



# WILDLIFE TOUR II

Wyoming with its sparse population and vast areas of public lands provides habitat to many species of wildlife. This tour can take as much time as you will allow. A minimum of three days allows you only short periods of time at each location.

On any of these drives, please remember the wildlife are for watching and do not approach them.



## (1) TONGUE RIVER CANYON

Amsden Creek Wildlife Habitat Management Area

This wildlife habitat area has two campgrounds and access for hiking, camping, hunting and fishing.

The canyon is a great location for a picnic, to watch for the animals which inhabit the area, or to hike up the trail along Tongue River. Fishing here, for trout, is excellent. The steep walls of this canyon are favorites of local climbers.

Nearly 300 elk migrate to the Amsden Creek Habitat Area which is also home to mule deer. This habitat area is located in the foothills of the Big Horns north of the canyon. An access book on Wyoming Habitat Areas is available from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department located in Sheridan.



## The Big Horn Mountains

The Bighorn National Forest is an isolated range which uplifted some 60 million years ago. "Virtually every era of geologic time can be viewed in exposed rock strata as travelers venture from foothills to high alpine peaks." Elevations range from 5,500 feet at the lower boundaries to 13,175 at the summit of Cloud Peak. The Forest encompasses more than a million acres of diverse landscapes and extends 30 miles across and 80 miles in length.

Large open meadows provide the opportunity to view native flora and fauna. More than three hundred species of wildlife inhabit the region, including mule deer and moose. Late June and early July are spectacular for viewing wildflowers. Goshawks and gray jays inhabit the timber year-round. Other birds in the area include red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, and great horned owls.

## **(2) DAYTON**

If you decide an afternoon drive on a highway is to your liking take U. S. Highway 14 to the Big Horns. As you travel up the mountain, several turnouts are available for viewing the breathtaking landscapes below. Once in the forest, be especially watchful at open meadows, for deer, moose and other wildlife. Stop at the Forest Service Visitor Center near Burgess Junction. See beautiful Shell Canyon and Shell Falls. This highway provides year-round access.

## **(3) BIG HORN TO DAYTON**

This tour of the Big Horn mountains can be taken in the summer and fall but not recommended for use by cars. Once the snow flies this route, which has miles of primitive dirt roads, is closed and access is limited to snowmobiles. A four-wheel drive or a vehicle with high clearance is recommended. Start at Big Horn just 16 miles south of Sheridan and follow the Red Grade Road up the mountain to the pavement. Near Park Reservoir watch for moose grazing in the fast moving waters of Rapid Creek. Follow U. S. 14 down the mountain on the north to I-90 and then on to Sheridan. Maps, to provide you with additional options on this route, are available from the Big Horn National Forest Service. This tour is a full day and can be extended in to several if camping is your mode of overnight sleeping arrangements.



## **(4) PARKMAN - KERNS WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT AREA**

This area is located 12 miles northwest of Parkman in the Big Horns. Take Pass Creek Road, County Road 144, to the west and watch for the signs for the Kerns Wildlife Habitat Management Area. This area provides crucial winter range for approximately 800 elk. It consists of foothills and deep canyons and also provides habitat for wild turkeys, grouse, small mammals, black bear, and mountain lions.

The Little Bighorn River is located in this management area. Rainbow trout, brown trout and whitefish are the catch of the day in this river. Cutthroat and brook trout can be fished in the nearby creeks. Hiking opportunities are extensive but vehicular



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access is limited and not recommended for cars. Be advised Wyoming hunting and fishing licenses are not valid on the Crow Indian Reservation or in Montana.

#### Medicine Wheel

Travel the Medicine Wheel Passage (US 14A) to the Medicine Wheel. It traverses high mountain country with immense scenic vistas. Part of this roadway is closed to the traveling public November through May.

Perched at 9,000 feet and located in the Big Horn Mountains, is the Medicine Wheel. A mysterious remnant of a culture long gone. The wheel is made of stones placed in a circle with spokes leading to a central cairn. Evidence leads scientists to believe the area was used by prehistoric people some 75,000 years ago. Today, it is revered as a powerful spiritual site by Native Americans. Parking is approximately a half-mile from the Wheel. During the summer months the Forest Service provides transportation to those unable to make the steep walk to the wheel. Watch for wildlife on your drive and while you trek to the Medicine Wheel.

#### **(5) CLEARMONT**

West of Sheridan (US 14) there vast riparian areas which provide diverse habitat for a great variety of birds. Ospreys, great blue herons, yellow warblers and red-winged blackbirds nest in large stands of trees and bushes which follow the creeks west of town. Bald eagles train their young near Clearmont in the winter months. Watch for deer and small mammals who inhabit the hay fields adjacent to the roadways.

