

Wildlife Viewing

Campgrounds provide food and shelter for many animals. Birds, such as the Swainson's thrush, nest in dense shrubs for protection. Look for these birds eating elderberries in the early morning or late afternoon. Chickadees and kinglets patrol hemlock branches in search of insect larvae. Sapsuckers drill rows of holes in tree trunks to feed on the trees' sugary sap.

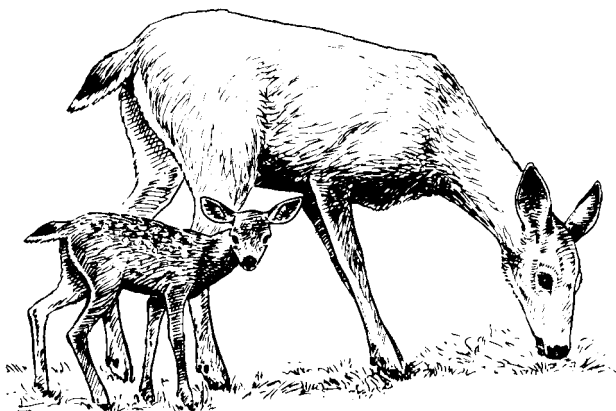
Watch for deer searching for succulent, new leaves on nearby shrubs. Red and Douglas squirrels are busily stashing seeds around your campsite for winter. You may see them tossing cones to the ground from high in the treetops. Later they will gather the cones and store the seeds.

Spiders build their webs in tall grass and shrubs, then retreat to wait for food. Look for dew-covered webs in the early morning. Get close to the ground to see slugs and ants. Watch these members of the forest recycling team clear away natural debris.

The best way to appreciate your campground companions is from a distance. Sit quietly. Watch and listen carefully. Observing wildlife takes patience, but you will develop a deeper understanding of the animals around you. If you treat those animals with respect, the campground can be a safe haven for all.



Keep your visit to British Columbia's protected areas safe by acting responsibly and respecting the wildlife. Your actions affect the safety of future park visitors and the animals that make provincial parks their home.



For More Information

BC Parks

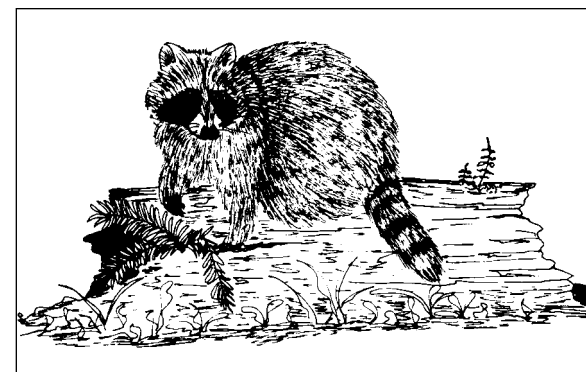
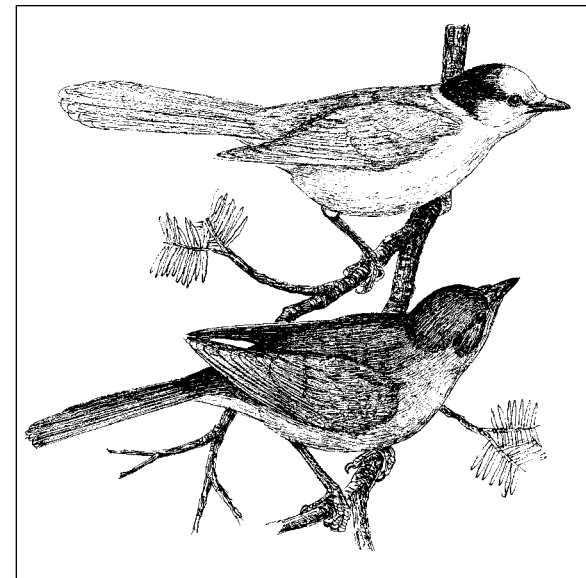
<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks>



