.

The erect white tail and low running gait of the white-tail distinguish it from the mule deer.

Antlers of bucks grow up and forward with single, unbranched spikes or tines projecting up from the main beam.

An adult white-tail buck may weigh from 100 to 300 pounds (70 to 140 kg). Does weigh between 85 and 130 pounds (45 to 60 kg).

## Habits

Although some grasses and herbs are consumed, white tail are mainly browsers feeding on such trees as chokecherry, birch, maple, dogwood and aspen.

Land clearing practices since the turn of the century have enabled the species to spread into formerly unoccupied areas of the continent. White-tail populations have increased rapidly and they now far outnumber the mule deer.

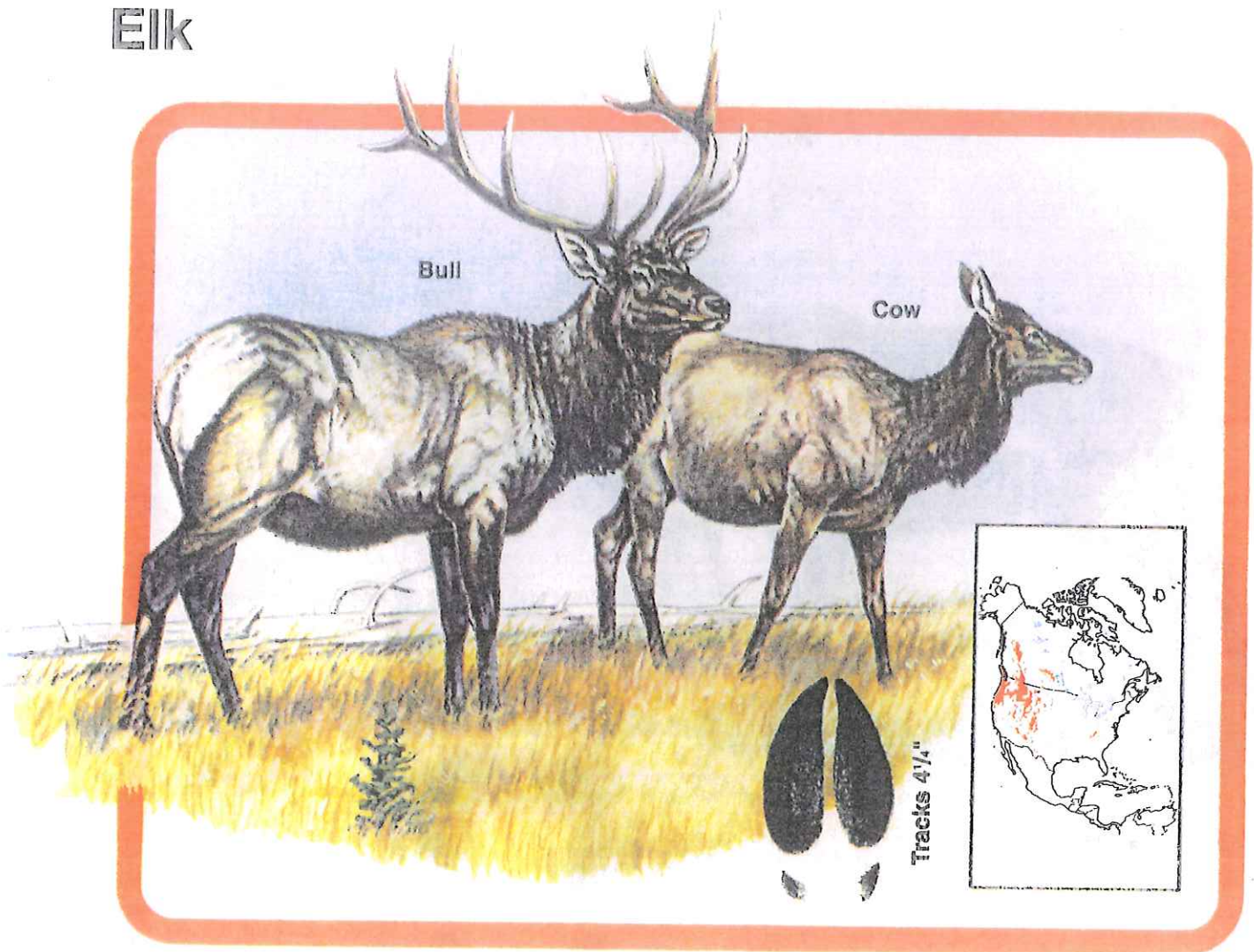
They are generally solitary during most of the year. In late fall and winter small groups may be found on or near favored feeding grounds. While white-tails do not normally form large winter herds, they may "yard up," in large groups in winters of very deep snow. Home range may vary from 40 to about 300 acres with total movement generally restricted to about one square mile.

White-tailed deer are most often seen in early morning or late afternoon when they move out on the edge of open areas to feed. At other times the white-tailed deer usually stays in thick brush.

Deer mate in late fall. Bucks compete for and, if successful, mate with many different does during this breeding season. Rattling a pair of antlers is a technique hunters use during rutting season to attract competitive bucks in the area.



# Elk



## Identification

Usually called "elk," this unique North American ungulate is also known as "wapati," the Indian name for the species.

Elk are generally a yellow-brown color with a distinctive light, cream-colored rump patch. The head, neck and legs are darker than the rest of its body. Cows are more evenly colored than bulls. The antlers of the bull are large and sweep back and upward. A mature bull will have five to seven tines, or points, projecting from each main branch.

