

WILDLIFE PROFILES



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Zebra and Quagga Mussels

Size: adults can be up to 2-inches long, larvae are microscopic

Eats: food particles it filters from the water

Lives In: Not yet found in Wyoming! Let's keep it that way!

Zebra mussels are exotic small freshwater mussels. They are native to the Black and Caspian Seas, but not to North America. Zebra and quagga mussels are an invasive species in North America, the British Isles, Spain, and Sweden. They can cause entire fisheries to be destroyed. Help us to keep these exotic mussels from coming to our state by draining water from our boats, cleaning all plants, animals and mud from boats and allowing boats to completely dry for 5 days before launching in a new water. Did you know the name quagga mussel comes from the name of an extinct animal related to zebras? Zebra and quagga mussels are filter feeders, meaning they feed by filtering suspended matter and food particles from water.

Beaver

Size: 3 to 4 feet long and weighs 44 to 60 pounds

Eats: bark and small twigs, particularly aspens and willows

Lives In: streams and lakes with trees on the banks

Did you know the beaver is a rodent? It has two large, dark orange incisors, which are its front teeth. Like all other rodents, these teeth never stop growing. Can you imagine having teeth that always grew? Beavers keep their teeth worn down by gnawing on things like twigs and branches. Beaver are very important for the riparian habitat area because their dams hold water that helps vegetation grow. Their dams also help trap dirt that has eroded from stream banks and is traveling through the water. Spring time is when beavers are out fixing their dams after a long winter of snow and ice!

White sucker

Size: Adult fish rarely weigh over two pounds, typically 16 inches or smaller

Eats: insects and small crustaceans

Lives In: prefers clear water in lakes and streams across Wyoming

The white sucker is a bottom-feeding fish that has a unique adaptation. Adaptations are features of an animal that allow it to survive in its habitat. Because white suckers live on the bottom of a lake or stream they have adapted to that habitat and use their sucker-like mouth to vacuum plants, animals, and other organic material from the sandy bottom of their environment. In Lake Hattie Reservoir people have observed the adult fish feeding off the surface of the lake. Although the white sucker lives in streams it avoids rapid current. The white sucker is an important forage fish. This means other fish eat them for food.

Cutthroat trout

Size: average 12 to 14 inches, but may grow bigger!

Eats: insects, small fish, crustaceans, earthworms, and even frogs

Lives In: clear, cool streams, lakes and rivers all across Wyoming

Did you know the cutthroat trout is the only trout that are native to Wyoming? There are four kinds of cutthroat in the Wyoming Game and Fish Department: the Yellowstone, the Bear River or Bonneville, the Colorado River and the Snake River cutthroat trout. The cutthroat gets its name from the red slash marks on each side of its jaws or throats. It looks like the throat has been cut. Biologists are working hard to keep the cutthroat trout populations in Wyoming healthy by creating better habitat in streams and rivers. Since they are native, they are very important to our state.