Ministry of Water, Land
and Air Protection



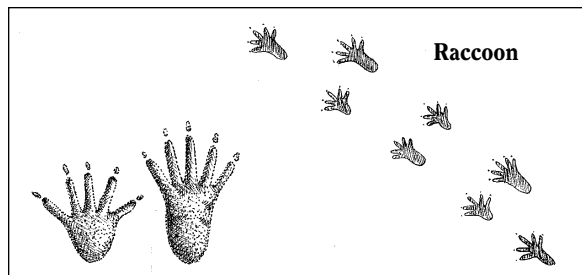
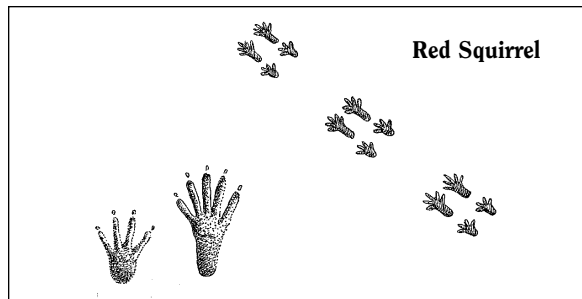
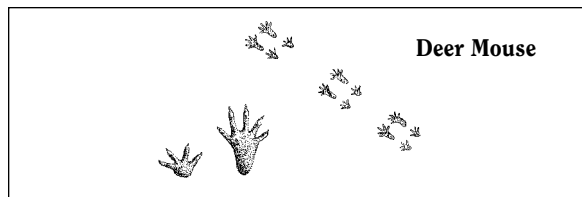
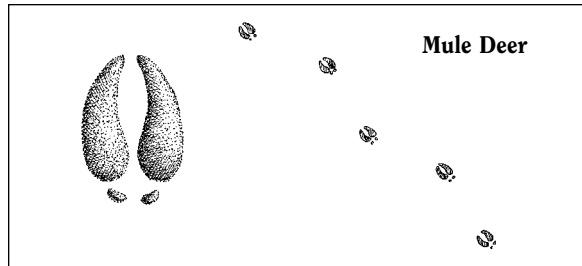
Campground Companions



Look and listen for signs of birds, mammals and other creatures around the campground, as well as in British Columbia's protected areas.

Play Detective

Be a detective by watching for animal clues, such as lost feathers, tracks or droppings. Can you find places where animals were walking, feeding or resting?

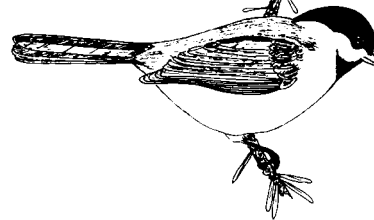


You might also hear animals, but never see them. Listen for the drumming sound of ruffed grouse in the spring. The sharp cry from the sky could be an eagle or red-tailed hawk circling overhead. When the tree frogs chirp, the forest seems to swell with their song. If you find a pond filled with tadpoles, please protect them. Each tadpole will grow into an adult frog, adding another voice to the forest chorus.

Meet Your Neighbours

Chestnut-backed Chickadee

Listen for a "wheezy" call.

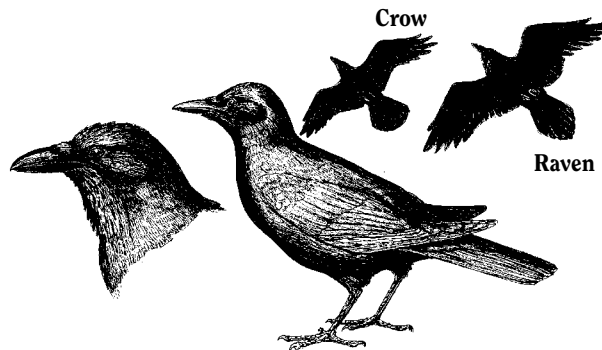


Black-capped Chickadee

It sings "feed-me" or "chick-a-dee-dee"

Listen for chickadee calls in the tree branches overhead. Stand still and make a "pssh, pssh, pssh" sound. Chickadees and other curious birds may approach for a closer look.

Crows and Ravens



Crows and ravens are not fussy when it comes to what they eat. They enjoy a varied diet, including seeds, grains, insects, frogs, eggs, mammals, other birds and carrion. Watch these clever birds drop nuts and clams from the sky in an attempt to crack the shells.