Bulls weigh as much as 1000 pounds (450 kg). Cows are smaller and usually weigh between 500 and 600 pounds (225 to 270 kg).

## Habits

Elk are now found in those areas shown in the map insert above.

Because elk are grazers or grass eaters, they must often compete for food with domestic livestock. This is

sometimes a serious problem in areas where the elk herds traditionally winter.

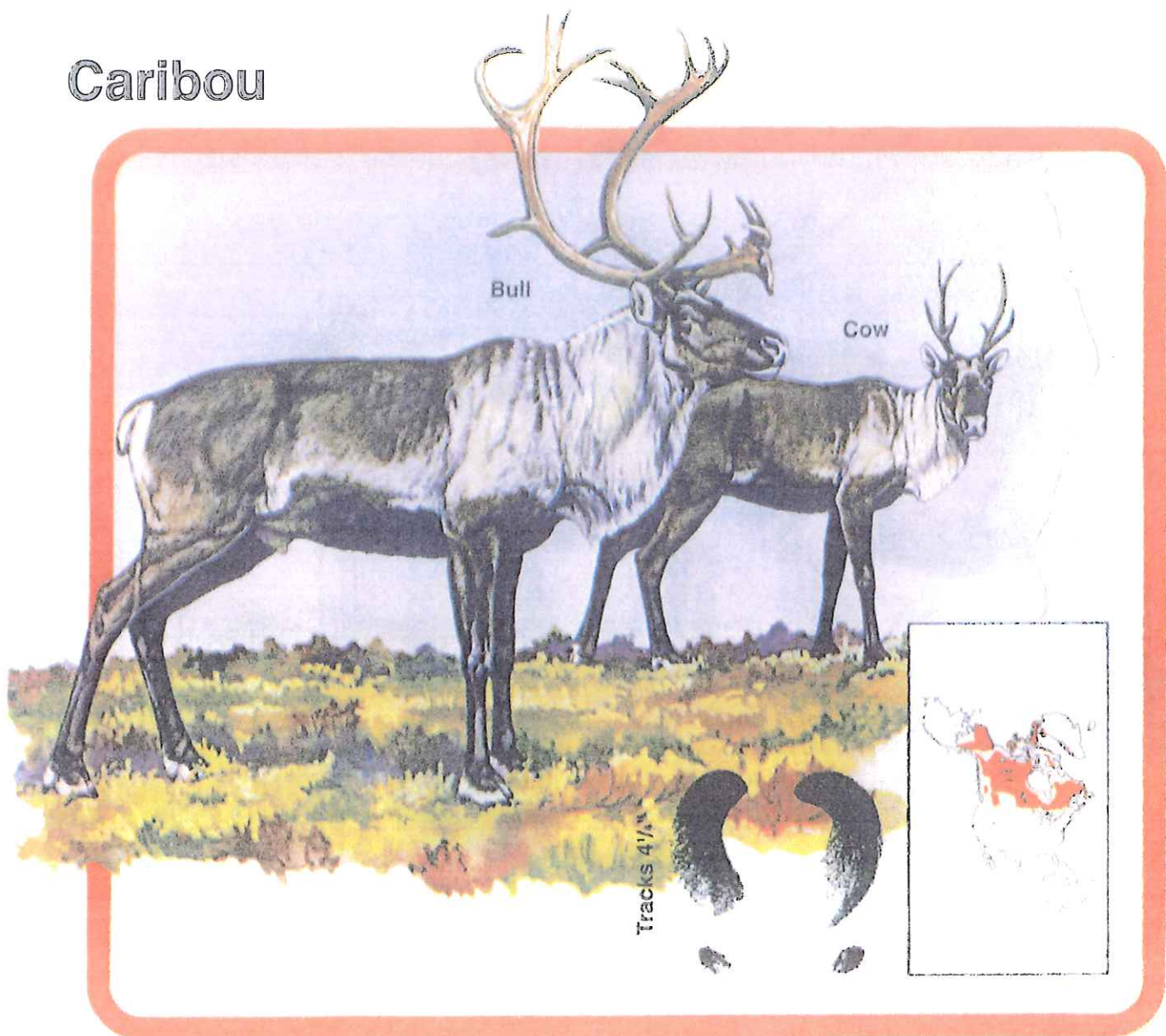
In severe winter when grazing is difficult, elk will browse for food and may even strip and eat trees.

Elk mate in early fall. A bull elk will gather together a small herd or harem of cow elk. As part of the mating ritual, other bull elk will challenge him for the herd. This challenge is heard as a high-pitched bugling sound unique to this species. The hunter, adept at imitating this call, may be able to attract a bull into shooting range from as far as a mile away.

During summer and fall elk inhabit open grassy areas at higher altitudes. In later fall, as snow covers these areas, the elk migrate down to lower wintering areas where shelter and food remain available to them. As snow disappears in spring, animals move back up to the meadows at higher altitudes.



# Caribou



## Identification

The caribou is divided into a number of geographic races, including the barren ground, mountain, woodland, and Quebec-Labrador types. The status is based more on geographic location of separate populations, but certain physical traits are apparent. The Alaskan Barren Ground is generally lighter in color with rather light antlers and long beams and tines. Mountain Caribou in British Columbia and Alberta are darker colored with heavier, more palmated antlers. Quebec-Labrador Caribou is even longer raked, and this woodland caribou is the heaviest and darkest, with generally a smaller rack. The distribution of these three races is illustrated in the insert map above.

