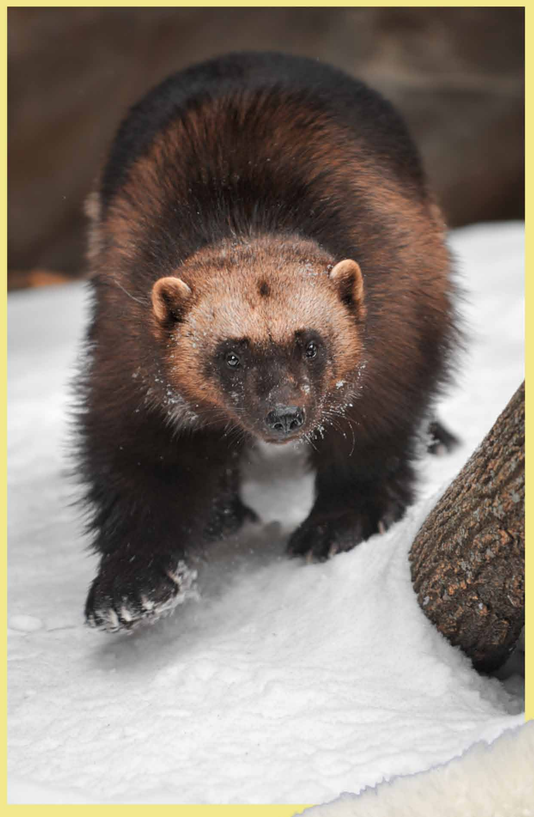
The **OSPREY** is closely tied to waterways where fish make up 99% of its diet. Its hunting technique is to hover, dive, and then plunge feet first to capture a fish. With long curved claws, barbed foot pads, and reversible outer toes, the osprey is well-equipped to grasp its slippery prey. Up to 10 fish per day are needed to feed both parents and their brood of two to four young.



The largest of land-dwelling weasels, **WOLVERINES** are a powerfully built carnivore of wilderness landscapes. With a thick, frost-resistant coat, large snowshoe-like feet, and powerful jaws that can crush through frozen bone, wolverines are ideally adapted for life in the remote mountains of Idaho. To find enough food in such harsh environments, an adult male wolverine may patrol a 500 square mile territory.

The **AMERICAN DIPPER** is a small songbird uniquely adapted to swift mountain streams. It has dense feathers to stay warm and dry, the ability to close its nostrils underwater, and a third eyelid to help it see while submerged. Dippers eat aquatic insects, which are intolerant of sediment and pollution. A healthy dipper population is a sign of a healthy river.

Within the wilderness crags and cliffs dwell supreme mountaineers. **MOUNTAIN GOATS** trek the rugged terrain aided by muscular forequarters and pliable hooves with rubbery pads that grip steep or smooth surfaces. Their shaggy white coats insulate against extreme cold and wind and offer perfect camouflage in their snowy realm.

With its lithe streamlined body, powerful rudder-like tail, and webbed feet, the **NORTH AMERICAN RIVER OTTER** is superbly designed for river life. Its ears and nostrils are valved to repel water and its dense, glossy brown fur acts like a wetsuit to keep it warm and dry in icy waters. Long, sensitive whiskers help detect fish and other prey underwater.

The Middle Fork of the Salmon River: Havens of Habitats

Tucked in rocky niches, soaring over cliffs, or lurking in deep pools, more than 300 species of fish and wildlife inhabit the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness.

Coursing through the heart of the wilderness, the Middle Fork of the Salmon River offers a front row seat to this rich biodiversity. Flowing 104 miles and descending nearly 3,000 feet in elevation, the Middle Fork travels through three ecological zones. From spruce/fir forests to ponderosa pine woodlands to vertical granite cliffs towering thousands of feet overhead, each zone supports a unique group of plants and animals finely tuned to place.

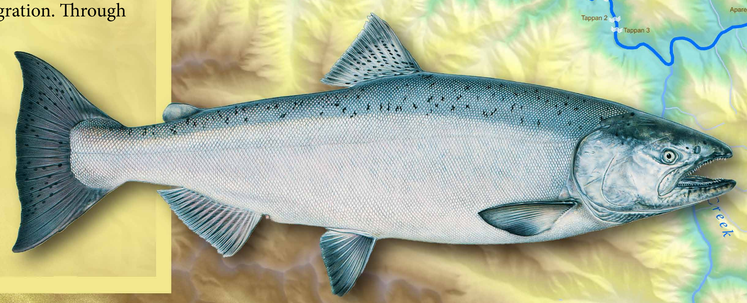
Your adventure ahead promises countless "watchable wildlife" moments that will enrich your river experience. Be on the lookout for some of these fascinating creatures.

