

**HOW TO USE:** When you are trying to identify wildlife, use this key by answering 'yes or no' questions. Once you've determined your wildlife, go to your wildlife ID booklet to see more cool facts!

**START HERE**

- If the specimen is a plant, start with: **PLANT TYPE**
- If the specimen is an animal, start with: **ANIMAL TYPE**

**Plant Type**

- If the plant is a tree, go to page: **2**
- If the plant is a shrub/vine, go to page: **2**

**Animal Type**

- If the animal is a mammal, go to page: **4 or 5**
- If the animal is a bird, go to page: **9 or 10**
- If the animal is a reptile, go to page: **7**
- If the animal is a fish, go to page: **6**
- If the animal is an amphibian, go to page: **8**

**Trees** { If the plant has needles, go to:  
**TREE WITH NEEDLES**  
If the plant has leaves go to:  
**PAGE 3**

**Shrubs** { If the plant has flowers, go to:  
**FLOWERED SHRUBS**  
If the plant has pointy leaves, may grow as  
a vine or a shrub, and grow in groups of  
three: **POISON IVY**

**Flowered Shrubs** { If the plant has pink and white flowers and has medium-sized shiny  
entire leaves: **MOUNTAIN LAUREL**  
If the plant has red flowers and long shiny entire leaves:  
**RHODODENDRON**

**Tree with needles** { If the needles are long and in bundles of 5: **WHITE PINE**  
If the needles are flat, like a sheet of paper: **FIR**  
If the needles are 'spiky': **SPRUCE**

Tree with  
leaves

If the leaves are fan-shaped and have many parallel lines from the stem to the end of the leaf: **GINKO**

If there are three different shaped leaves on the same plant: **SASSAFRASS**

If the leaves are broad and have 3-7 main points: **MAPLE**

If the leaves have multiple symmetrical points and if the tree has acorns: **OAK**

If the leaves are wide and look similar to maple leaves and the bark looks like a camoflauge pattern in gray and brown colors: **SYCAMORE**

If the leaves are clustered together to form a compound leaf with long serrated leaflets. The flowers are marroon-burgandy-pink in color and arranged in a cone shape: **STAGHORN SUMAC**

**Mammals that are not  
easy to see in the wild**

If the animal is a bear with a black coat with brown-tan fur along the snout: **BLACK BEAR**

If the animal looks a slightly bigger than a domestic cat with a shorter tail, coat is a mottled with gray, copper, and brown colors with white on the belly and dark spots typically around the legs but may be elsewhere on the body. Ears have black 'tufts' on the tips: **BOBCAT**

If the animal is around water, brown coat, large front teeth. Tail is large, black, and flat: **BEAVER**

If the animal is around water, light brown- gray coat, broad snout and flat head, small rounded ears, long thin tail, webbed fingers: **RIVER OTTER**

Mammals that are easy to see in the wild

If the animal has hooves, brown-gray fur with light colored belly. Tail is small and white underneath. Black nose. Males have antlers: **WHITE-TAILED DEER**

If the animal has a fluffy tail, gray or red coat, large front teeth, small in size: **SQUIRREL**

If the animal has a brownish-gray coat with long ears and a small white round fluffy tail: **RABBIT**

If the animal is small, has an overall coppery-brown coat with white and black stripes along back, and small tail: **CHIPMUNK**

If the animal has mottled tan-brown-grayish coat, large black nose and blunt snout, round ears, medium in size: **GROUNDHOG**

If the animal has an overall gray coat with a black 'mask' and black stripes on the tail: **RACCOON**

If the animal has an overall black coat with a white stripe along the back: **SKUNK**

If it is a trout that is green-gray in color, has a dark spots along back, pinkish-red stripe along sides, lighter in color in belly: **RAINBOW TROUT**

If it is a trout that is brown in color, lighter color along the belly, large dark spots along back that is outlined with a lighter color: **BROWN TROUT**

