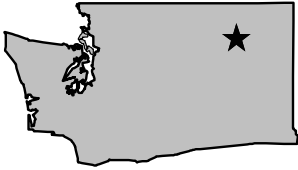


CHAPTER 5—COLVILLE NATIONAL FOREST

A Forested Foothill Biome



Colville National Forest comprises a large track of land in northeastern Washington State. Three mountain ranges, the Okanogan, Kettle, and Selkirk, run through the forest from north to south and are considered foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Many native tribes that prized the abundant fish and game, as well as the potato like root called “camas,” settled this region. Many native migration routes were directed toward Kettle Falls, attracting fisherman and traders from countless tribes in surrounding regions. Shortly after David Thompson became the first non-native person to visit the area in 1809, white settlers and fur trappers converged on the foothills eventually building Fort Colville near Kettle Falls. In 1930, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) took on the task of building roads, trails, and camps to allow access to the remote forest.



Woodland Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) A member of the deer family, both male and female of the species grow large antlers, though those of the female are shorter and have fewer points. The bulls use their antlers to defend their herds during breeding season before losing their racks during the first few weeks of winter. Caribou young are so well developed when they are born, that they are capable of standing after only 30 minutes and running after 90!



Coopers Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) Often referred to as the “chicken hawk,” this red-eyed bird get most of its food by catching other small to medium sized birds and bats, while in flight. This species lives in dense forests and commonly make their nests in the crook of large deciduous trees. After building their nest a mating pair will lay one egg every other day until 4 or 5 have been laid. The female sits upon the eggs, turning them periodically, while the male hunts and delivers the food almost constantly.



Pumpkinseed Sunfish (*Lepomis gibbosus*) Found in the shallows of both lakes and rivers, this small flat fish is usually found in great numbers. Shaped, as its name implies, like a pumpkin seed, its body can be blue, green, yellow or a number of shades of brown. Male Pumpkinseed Sunfish create the nesting sites for the female and then spend the next three days guarding them against predators until they are hatched. This fish eats snails, dragonfly nymph, and larval salamanders.



Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*) Trees of this variety can reach 200 feet tall and 1000 years of age. It was referred to as “the tree of life” by Native American tribes of the central U.S. and Canada. Tribes of the Pacific Coast used the tree to construct canoes, build lodges and carve totems. The pitch from this species was often chewed like gum and it remains, for some, the wood of choice when smoking salmon. Today, the Western Red Cedar is still prized in the making of shingles, siding and in boat building because of its natural resistance to rot.

Raptor Identification Activity: Invite an ornithologist that specializes in raptors into the classroom. Discuss which varieties of raptors are found in your area and collect information, including pictures, dietary preferences, and other distinguishing features on each. Assign groups of students to organize this information and then create short reports or simple web pages that share this information. Have larger groups use the reports to create a key for the identification of unknown raptors. Visit a local raptor rehabilitation center and test the key you have created.