

## LITTLE WYOMING

# MIGRATING TO STAY WARM



Frigid temperatures, deep snow and merciless wind are hallmarks of our harsh Wyoming winters. Unlike humans, animals don't have indoor heaters, heavy jackets or hot cocoa to keep them warm! Many Wyoming animals avoid winter's harshest conditions by moving somewhere more habitable during the fall. This seasonal movement from one area to another is called a migration.



## SEASONAL ADAPTATIONS

Some animals, like deer and elk, can prepare for winter by growing thicker coats and fat reserves. These animals travel 30 to 150 miles to reach lower elevation areas where there is less snow to spend the winter months. Other animals, like many amphibians, survive winter by burying under the ground and dramatically slowing down their heart rate, metabolism and breathing. Once the ground thaws upon spring's arrival, these amphibians begin their migrations to their breeding ponds. These migrations may be as short as a few meters, or as long as a few miles!



## HEADING SOUTH

Some animals, like many birds and insects, survive Wyoming winters simply by not being present for them. These migrants undertake long treks to southern climates where the warmer weather means food and other resources are still abundant. After winter, these animals will return north to Wyoming where the arrival of spring weather means there's plenty of food sources to sustain them and their offspring.



## FAMILY VACATION

It might seem impossible that an insect with a wingspan of only three inches could travel 1,500 miles, but that's how far common green darners migrate each year. These dragonflies can cover 75 miles in one day, at speeds of almost 40 miles per hour! Because green darners only live for a few weeks, these migrations occur over multiple generations. That means the dragonflies that return north each spring are the grandchildren of the fall migrants.