Caribou are dark brown in color and have distinctive markings—a thick white neck mane, white tail and rump, and a light leg band just above the hooves. Caribou antlers are different than those of other deer in that one or two heavy tines called “shovels” extend outward from the animal’s brow. The main stem of the antler extends back, up and out to the side. Caribou antlers are flatter and wider than those of mule

and white-tailed deer. Cow caribou may also have antlers. If so they are smaller than those of the bulls.

Bulls weigh from 200 to 300 pounds (90 to 136 kg) and cows weigh about 25 percent less.

Caribou hunting is challenging due to the nomadic nature of the animals. The caribou is a stylish, impressive trophy animal with delicious meat. Once found, they are not so hard to kill as moose or elk, and can be dispatched by any cartridge that would handle a mule deer.

## Habits

Woodland caribou are generally found in mature forests or tundra where they feed year round on lichens and ground mosses. Logging, forest fire and other removal of old forest growth may result in a decrease of caribou numbers. They are probably the most migratory of big game animals.



# Big Game Carnivores

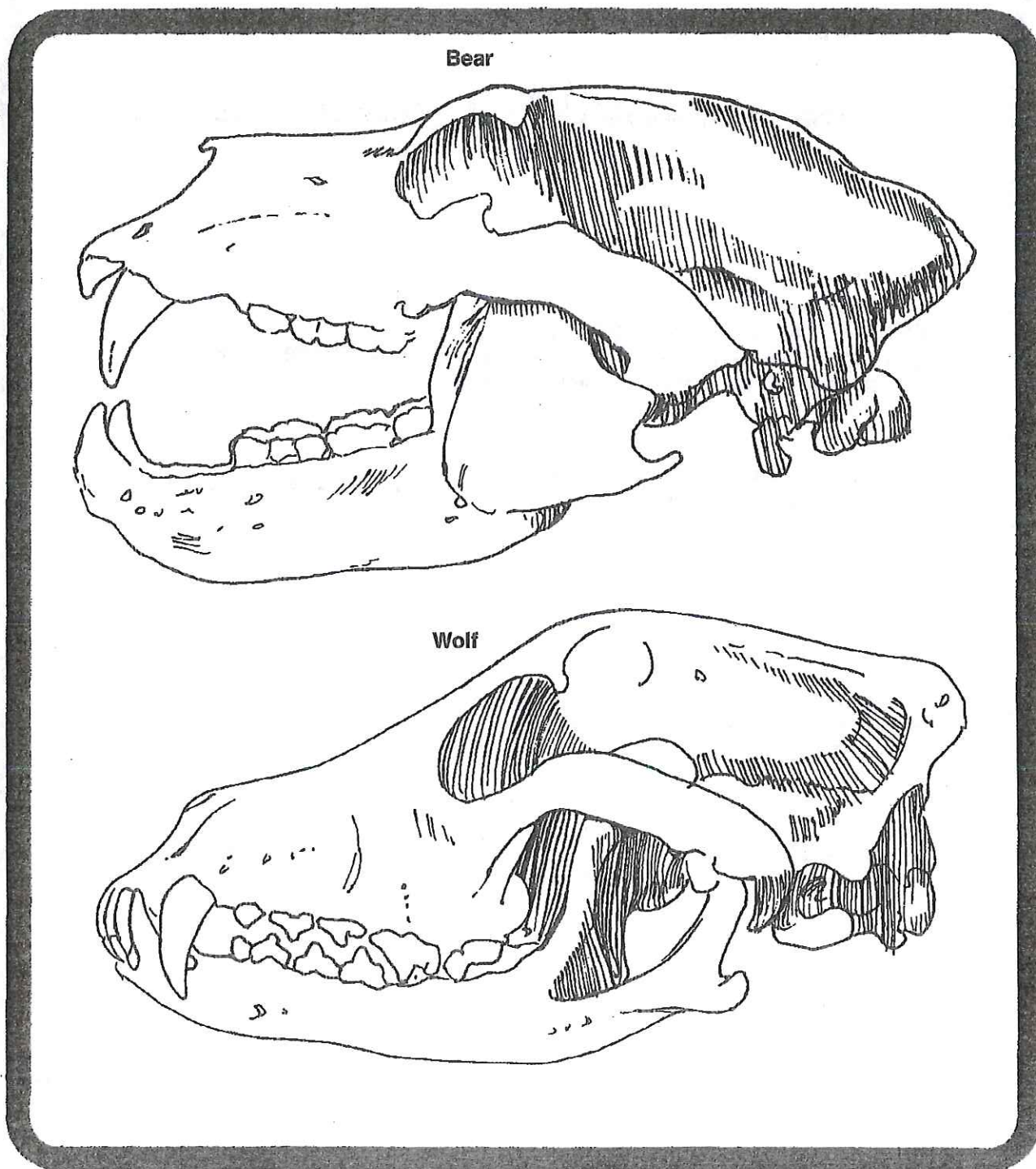
Carnivores are meat-eating mammals which have teeth along the sides of their jaws for cutting, or more accurately, "shearing" their food.

Bear teeth are different from those of other carnivores. The teeth of bears are similar to human teeth which are flat-topped and crush, rather than shear, food.

Certain of the large species of carnivores found in North

America are classed as game animals. Included in this group are the cougar or mountain lion; black or brown bear; and the grizzly. Other carnivores such as the lynx, weasels, mink, fox and fisher are hunted or trapped for their fur.

In some areas of the country, certain carnivores are protected while in other areas they are not. Before hunting or trapping for them check the current game regulations for your area.