If it is a trout that is generally dark green in color, lighter color along the belly, and has squiggly spots on the back: **BROOK TROUT**

If the fish has a narrow greenish-brown body, large scales, and 2 fins on the back: **BASS**

If the fish is about 8 inches, olive-golden brown in color, and has blue-ish green specs scattered on the body, pointy dorsal fin: **PUMPKINSEED**

If the fish is tannish in color, has dark vertical bars, and has is metallicay-blue on the lower edge of gill: **BLUEGILL**

Reptiles: SNAKES

If the snake is commonly around water, large, nonvenomous, and has brown-gray coloration with reddish-brown or black stripes as well as dark blotches along back: **NORTHERN WATER SNAKE**

If the snake has 3 lighter colored lines along its back: **GARTER SNAKE**

If the snake is black in color with an orange 'ring' around its neck: **RINGED NECK SNAKE**

If the snake has a 'triangular' head, overall copper in color with dark brown and red stripes across the back with the stripes tapering in the middle, and has a vertical pupil like a cat's: **COPPERHEAD**

Reptiles: TURTLES

If the turtle is orange on the neck and legs and has a rough solid-color shell: **WOOD TURTLE**

If the turtle has a large head, pointed beak, and a rough shell: **SNAPPING TURTLE**

If the turtle has red lines behind the eyes and has a smooth shell: **RED EARED SLIDER**

- Amphibians:  
**FROGS**
- If the frog is gray in color with white spots under the eyes: **TREE FROG**
  - If the frog has 'warts' in dark spots on the back: **TOAD**
  - If the frog is small, tan, and has a dark 'X' shape on the back: **SPRING PEEPER**
  - If the frog has a blunt snout, a distinct longer middle toe, green in color, looks smooth and has no ridges on its back: **BULL FROG**

- Amphibians:  
**SALAMANDERS/NEWT**
- If the animal is red in color and has black spots: **RED SALAMANDER**
  - If the animal is black-brown in color with two distinct lines along the back: **TWO LINED SALAMANDER**
  - If the animal is red in color and has neon orange dots along its back: **SPOTTED NEWT**
  - If the animal is big and brown: **HELLBENDER**



Large Birds

If it is in or around water, has a long black neck and face with a white patch by the eyes, a white belly and is brown-tan in color on the back and wings: **CANADA GOOSE**

If it is around water, and the male has a shiny green head, yellow-orange bill, white ring around neck, brown breast, white belly and a black and gray back. Females are mottled brown and white with a purple patch of feathers around the neck: **MALLARD DUCK**

If it has a white head, neck, and tail feathers with a brown torso and wings and yellow beak and feet: **BALD EAGLE**

If it has a large dark colored body and a small red featherless head, and a wingspan about double its height: **TURKEY VULTURE**

If it has dark brown back and wings, a cream colored belly with brown flecks, and a rusty red colored tail: **RED TAILED HAWK**

Small  
Birds

If it is overall gray in color, neck has a large ring with a green sheen and a thin purple sheen ring underneath, and a white mark above the beak: **PIGEON**

If it has a small thin sharp black beak, bright red spot on the head, and is black and white in color: **WOODPECKER**

If it is overall peachy brown in color, has a gray beak, a blue ring around eyes and smooth feathers: **MOURNING DOVE**

If it is overall gray-black in color, yellow beak, and red belly: **ROBIN**

If it has a gray neck, chest, and belly that fades to white, black and white lines on wings and tail, and is blue with a blue 'mohawk': **BLUE JAY**

If it has black shiny feathers all over and a large black: **CROW**

If it has brown on head, back, and wings, white on the throat and mottled gray belly: **HOUSE SPARROW**

If it is gray all over and a medium-sized beak: **GRAY CATBIRD**

If it is red all over aside from black around beak, neck, wings, and tail tips and a red "mohawk": **CARDINAL**

If it is black all over with a bright red and yellow shoulder:  
**REDWINGED BLACK BIRD**