The Middle Fork is black bear country! Be "**BEAR AWARE**" by observing these precautions:

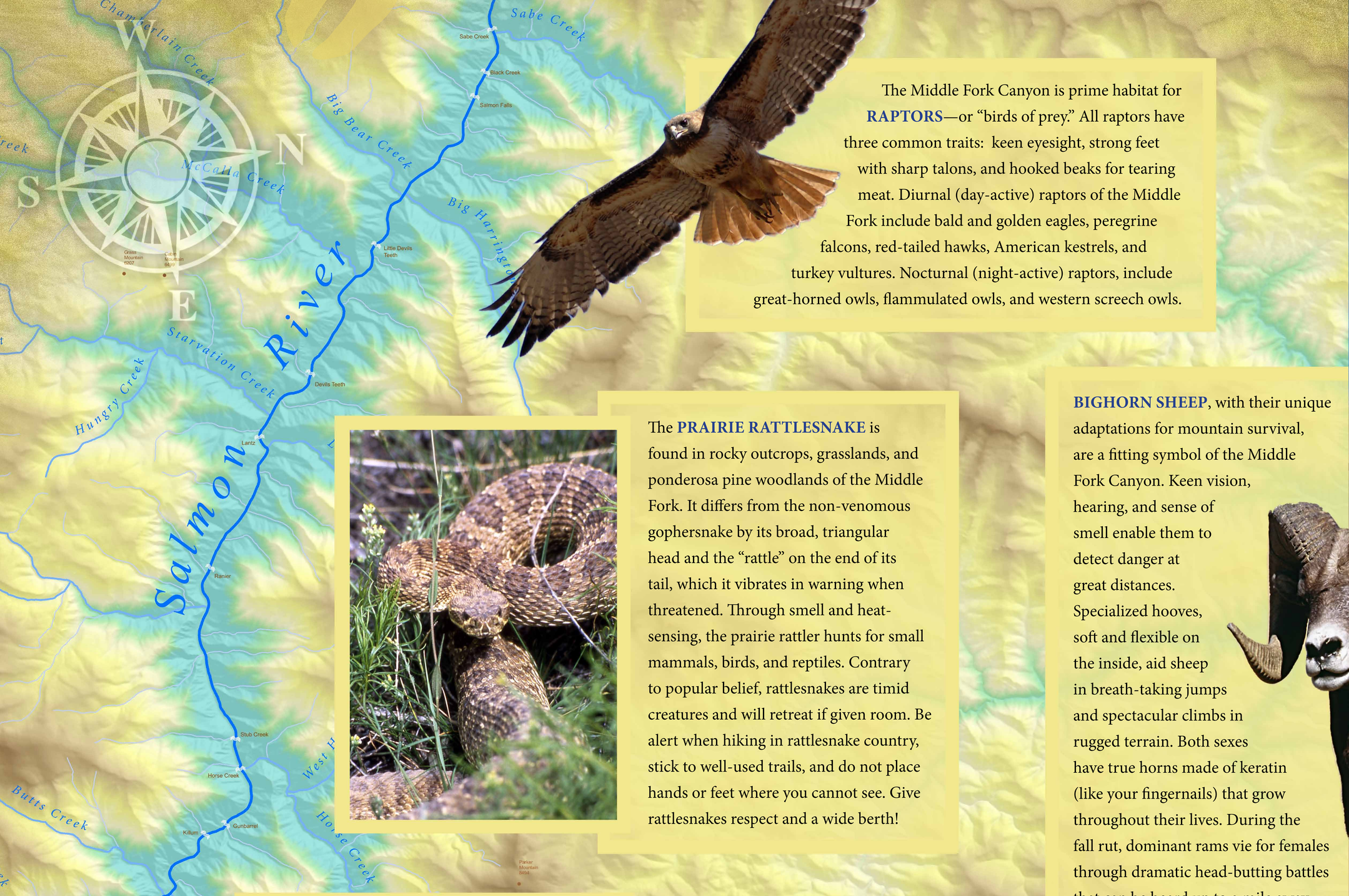
- Always consider black bears unpredictable and potentially dangerous
- Maintain a safe and respectful distance from bears and other wildlife
- Hike in groups and make noise to announce your presence
- Do not feed bears; they learn quickly to associate humans with food
- Maintain and leave clean camps:
  - Keep all foods, soaps, and other strong-scented items ≥100 yards from sleeping areas
  - Store food and garbage by hanging >12 feet above ground and >6 feet from tree trunk or in bear resistant containers.

The westslope **CUTTHROAT TROUT** is one of 14 subspecies of cutthroat trout found in western North America. They are readily identified by the brilliant red-orange "slash" marks under their jaw. Their eagerness to take a fly or lure makes them a prized sport for the angler. To conserve this unique fishery, the Middle Fork mainstem and its tributaries are designated as catch-and-release waters.

In early spring, year-old **CHINOOK SALMON** hatched in local streams begin an epic 800-mile journey to the ocean. Navigating a gauntlet of dams and predators, young salmon reach the food-rich waters of the Pacific Ocean where they spend the next one to three years. Triggered by maturity, genetics, and day length, adult salmon begin their return migration. Through a mysterious process known as homing, they cue on a trail of familiar scents to their natal stream where they spawn and eventually die, completing a 1,600-mile journey to nurture the next generation.