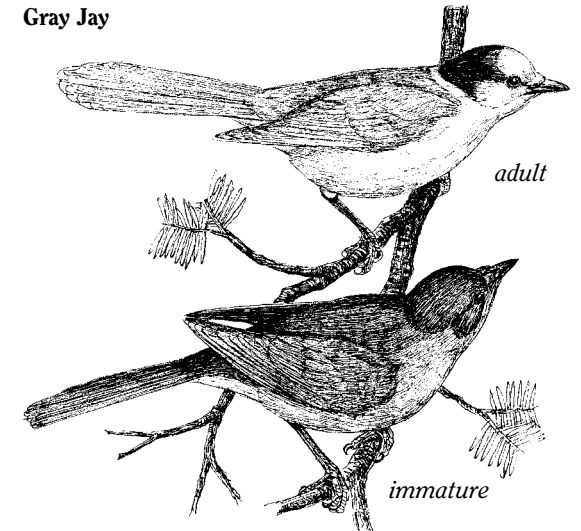
Crows and ravens are social birds that communicate with distinctive "caw" sounds. Early and late in the day, you can see flocks of crows – also called murders of crows – flying to and from their rookeries.

Hairy Woodpecker

If you hear a sharp "keek" or drumming sound, watch for a hairy woodpecker. This bird probes for insects in dead trees with its chisel-like bill. Woodpeckers also use their bills to create nest cavities in dead trees. Once the woodpeckers move on, other birds that cannot build their own nest cavities, such as chickadees, move in. Because dead trees are important for food and shelter, we call them wildlife trees.



Gray Jay



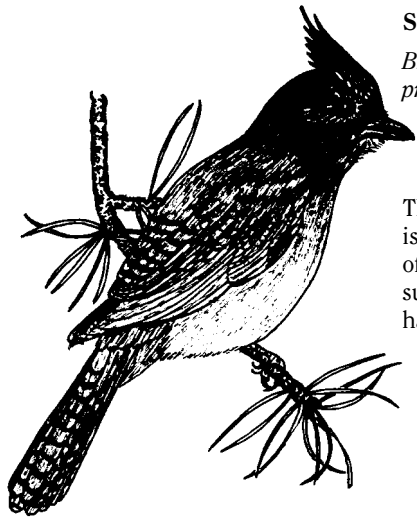
Cheeky gray jays, also known as whiskey jacks, commonly steal food from campers. They produce special saliva that binds food together so it can be stored in conifer foliage.

Birds (continued)

Steller's Jay

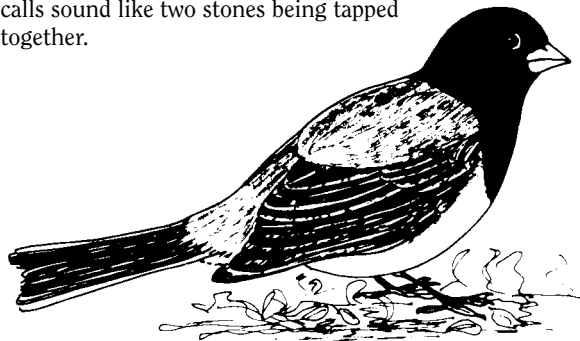
British Columbia's provincial bird.

The Steller's Jay is a vocal mimic of other birds, such as red-tailed hawks.



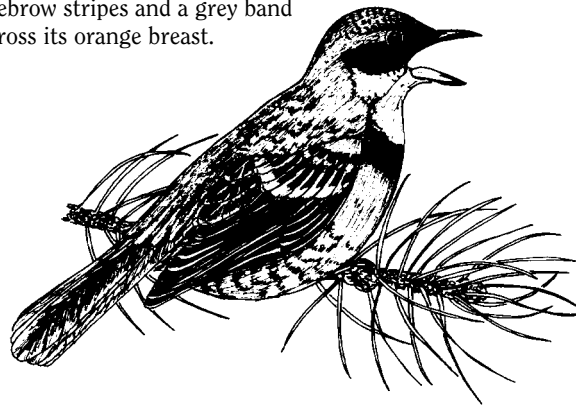
Dark-eyed Junco

Juncos are often seen on the ground foraging for seeds and insects. White outer tail feathers and a black head help to identify this sparrow-like bird. Junco calls sound like two stones being tapped together.