# Large Carnivores

The larger carnivorous forms of North American wildlife are generally recognizable as those that are cat-like, dog-like, bear-like or none of these. This short key will use these groupings to help you identify the animal in question.

## Cat-Like Animals

Large, (100 to 200 lbs). long tail.

Cougar

## Dog-Like Animals

Color variable, ashy white through brown, gray to black, large, 75-100 lbs. or more, nose elongated blunt; thick powerful neck bushy tail.

Wolf

Smaller 20-40 lbs., thick hair, slender pointed nose, bushy tail.

Coyote

## Bear-Like Animals

Large (up to 1000 lbs. or more) massive head, concave or dished profile, brown to silvery gray, shoulder hump pronounced and prominent.

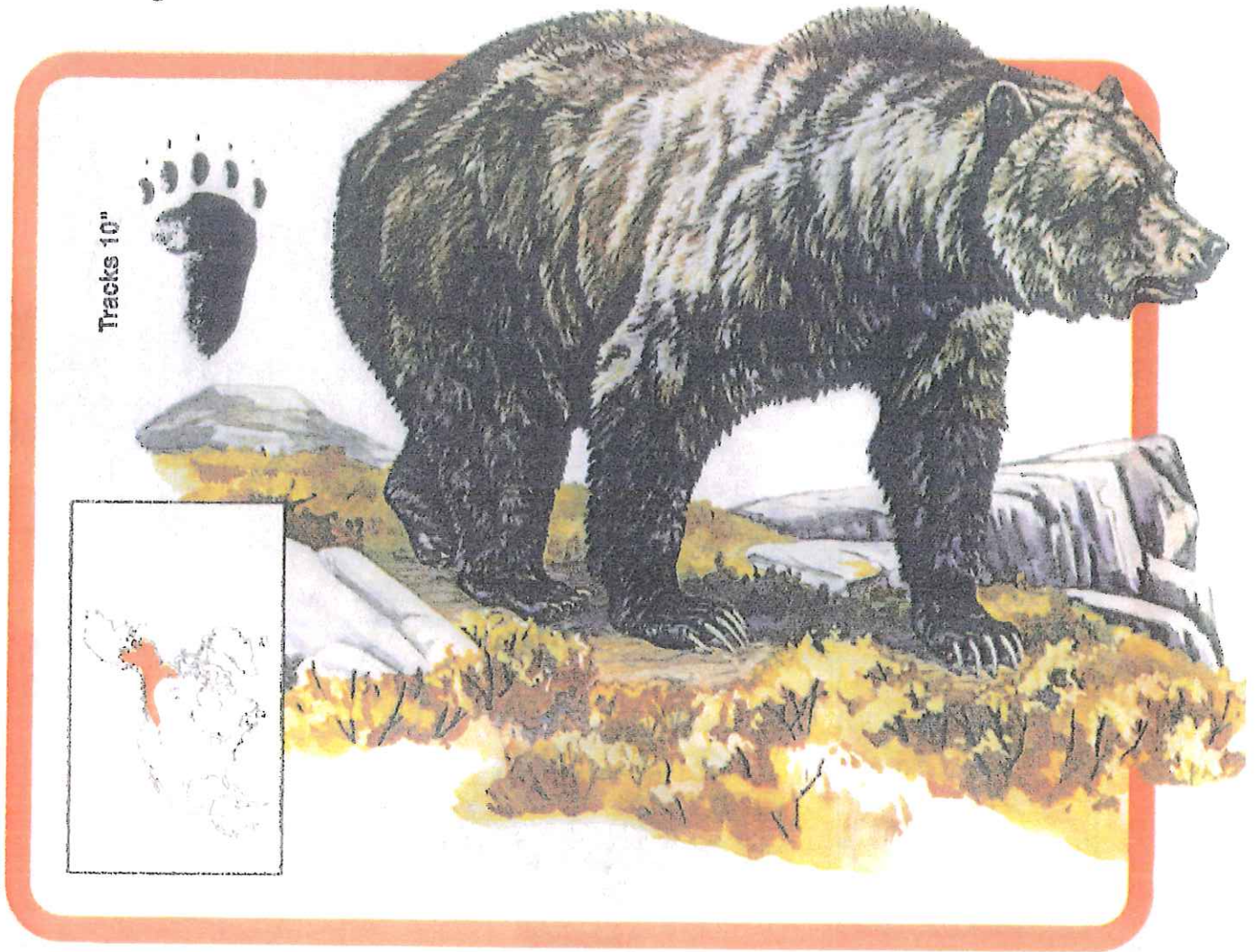
Grizzly

Smaller (300 lbs). black to cinnamon brown, often with white chest patch, facial profile straight, no pronounced shoulder hump.

Black Bear



# Grizzly Bear



## Identification

The grizzly bear is the largest and most powerful of the North American carnivores. A boar or male bear may weigh 500 pounds (227 kg) or more. Sows or female grizzly bears are usually smaller and weigh an average of 400 pounds (182 kg).

Grizzly bears are usually brown although their color may vary from blonde to black with a grizzled "silver tip" appearance. The pronounced shoulder hump, large muscular body and massive head with its dished, concave profile are all distinctive characteristics.

The grizzly's tracks will show claw markings, distinguishing them from the tracks of black bears which usually do not.

## Habits

The grizzly is found in remote mountainous and foothill terrain. The distribution of the grizzly bear in North America is shown in the insert map.

Grizzlies live on roots, berries and other vegetation as well as small mammals. They also eat dead animals and will occasionally kill a large ungulate.

