



ROCKY MOUNTAIN BIGHORN SHEEP

Ovis canadensis canadensis



There are two subspecies of bighorn sheep, the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep, *Ovis Canadensis Canadensis*, and the desert bighorn sheep, *Ovis canadensis nelsoni*. Bighorn sheep have double-layered skulls. This extra thickness helps protect them when they crash horns during battle. Male bighorn sheep usually stay in separate bachelor groups and do not come in contact with females except during the breeding season. Although coyotes, wolves, and mountain lions frequently prey upon bighorn sheep, the sheep can often escape if it can find a cliff that it can jump to.



SPECIES QUICK FACTS

SIZE

The Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep averages between four to five feet in length and stands between three and a half and four feet in height at the shoulder.

WEIGHT

An adult Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep can range between 115 and 280 pounds.

FOOD HABITS

The Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep eats a variety of grasses and sedges.

HABITAT

The Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep is found throughout many dry mountain regions with alpine meadows and grassy slopes.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep is found throughout the Rocky Mountains from southern regions of Canada to Colorado.

FUN FACT

The Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep can gain a stable foothold on mountain ledges that are only two inches in width. They can jump from ledge to ledge for distances of close to 20 feet.