



Newsletter

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The North American Badger - By Liz Rocco

Badgers in Alta? You betcha! The North American Badger, *Taxidea taxus*, can be sighted roaming around many parts of Alta Ski Area. Even more commonly spotted are the holes that mark its dens. This burrowing mammal does not hibernate in winter but spends many of the colder months in an active state of torpor that can extend for up to 29 hours at a time. Badgers are generally nocturnal but can also be seen foraging during the day.

The Badger is a solitary mammal with a stocky, low-slung body, and short powerful legs. Their large claws are used for digging dens as well as pursuing prey. The fore claws can be up to 2 inches long, bodies between 23-29 inches in length, weight between 15 to 19 lbs., and males are slightly larger than the females. The distinctive white stripe on the Badger's face extends from the nose to the start of

the tail then all the way down the back. They have coarse hair with a mixed brown to tan appearance. Part of the Mustelidae family, the Badger is related to weasels, otters, ferrets, and wolverines.

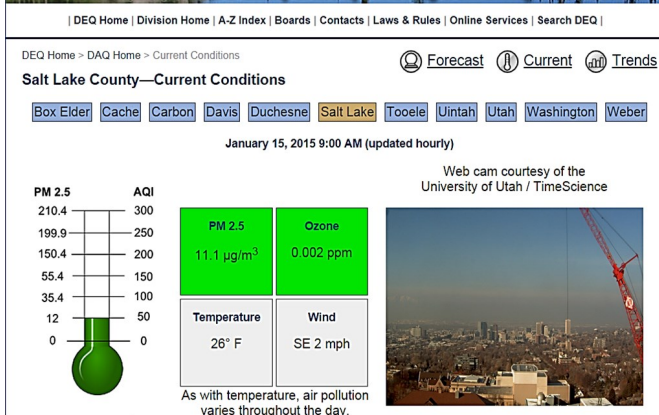
The Badger preys on small mammals including mice, squirrels, groundhogs, and even ground nesting birds, but will eat pretty much anything that crosses its path, from bees and honeycomb, insects, some plants, and sometimes trash! This solitary animal normally inhabits grassland territories, but has been seen living in meadows, forested glades, brushy areas, and mountain meadows up to 12,000 feet in elevation.

Their burrows are 4-10 feet deep by 4-6 feet wide, and can have connecting tunnels to 2-4 other burrows. Badgers are born blind, furred, helpless, and in litters of 1-5 young. Their average longevity is 9-10 years with a record of 14 in the wild, and just over 15 years in captivity. These aggressive mammals have few natural enemies; but have been documented to be preyed upon by coyotes, cougars, bobcats, bears, wolves, and eagles. Habitat for the badger extends Northern Mexico to South Central Canada. Keep your eyes peeled while skiing around this winter! You never know what you might catch a glimpse of!



Air Quality: Knowing What's Up - By Liz Rocco

Many Alta skiers out there receive powder alerts, but how about *Air Quality Alerts*? The Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has a great web page with tons of resources, information, and a place to sign up to receive *Air Quality Alerts*.



The air we breathe is vitally important to our survival and health. Yet activities that are also vital to our society are wreaking havoc on this precious resource, AIR. The Salt Lake Valley is surrounded by large mountain ranges, which geographically speaking, makes the valley especially suited for trapping air masses, and more so in colder months of the winter, that often leads to polluted air. Air is essential and a sensitive subject for Salt Lake Valley residents. Some say it is the one thorn to an otherwise perfect city of world class skiing, climbing, biking, nature, and an international airport. Unfortunately, this great area also has terrible winter inversions.

If you are in Alta, you can look down at the brownish mass that sits over the valley and tell it's not great to breathe. The air looks brown because of the particulates that are suspended in it, or particulate matter (PM) that is made up of a number of different compounds.