Young grizzlies can climb trees easily but the adults have more difficulty in doing so because of their long claws.

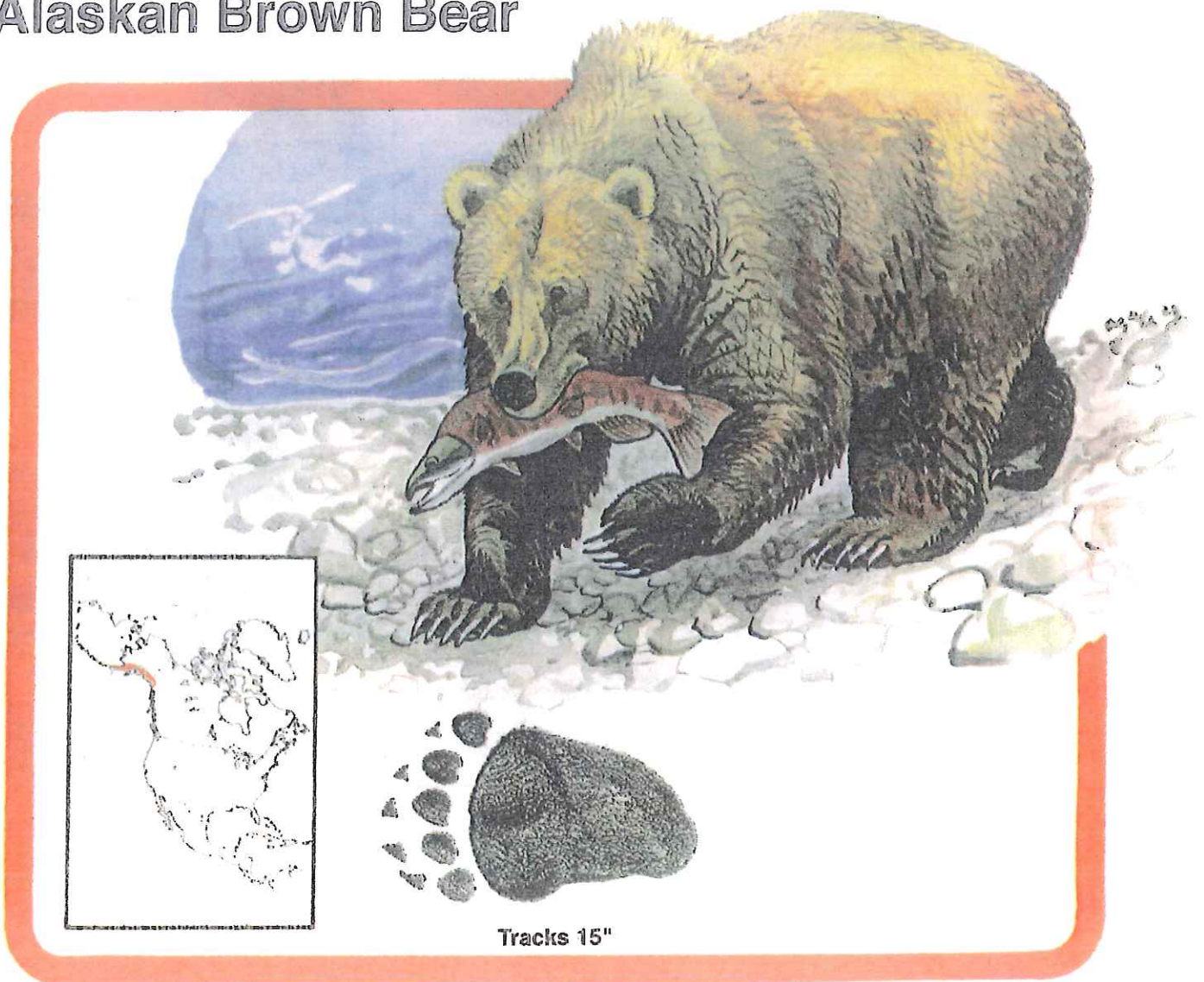
Grizzly bears are inactive during the winter when they hibernate in dens. Hibernation usually extends from December to March.

In most regions of North America grizzly bear populations have decreased substantially in recent years and where that has occurred this species is considered endangered.

Grizzlies, particularly males or boars, are solitary animals but cubs will remain with the female or sow for up to three years. Cubs and sows with cubs cannot be hunted. The home range of a grizzly may be from three to ten square miles (eight to 26 km) but bears have been known to range up to 50 to 60 miles (80 to 100 km).



# Alaskan Brown Bear



Tracks 15"

## Identification

The Alaskan brown bear's pelage varies from very dark brown to blond, but lacks the silver-tipped guard hairs of the grizzly bear. This species has a short tail and shorter and less curved claws on the forefeet than a grizzly. The brown bear's powerful build, prominent, heavy canine teeth and aggressive disposition make it a potentially dangerous game animal. The adult male is 8 to 9 feet long (240 to 270 cm) and as high as 4 ½ feet (135 cm) at the shoulder. His weight may be from 800 to 1200 pounds (340 to 510 kg), although occasional individuals will exceed 1,500 pounds (695 kg).

## Habits

The Alaskan brown bear ranges over most of Coastal Alaska. Their habitat includes slopes where deep grass and spongy moss grows as well as upland timber areas.

The brown bear is omnivorous. It feeds heavily on salmon and trout in the coastal areas. Other foods include berries,

carrion, fresh green grass, eggs of nesting waterfowl and large animals such as caribou.