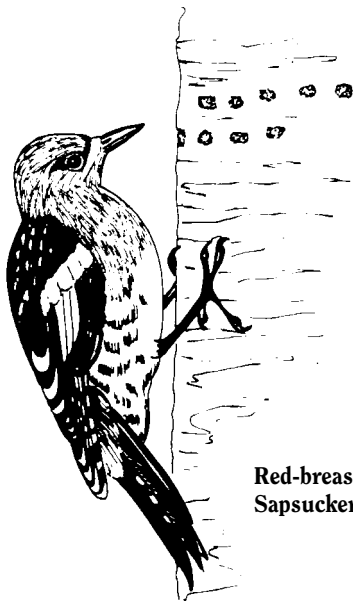
Varied Thrush

Listen for the long, musical notes of these secretive birds. The varied thrush resembles a robin, but has orange eyebrow stripes and a grey band across its orange breast.



Sapsuckers

Sapsuckers drill sapwells in various tree species. Rather than actually sucking sap, they lap it up with their brush-like tongues.

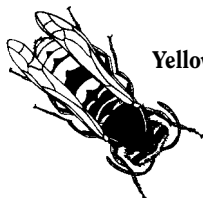


Red-breasted Sapsucker

Insects

Many creatures that bite or sting have bold markings to warn predators.

Insects like yellowjackets and ants enjoy a good snack as much as you do. Keep your food covered to stop them from carrying it away.



Yellowjacket

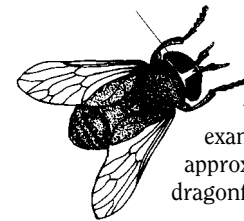


Deer Fly

Notice the gold-dotted eyes.

Horse Fly

Notice the "rainbow" eyes.



Some insects have compound eyes, which are many simple eyes working together. For example, a horse fly has approximately 5,000 eyes, while a dragonfly has up to 30,000.

Ants

Ants can lift many times their own weight. The equivalent for you might be lifting a small truck! Look for ants carrying food or building materials to their colony. Ants also collect a sugary liquid called honeydew from aphids. In return for the honeydew, ants protect aphid colonies from predators.



Spiders

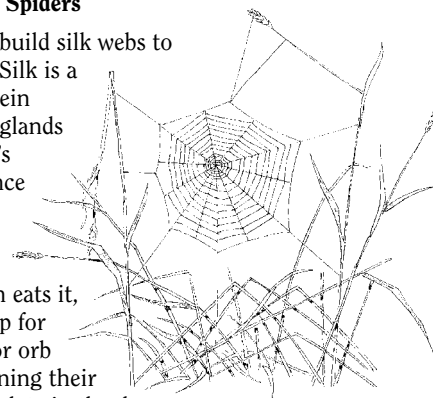
Wolf Spiders

Look for these common spiders running on the ground or over stones. The female wolf spider carries her egg case attached to her abdomen. When the spiderlings hatch, they ride on their mother's back.



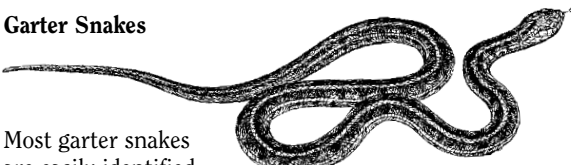
Orb-weaving Spiders

Orb weavers build silk webs to trap insects. Silk is a stretchy protein produced by glands in the spider's abdomen. Once an insect is caught, the spider wraps it in silk then eats it, or hangs it up for later. Look for orb weavers spinning their webs early or late in the day.



Reptiles

Garter Snakes



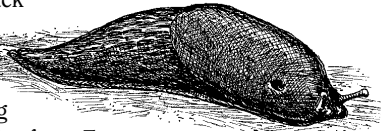
Most garter snakes are easily identified by the light-coloured stripes on their backs and sides. In August or September, the females give birth to live young. Each brood can have eight to fifty snakelets about the size of large earthworms.