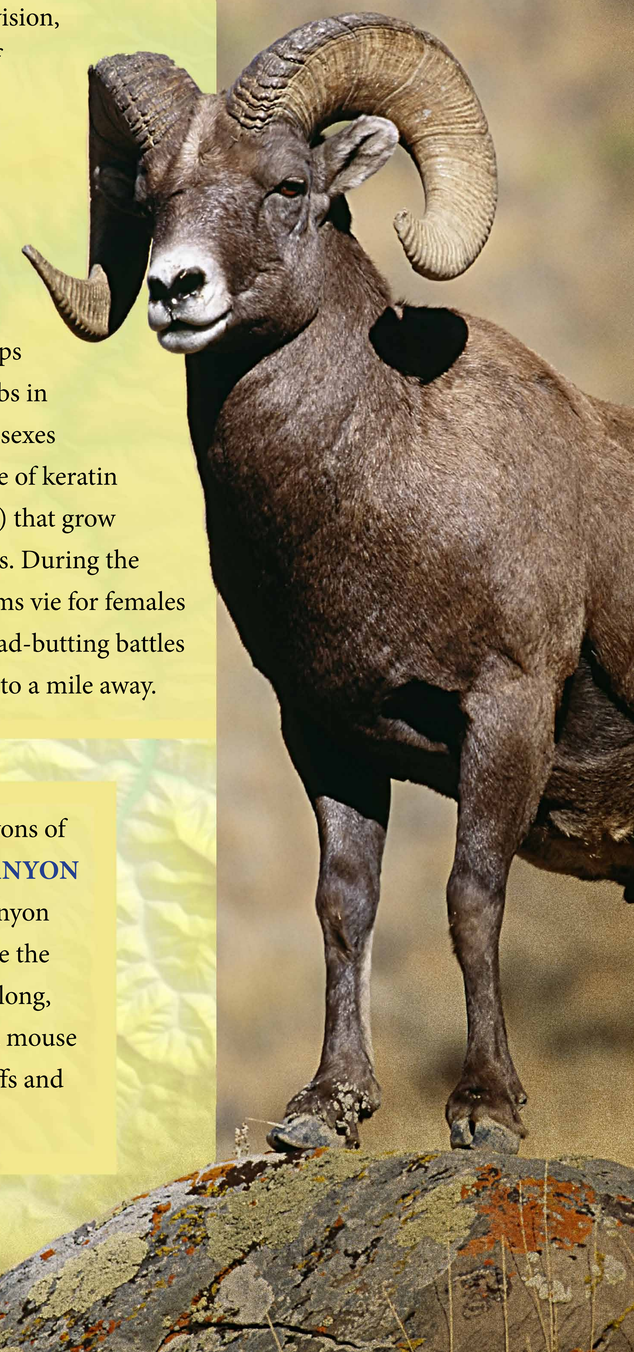
BATS are simply amazing creatures. They are the only mammal capable of true flight. Using vision and ultrasonic calls, bats can detect insect prey and obstacles as fine as a human hair in total darkness. Emerging at dusk from caves, rock crevices, or the loose bark of trees, bats can be seen hunting for insects over water and in forest openings.



The Middle Fork Canyon is prime habitat for **RAPTORS**—or "birds of prey." All raptors have three common traits: keen eyesight, strong feet with sharp talons, and hooked beaks for tearing meat. Diurnal (day-active) raptors of the Middle Fork include bald and golden eagles, peregrine falcons, red-tailed hawks, American kestrels, and turkey vultures. Nocturnal (night-active) raptors, include great-horned owls, flammulated owls, and western screech owls.

The **PRAIRIE RATTLESNAKE** is found in rocky outcrops, grasslands, and ponderosa pine woodlands of the Middle Fork. It differs from the non-venomous gophersnake by its broad, triangular head and the "rattle" on the end of its tail, which it vibrates in warning when threatened. Through smell and heat-sensing, the prairie rattler hunts for small mammals, birds, and reptiles. Contrary to popular belief, rattlesnakes are timid creatures and will retreat if given room. Be alert when hiking in rattlesnake country, stick to well-used trails, and do not place hands or feet where you cannot see. Give rattlesnakes respect and a wide berth!

BIGHORN SHEEP, with their unique adaptations for mountain survival, are a fitting symbol of the Middle Fork Canyon. Keen vision, hearing, and sense of smell enable them to detect danger at great distances. Specialized hooves, soft and flexible on the inside, aid sheep in breath-taking jumps and spectacular climbs in rugged terrain. Both sexes have true horns made of keratin (like your fingernails) that grow throughout their lives. During the fall rut, dominant rams vie for females through dramatic head-butting battles that can be heard up to a mile away.



The **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** is a peculiar member of its family. Its glossy green-black, silver-white, and salmon-red plumage was described as "a curious mix" by explorer and namesake Meriwether Lewis. The Lewis's woodpecker is a fly-catcher that nests in snags or old nest holes of its wood-boring cousins. Preferred habitat is cottonwood forest or recent burns where dead or decaying trees provide ideal nest cavities and foraging perches.

One bird's voice embodies the granite-walled canyons of the Middle Fork like no other—the song of the **CANYON WREN**. Naturalist Ralph Hoffman wrote, "The canyon wren pours out a cascade of sweet liquid notes, like the spray of a waterfall in sunshine." About six inches long, look for this shy songbird creeping like a mouse around rocky cliffs and boulder piles.