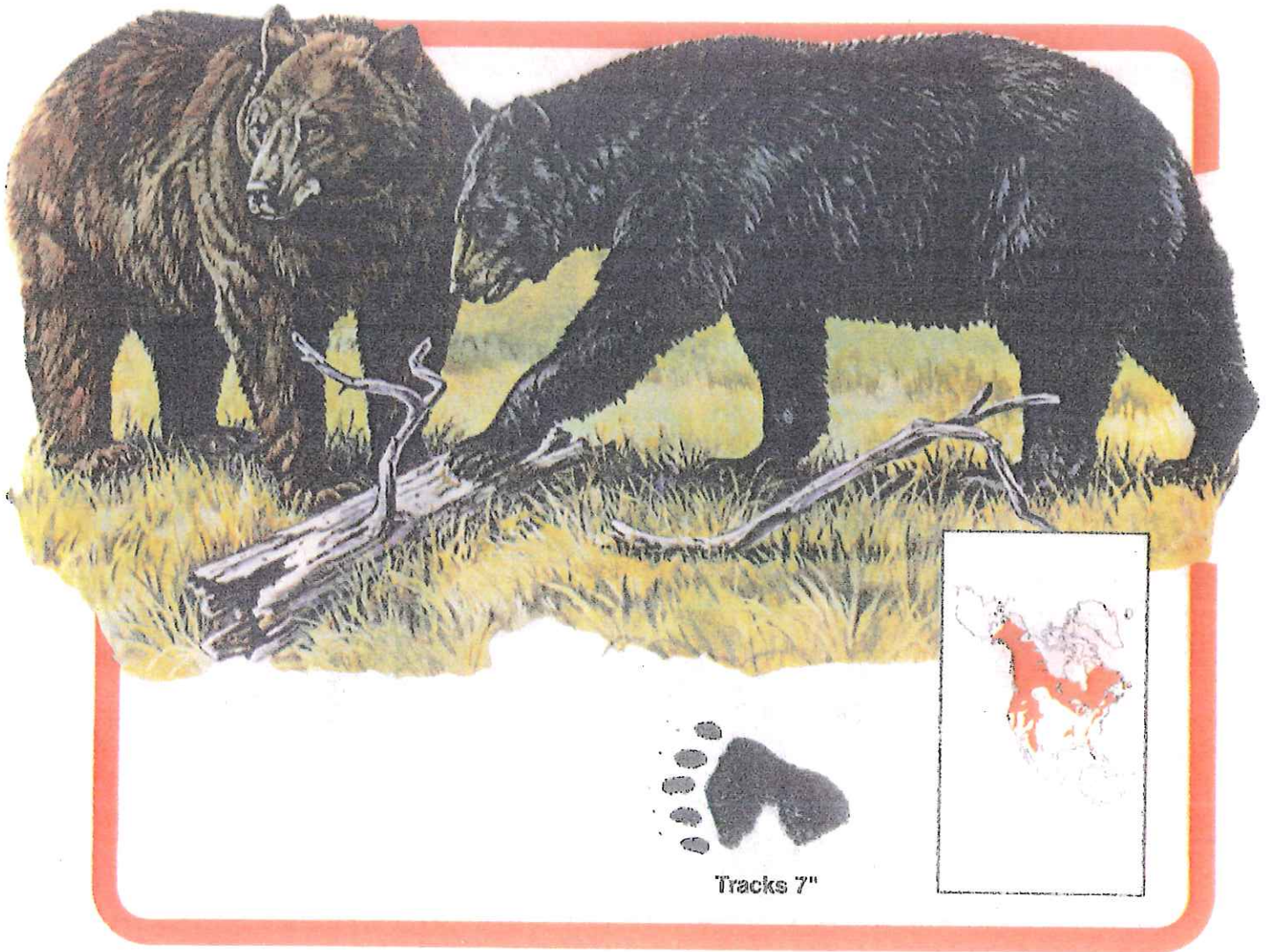
The breeding season is from spring to midsummer. Females breed in alternate years, some only every third year. The gestation period is six to eight months, and one to three cubs, which are unable to see at birth, are born during the last weeks of the hibernation period.

Most of the movements of the brown bear are related to obtaining food. This animal is a fine swimmer, but it is not noted as a tree climber because of its size and the nature of its claws which are not adapted to climbing.

Although the Alaskan brown bear has very poor eyesight, it has a keen sense of smell. Individuals who hunt brown bears must be in top physical condition and be prepared to cope with the animal's keen sense of smell.



# Black Bear



## Identification

Black bears usually have a deep glossy black coat, but other color variations including cinnamon and brown occur. The average weight for adults of either sex is 250 to 300 pounds (115 kg to 135 kg). In the fall, bears have a heavy accumulation of fat and may weigh considerably more.

The smaller size, absence of a shoulder hump and straight or slightly bulging facial profile help to distinguish black bears from the grizzly.

Unlike the grizzly, black bear tracks do not normally show claw marks.

## Habits

Black bears are found in forest regions and foothills. Like the grizzly bear they feed on roots, berries, other vegetation, insects, fish, small mammals and the flesh of dead animals.

The distribution of the black bear in North America is illustrated in the insert map.

Black bears are excellent swimmers and tree climbers. In early winter they den up and emerge the following spring.

