

Deer Ears

Species focus: Mule Deer & Mountain Lion/Wolf/Grizzly Bear

Intro: Mule deer have very large ears- up to 9 inches long- and incredible hearing. They use these ears to detect danger, like a predator approaching. Mountain Lions, Wolves, and Grizzly Bears are all predators to the mule deer in Wyoming.

Activity: Find a safe open area and pick one person to be the mule deer. He/she should put a blindfold over their eyes, but not their ears, and place a toy such as a ball or stuffed animal within their reach on the ground. Everyone else is a predator, which could be a mountain lion, a grizzly bear, or a wolf. The predators can take turns sneaking towards the deer (slowly). It is very important that the other predators stay silent for it to be fair to the deer. If the deer hears the predator, they can point at the predator and yell "freeze!" If the predator can grab the toy from near the deer without being sensed, that's a sign that they were a very sneaky predator! They can become the new deer. Once everyone playing has taken a turn being the deer, try switching to another area that has a different type of material on the ground (for example, if you started out in grass, try switching to some leaves and sticks).

Follow up questions:

Think about which area was easier for the deer to hear predators in.

- If you were a deer, where would you like to live? Why?
- If you were a predator, where would you like the deer to be? Why?