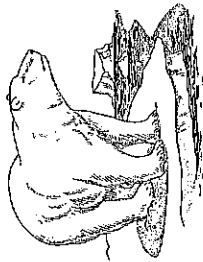


Name _____

Wildlife of North America



Polar Bear

The polar bear is the world's largest land carnivore, or meat eater.

Habitat

- polar ice cap in the Arctic Circle

Characteristics

- male weighs up to 1,600 lbs (720 kg)
- black skin under white fur absorbs sunlight
- layer of fat keeps the bear warm

Diet

- mostly seals, which the bear sneaks up on by waiting near holes in the ice

Behavior

- hunts and lives alone
- excellent swimmer

Life Cycle

- mates in spring
- mother gives birth to two cubs in snow or ice dens in winter
- cubs live with the mother for several years
- lives 25 to 30 years in the wild

Status

- threatened due to global warming

Name _____

Wildlife of North America



Humpback Whale

The humpback whale is a baleen whale, meaning it filters food from the water.

Habitat

- migrates up to 31,000 miles (50,000 km) from the arctic regions in summer to warmer waters in winter

Characteristics

- up to 52 feet (16 m) in length
- black on top with white underbelly
- long, narrow flippers

Diet

- krill, which are small shrimp-like animals

Behavior

- travel in groups
- can jump completely out of the water

Life Cycle

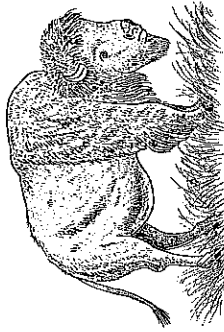
- breeds in warm waters in winter
- mother gives birth to a single calf, which stays with its mother for a year
- lives for about 50 years in the wild

Status

- once endangered from overhunting; still considered a threatened species

Name _____

Wildlife of North America



Bison

Although bison are often confused with buffalo, they are actually more closely related to cattle.

Habitat

- the Great Plains region of North America in both the U.S. and Canada

Characteristics

- shaggy, dark-brown fur; large heads; and short, curved horns
- adult male weighs up to 2,000 lbs (900 kg)

Diet

- mostly grass and herbs

Behavior

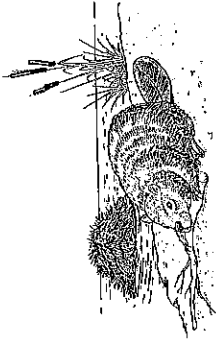
- live in small bands that often come together to form large herds
- migrate a few hundred miles south in winter

Life Cycle

- mate in August; males engage in fierce head-butting contests to win their mates
- females usually give birth to a single calf in May

Status

- once near extinction, there are over 450,000 bison today



Beaver

Beavers are the largest rodent in North America.

Habitat

- live in lodges they construct from tree branches in marshes, lakes, ponds, and small rivers

Characteristics

- large, strong teeth for gnawing through tree trunks and powerful, paddle-shaped tails for swimming
- thick waterproof fur

Diet

- the soft layer beneath the bark of trees, as well as leaves, twigs, and buds

Behavior

- build dams and lodges
- live in family groups inside the lodge

Life Cycle

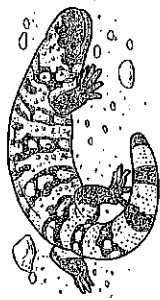
- mate once a year and produce a litter of about four kits
- kits stay in the lodge for two years
- live about 20 years in the wild

Status

- people hunted beavers for their pelts and the species was almost extinct by 1900; has since recovered

Name _____

Wildlife of North America



GILA MONSTER

The Gila monster is the only venomous lizard that is native to the United States.

Habitat

- lives in the Mojave, Sonoran, and Chihuahuan deserts in the United States and Mexico

Characteristics

- can reach up to 2 feet (60 cm) in length
- black with pink and yellow markings and black bands around its thick tail

Diet

- uses its venom to kill rats, mice, and other small mammals, as well as birds and lizards

Behavior

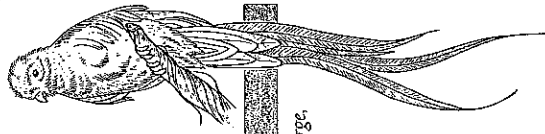
- lives in burrows it digs in the sand
- can go for months without food

Life Cycle

- female lays 3 to 15 eggs in a hole she digs in the sand
- baby Gilas are about 4 inches (10 cm) long
- lives for about 20 years

Status

- threatened by loss of habitat due to humans
- protected in the states of Nevada and Arizona



QUETZAL

The name "quetzal" means "large, brilliant tail feather."

Habitat

- tropical rainforests of Central America

Characteristics

- brightly colored feathers in shades of green, red, and white
- male has tail feathers that are up to 3 feet (1 m) long

Diet

- fruit, worms, frogs, and insects

Behavior

- poor flyer
- avoids predators such as gray squirrels, hawks, and owls by blending in with its environment

Life Cycle

- makes nests in rotted tree stumps
- female lays two or three light-blue eggs
- both parents care for the hatchlings that fly at about three weeks old

Status

- endangered due to habitat loss and hunting of their unique feathers
- do not survive in captivity