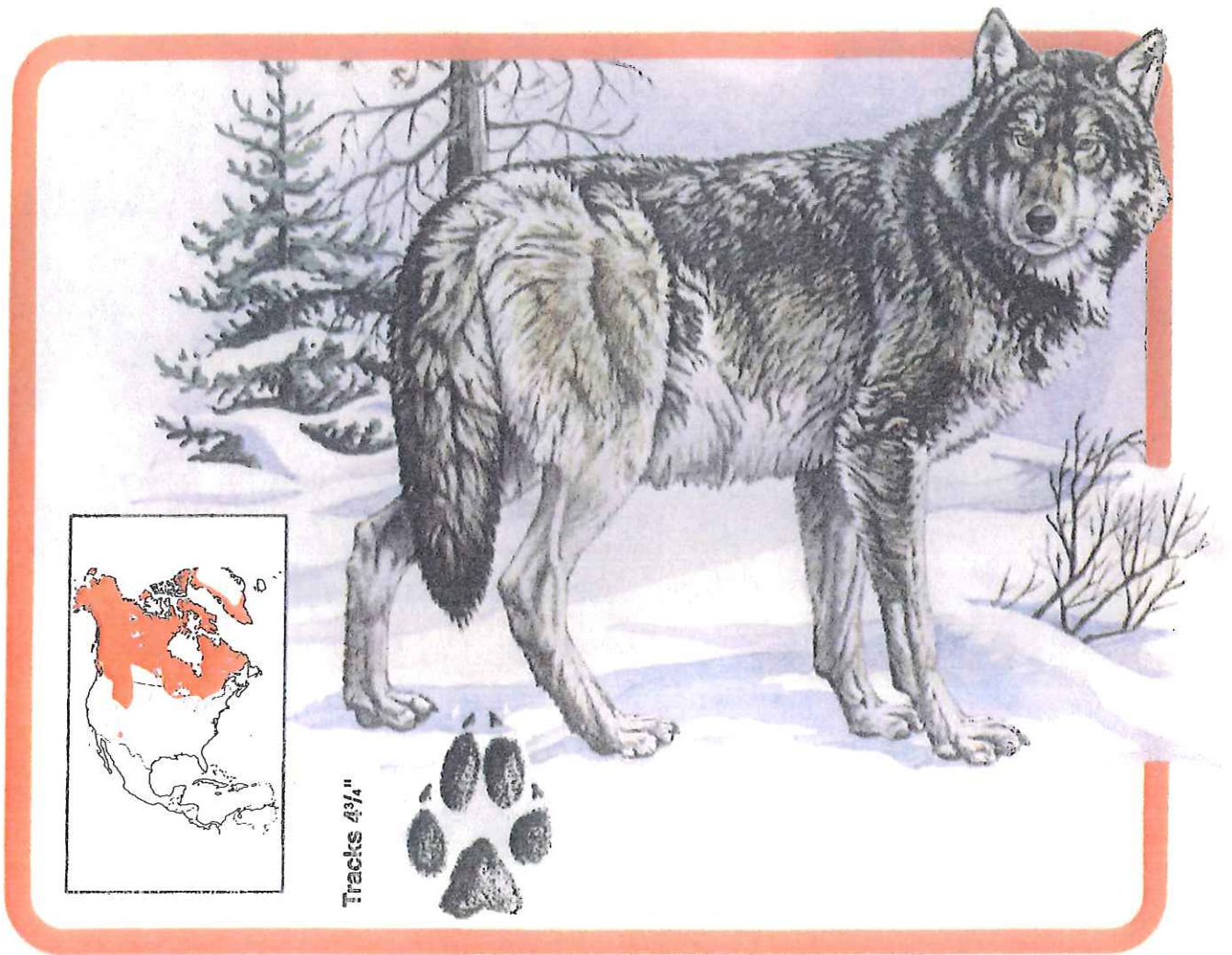
Home ranges for black bear vary from one to 16 square miles (three to 40 km) but individuals may travel 60 miles (80 km) or more.

Black bears are normally solitary animals but cubs remain with the sow for a year or more. Cubs and sows with cubs cannot be hunted.

In some areas, black bears have become dependent on humans for their food. The bears feed on garbage, oat crops and raid beehives. In such instances bears can become a problem of economic importance and can be a hazard to human safety.



# Wolf



Tracks 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"

## Identification

Wolves are the largest wild members of the dog family in North America. The wolf's long, dense fur is usually a pale ash or creamy white color often overlaid with shades of brown or gray though color may vary from black to white.

An average adult wolf weighs about 100 pounds (45 kg) with little difference in either size or appearance between sexes. Both look much like a German Shepherd dog.

It is sometimes difficult for the inexperienced hunter to distinguish a wolf from a coyote. Wolves are larger, heavier and more powerful in appearance than the coyote. The wolf's nose is bluntly pointed; the coyote's nose is elongated and sharply pointed.

## Habits

At one time wolves were found throughout much of North America. The regions in which they are now found are

shown in the map insert.

The number of wolves in an area varies from year to year depending on the availability of game to feed on and the territorial needs of the pack. The size of a pack may vary from four to 20 or more. If there is sufficient food to sustain the pack, it will be large. When the food supply is low, the pack is smaller.

In summer when the pups are young, wolves seldom travel far and are usually seen alone or in pairs. Packs of wolves travelling and hunting together occur most often in winter. At this time, packs may range and travel over territories of 100 square miles (260 km) or more.

Wolves may eat birds and small mammals but they depend primarily on the large ungulates such as deer, elk and moose for food.



# Coyote



## Identification

The coyote is similar in appearance to the wolf but is smaller. Weighing about 30 pounds (14 kg) it is more slender in body shape and has a more sharply pointed nose than the wolf.