Mollusks

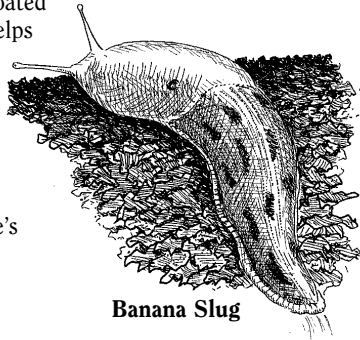
Slugs

If you're in the forest on a wet day, you are sure to see a slug. Banana slugs are large and yellow, often with black spots. The smaller black licorice slug has raised ridges along its body. The licorice slug is an introduced species from Europe.

Slugs breathe partially through their skin, which is coated in slime. The slime helps the slug move and protects it from predators. Because slugs eat animal droppings, and dead plants and animals, they are one of nature's garbage collectors.



Licorice Slug




Banana Slug

Rodents

Rodents include such diverse species as beavers, flying squirrels and chipmunks.

Deer Mouse



Large eyes, sensitive ears and a fine set of whiskers equip the deer mouse for a nocturnal life.

Chipmunks

Chipmunks carry food, such as seeds and fruit, in their cheek pouches.

Notice the striped head and back.



Squirrels

Squirrels are one of the most active and noisy creatures in the campground. They often use tree stumps as dinner tables, leaving behind piles of Douglas-fir, pine and hemlock scales. They also collect mushrooms and lay them on tree branches to dry.

Watch for three kinds of squirrels – gray, red and Douglas. The gray squirrel, which was introduced from eastern North America, is the largest, with a long, bushy tail. The red squirrel's belly is white, while the Douglas squirrel's belly is creamy white. Both the red and Douglas squirrels have black lines along their sides.



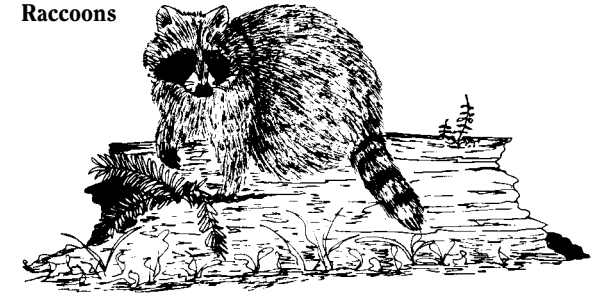
Squirrels use their paws like little hands.

Columbian Groundsquirrels

Columbian ground squirrels live in underground colonies in alpine meadows and arid grasslands. They eat insects and plant materials, such as grasses, bulbs and seeds.

Larger Mammals

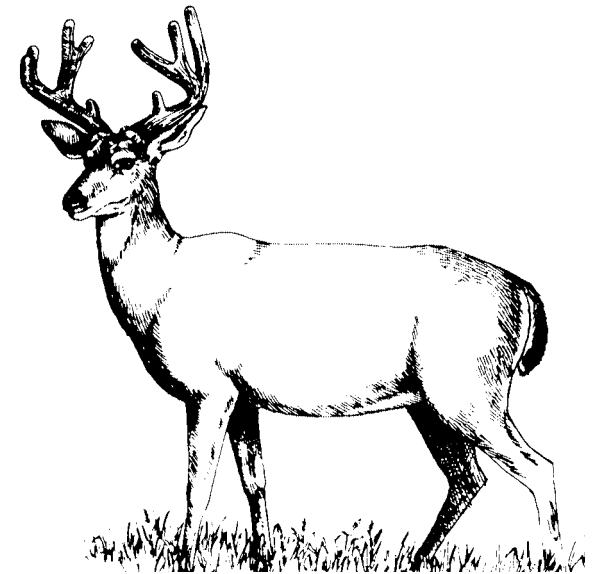
Raccoons



Look for raccoon tracks in the mud, especially at dawn or dusk. Their paw prints are like tiny human hands. Raccoons will eat almost anything, including frogs, snakes, berries, insects and crabs.

Deer

Maybe you will see a blacktail deer at dusk browsing on salmonberry, thimbleberry and fireweed at the edge of the campground.



Male deer, like this one, polish their antlers on trees and shrubs. The type of plants they use can affect the colour of their antlers.