*Plans to protect air and water, wilderness and wildlife
are in fact plans to protect man.*

-Stewart Udall

Air Quality - continued

The primary human-caused sources of PM include blowing dust from construction sites, agricultural activities, combustion products from solid fuels (such as fly ash from power plants), carbon black (from automobiles and diesel engines), and soot (from fireplaces and wood stoves). One way in which the DEQ measures air quality is the amount of PM that is suspended in the air. In addition, the DEQ has developed a system to share these measurements with the entire Salt Lake Valley. An all in one resource for quality, danger ratings, and ways to help can be found on the DEQ's Air Quality site: www.airquality.utah.gov.

Explanation

The data displayed on this page represents the current air pollution levels and meteorological values, and is not quality assured. For quality assured data please visit <http://www.epa.gov/airdata/>.

Particulate matter (PM), also known as particle pollution, is a complex mixture of extremely small dust and soot particles. For more information visit [Air Pollutants: Particulate Matter](#).

Ozone (O₃) is formed when hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides chemically react in the presence of sunlight and heat. For more information visit [Air Pollutants: Ozone](#).

Action Forecast

Unrestricted Action



Voluntary Action



Mandatory Action



Health Forecast

Air Quality Index (AQI)	PM 2.5	Ozone
Good	0 - 12.0 µg/m ³	0 - 0.059 ppm
Moderate	12.1 - 35.4 µg/m ³	0.06 - 0.075 ppm
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	35.5 - 55.4 µg/m ³	0.076 - 0.095 ppm
Unhealthy	55.5 - 150.4 µg/m ³	0.096 - 0.115 ppm
Very Unhealthy	150.5 - 250.4 µg/m ³	0.116 - 0.374 ppm
Hazardous	Above 250.5 µg/m ³	Above 0.375 ppm

Based on a 24-hour average. Based on an 8-hour average.

So, if you have ever been wondering what the average person can do in response to air issues; where to go for information regarding conditions and travel; and what exactly red, yellow, green air days mean; this is the site for you. It has loads of resources, from charts and graphs depicting air quality trends throughout the day or week, health facts, and a sign up for [air quality email alerts](#). This site will explain in detail how they calculate and categorize red to green air days and also gives valuable tips and links to other resources. The number one thing that YOU can do is drive less. Cleanair.Utah.gov has a list of 50 ways in which every citizen can help, 10 of those are ways in which we can all drive less. Every one of us can take part in the idle-free campaign, carpool, or take public transit up to the mountain to ski. If every one of us does our part to help, we can make a change in the air quality of our valley!

January - Febuary Sustainability Events

Now that the Holidays have come and gone, it's time to focus on 2015 goals and resolutions. Here are a few ideas, also listed in the [AEC Google Calendar](#) - your one stop shopping for sustainability events and activities making for a happy, healthy, sustainable life in 2015!

- **Month of January - Christmas Tree Recycling** - For more info visit these resources: recycleutah.org or wasatchfrontwaste.org or slco.org/recycle.
- **January 20 - SLC Green Drinks** - 6pm: Celebrate the 8th Anniversary with music, mingling, and networking. A fun evening event in downtown Salt Lake.
- **January 24 - Snowshoe with a Naturalist Tour** - 10am: Join Cottonwood Canyons Foundation at Alta Ski Area on the snow and learn all about the natural history of Alta! Go to altaence.com for more info.
- **January 31 - Guided Snowshoe Tours** - 10am: For all ages snowshoe with the [Swaner Preserve and EcoCenter](#) for some fun natural history. Must RSVP.
- **February 10 & 11 - Mountain Accord Open House and Public Forum**: It's not too late to voice your input on this monumental project! Mountainaccord.com
- **\$1 Winter Wednesdays** - Come check out all [Tracy Aviary](#) has to offer, for only \$1, every Wednesday throughout the winter.
- **February 12 - Yoga Class** - 5:45pm: Enjoy the ACE monthly sponsored yoga class at Our Lady of the Snows in Alta with instructor Stacy Peterson. More info at: altaarts.org.
- **Weekends throughout the season - Tour with a ranger**: 1:30pm base of Cecret Lift, join Cottonwood Canyons Foundation Naturalists for an hour of geology, winter ecology, natural history and much more while out skiing. For more info visit cottonwoodcanyons.org

