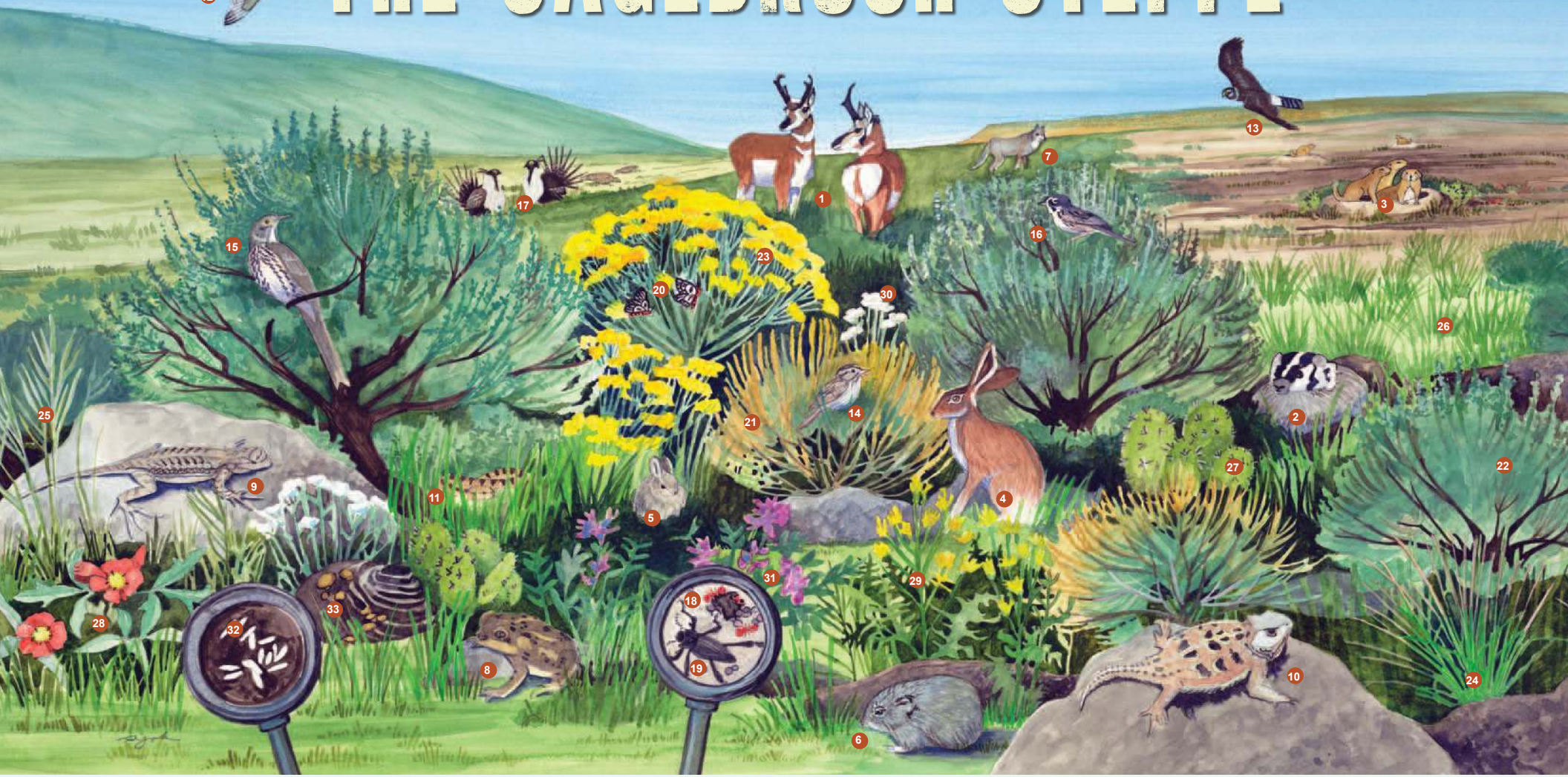




# THE SAGEBRUSH STEPPE



## MAMMALS

1. Pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*)
2. Badger (*Taxidea taxus*)
3. White-tailed Prairie Dog (*Cynomys leucurus*)
4. White-tailed Jackrabbit (*Lepus townsendii*)
5. Pygmy Rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*)
6. Sagebrush vole (*Lemmiscus curtatus*)
7. Coyote (*Canis latrans*)

## REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

8. Great Basin Spadefoot Toad (*Spea intermontana*)
9. Sagebrush Lizard (*Sceloporus graciosus*)
10. Short Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma hernandesi*)
11. Prairie Rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*)

## BIRDS

12. Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*)
13. Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)
14. Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*)
15. Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*)
16. Sage Sparrow (*Amphispiza belli*)
17. Greater Sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*)