Coyotes are generally a tawny gray with lighter, yellowish legs, paws, muzzle and ears. Paler or much darker animals are also frequently seen.

## Habits

The coyote is the most numerous of the wild dogs in North America and is found over much of the United States as shown in the map insert. It is an extremely

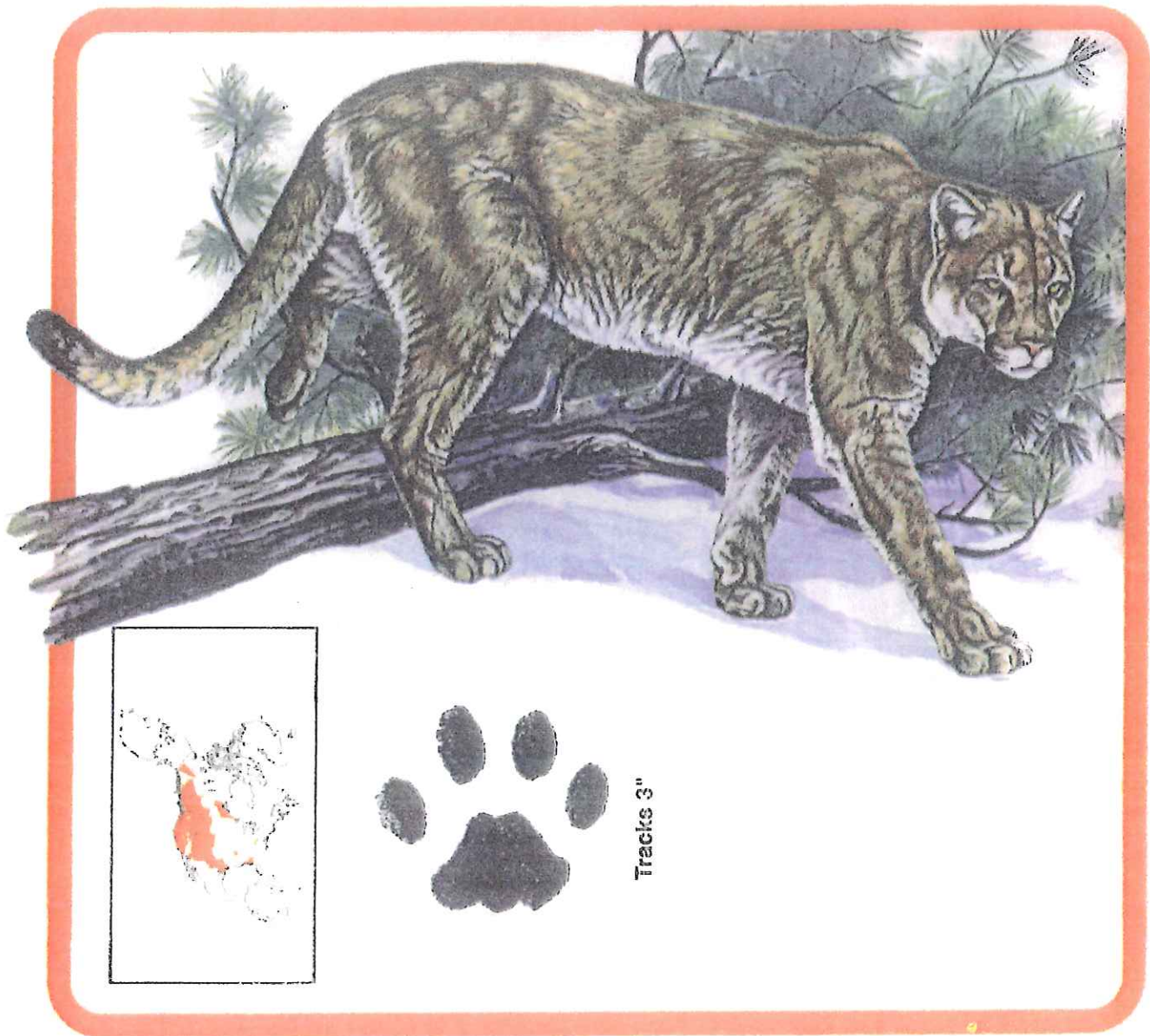
adaptable animal and has adjusted to many of the changes that man has made to its habitat. Considered a pest by many landowners, the coyote has survived poisoning, bounty programs and other efforts by man to eradicate it.

Over most of its territory the home range of the coyote is about 10 to 15 square miles (25-40 km). Adult males may travel much further

Coyotes are usually seen alone or in pairs with their young. Primarily a carnivore, rodents make up about 75 percent of a coyote's diet. They also eat eggs, birds, insects, snakes, frogs, fish and some vegetation.



# Cougar



## Identification

The cougar or mountain lion is the largest of the North American wild cats. Males average 160 pounds (75 kg) but may weigh as much as 250 pounds (115 kg). Both sexes look alike, but the female is smaller, weighing about 100 pounds (45 kg).

Cougars are tawny brown with a light colored belly. Their long, round, black-tipped tail is the most reliable identification feature.

## Habits

Cougars are now found mainly in the mountain and foothills region as shown in the insert map. Cougars are solitary animals occupying firmly established territories of

up to 40 or 50 square miles (105 or 130 km).

Cougars have no special breeding season but young are usually born in spring and late summer.

A cougar's prey is primarily deer or elk but other small mammals and birds are also eaten.

Although cougars are more active at night than during daylight, they rely more on sight and hearing than on scent for locating and stalking prey.

Cougars are usually hunted using dogs to track and tree the animal.