## INSECTS

18. Harvester Ant (*Pogonomyrmex sp.*)
19. Darkling Beetle (*Eleodes hispilabris*)
20. Hera Moth (*Hemileuca hera*)

## OTHER

32. Bacteria
33. Fungus

## PLANTS

21. Wyoming Big Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* var. *wyomingensis*)
22. Mountain Big Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* var. *varvaseyana*)
23. Rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*)
24. Western Wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*)
25. Needle and Thread Grass (*Hesperostipa comata*)
26. Bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*)

27. Plains Pricklypear (*Opuntia polyacantha*)
28. Scarlet Globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*)
29. Tapertip Hawksbeard (*Crepis acuminata*)
30. Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* var. *lanulosa*)
31. Purple Milkvetch (*Astragalus spp.*)

# SPOTLIGHT ON THE SAGE BRUSH STEPPE ECOSYSTEM

A TYPE OF GRASSLAND THAT DOESN'T HAVE TREES, IS HOT AND DRY IN THE SUMMER, IS COLD AND WINDY IN THE WINTER, HAS A HIGH ELEVATION, AND IS MOSTLY FLAT. DOES THAT SOUND LIKE PLACES YOU KNOW IN WYOMING? ALMOST HALF OF THE STATE OF WYOMING IS CONSIDERED A SAGEBRUSH STEPPE ECOSYSTEM.

## CAN YOU FIND

A **FOOD CHAIN**?

For example : Badger > Prairie Dog > Western Wheatgrass

A **PLANT THAT HAS SPINES** INSTEAD OF LEAVES?

AN **ANIMAL THAT SHAKES THE TIP** OF ITS TAIL AS A WARNING?

## VOCABULARY

HABITAT  
ECOSYSTEM  
SPECIES  
FOOD CHAIN

All living things need a **HABITAT** or a place where they can find shelter, food, water, and have space to move, live, and reproduce. Your shelter might be a house, a mobile home, or an apartment. You go to the grocery store to get food and your water comes out of a faucet.

## SO HOW DO PLANTS AND ANIMALS LIVE IN THIS ECOSYSTEM?

Plants that live there, like sagebrush, use the plentiful sunlight to make its food. Many plants will store water when it is available so that they can survive times when it is dry. Animals, like the pronghorn and the sage-grouse, depend on sagebrush for food, shelter, and even water that is stored in the plant.

To humans, the Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem can look empty, without any life at all. When you take a closer look at these large open areas covered with sagebrush, grasses and other plants, you can see that there are actually quite a lot of animals who call the Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem their home or habitat.

In fact, 400 types or **SPECIES** of plants provide habitat, food, and even water for over 250 species of animals.

### THE GREATER SAGE GROUSE



**SCIENTIFIC NAME :**  
*Centrocercus urophasianus*

**HABITAT :**  
Foothills, plains and mountain slopes where sagebrush is present.

**DIET :**  
Feeds on vegetation, especially sagebrush in the winter; forbs (flowering plants); and insects.

**NATURAL HISTORY :**  
Males display for females on dancing grounds known as leks. The females visit the leks to find a mate then nest at the base of a nearby sagebrush plant. Females lay between 7-13 eggs, which are brown with dark spots. Eggs hatch after 27 days and the chicks are able to fly for short distances after approximately one week.

**COOL FACT :**  
The booming sounds that males make with the air sacs on their chest can be heard a mile away!

### THE PRONGHORN



**SCIENTIFIC NAME :**  
*Antilocapra americana*

**HABITAT :**  
Shrublands, great plains and sagebrush-grasslands.

**DIET :**  
Feeds on shrubby plants, especially sagebrush; forbs in the spring and summer; some grasses.

**NATURAL HISTORY :**  
Also known as antelope, they are distantly related to goats and bison. Females can give birth to twins. Because they live in open country, pronghorn have excellent eye sight allowing them to see and then escape danger from a long distance.

**COOL FACT :**  
Although the cheetah is often called the fastest land mammal, the pronghorn can sprint as fast as 60 mph and can sustain a speed of 30 mph for miles!

### THE SHORT HORNED LIZARD



**SCIENTIFIC NAME :**  
*Phrynosoma hernandesi*

**HABITAT :**  
Grasslands, sagebrush-grasslands.

**DIET :**  
Feeds on ants, beetles, grasshoppers and other insects.

**NATURAL HISTORY :**  
Although they are sometimes called "horny toads", these lizards are not amphibians like frogs, but reptiles. Named the state reptile of Wyoming in 1993, the "horns" found on this lizard are actually modified scales. The females can give live birth to a large litter, with reports of up to 50 young. However, most studies list litter sizes of 5-30.

**COOL FACT :**  
In order to ward off predators, they can inflate their bodies up to twice their size.