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# ANIMAL TOTEMS

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## Interpretation Guide



### DECK 1

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Thank you for purchasing my Animal Totems starter deck. As a long-time animal communicator, I've found that much insight may be gained by looking at the symbols that present to us in both waking moments and in dreams.

This deck was crafted from my original artwork. If you see an animal totem you love, you will find the full-sized art on my website. Sometimes the original art is still available; but in nearly all cases prints in many styles (acrylic, wood, canvas, traditional print and print merchandise) and sizes are available.

This deck is the first issue of animal totems. I will be releasing future add-on decks. If you'd like to be notified of future releases, sign up for the art newsletter on my website, [MedicineHorseWoman.com](http://MedicineHorseWoman.com)

Sincerely,

Mary Clouse

## BAT

Bats use sonar to navigate the world, in essence flying by feeling, rather than sight. They emit a tiny sound, allowing the vibration to guide their every movement. They are extremely nimble fliers.

Bats do not see well during they day; the bright light overwhelms them visually.

These mammals are found in most every part of the world. They rest by hanging upside down with their wings folded around their bodies.

- Use your feelings to guide you
- Do not be overwhelmed by what you see or by appearances; trust your inner guide
- Sleep when you must and in a position that allows proper blood flow to your intuitive self (the crown chakra)

## BEAR

Large and powerful, bears spend a good deal of time foraging and hunting food and an even greater amount of time resting.

Bears possess thick hides and protective fat. Mother bears are known for being especially protective of their young.

The bear has a keen sense of smell and is not deterred by doors, lids and other obstacles when he senses a tasty morsel.

Many types of bears spend much of their winter months sleeping to reduce their energy consumption.

- Are you properly protecting yourself?
- Are you getting sufficient rest?
- You are able to overcome obstacles to your goal if you put your mind to it

## BEAVER

Masters of underwater architecture, the beaver is able to use the materials around him to construct his home. Using his powerful and prominent front teeth, this rodent can remove a human's finger with a single sharp bite.

Beavers spend their lives in two realms; water, the feminine energy; and land, the masculine realm.

The beaver's body is covered with a luxurious coat but the powerful tail is a broad flat paddle covered with scales. He uses this to propel himself and easily maneuver sizable logs and branches when constructing his home.

- Do you need to focus on the home front?
- Are you too busy?
- Have you bitten off more than you can chew?
- Reflect on the number two and duality in your life

## BEE

The tiny bee is a primary contributor to agriculture and the world's foliage. Considered to be among the most important pollinators in the world, the humble bee spends its life in service to its hive, collecting pollen that will become honey, honeycombs and royal jelly for its community.

While nearly all varieties of bees are able to sting, honeybees will quickly die after they have expended their single defense.

Bees are known for using their wings within the hive to maintain proper temperature for the health of the colony as well as to incubate the eggs laid by the queen.

- Are you working too hard?
- Community is imperative to your well-being; spend time with those you love
- Stinging words can oftentimes do more harm to those who uttered them

## **BUFFALO (Bison)**

The bison is the largest land animal in North America. They are herd animals who use their thick, shaggy heads to protect them from the harsh plains winter, shedding them in the warmer months. Both males and females possess a single set of horns.

Bison use grunts to communicate with each other, have an excellent sense of smell but do not see well. They rely on their size and group to maintain safety.

Surprisingly, bison are adept swimmers, able to safely navigate large water crossings.

Despite their large size, bison are herbivores. They graze over large swaths of land to find adequate food.

- Wisdom is found between the head and heart (hump)
- Do not fear moving to new environments to find what you need
- Protect yourself appropriately

## **BLUEBIRD**

The bluebird is a cavity nester, meaning it finds small, protective spaces such as nesting boxes and lines them with grass and twigs for eggs.

Bluebirds are migratory members of the thrush family and can frequently be seen on telephone wires, posts and low branches. They feed by dropping to the ground to catch insects or by gobbling up berries from fruit trees.

Bluebirds are a common symbol for happiness, even garnering a line in the song, "Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah."

- Are you allowing yourself to feel happiness?
- Happiness can be found in small things and in hidden places of the heart
- Going for what you want is a path to happiness

## BLUEJAY

Blue jays are year-round residents in many parts of North America. The eastern variety is known for being the noisiest of all jay bird. Blue jays are not afraid to stand their ground with considerably larger opponents.

The blue crown of the eastern variety is a symbol of higher thinking. The blue, white and black stripes relate to three realms of the blue jay, earth, water and sky.

- Are you making too much noise rather than quietly making your point?
- Are your actions demeaning to those around you on any level?
- Are you using your highest thoughts and intuitions for the best outcome?

## BUTTERFLY

A classic symbol of transformation, the butterfly begins its journey as a tiny larva, progressing to a caterpillar. After gorging on plants for months, the crawling insect finds a plant to suspend itself and begin the arduous process of weaving a cocoon. Hidden inside of the casing a miracle is underway as wings, legs and eyes begin to develop. When the transformation is complete, the butterfly emerges.

Butterflies are also symbols of resurrection and a time of rebirth.

Butterflies are critical to plant life because they carry pollens from plant to plant in their search for nectar, thus fertilizing the foliage and flowers they visit.

- Is there a transformation occurring within?
- Do you need to hide or protect yourself in order to find your truest self?
- Trust in your ability to transform, emerge and soar

## CARDINAL

The word “cardinal” has two different meanings: the bright red bird and a position of considerable influence within the Catholic Church. It is wise to consider both when this card is drawn.

The vivid color of the bird brings to mind the color of blood; life force energy that flows within us. Red is also considered an attention seeking/bringing hue. The pronounced crest is a symbol of higher thought and connection with the divine. This ties into the second meaning, that of a spiritually elevated individual.

- Are you taking proper protections to ensure your vitality?
- Are you “seeing red” over something in your life?
- Are you seeking too much attention or parading your elevated spirituality for show?

## CAT

Cats are incredibly flexible and agile on their feet; it takes a considerable amount to knock them off their balance. It is this extraordinary ability to recover from near-disastrous falls that gives the appearance of them having “nine lives.” They also possess lightning-fast reflexes which they use to great effect when hunting or defending themselves.

Felines are known to be highly opinionated, some quite vocally.

- Are you being flexible in the situation at hand?
- Are you being “catty” with those around you?
- Are you expressing yourself appropriately or has “the cat got your tongue?”
- Circumstances will benefit from your mental agility

## CHICKADEE

The tiny chickadee is a songbird whose cheery call is its name. This member of the titmouse birds is a social creature and prefers to travel in groups; where one is found, there are typically several more chatting back and forth.

The black cap over the head is a sign of higher thought processes.

- Are you speaking to your support flock?
- Are you being supported by those closest to you?
- Your companions are important to keeping spirits high

## CHICKEN

While technically a bird, chickens do not fly long distances. They are however, able to flap up and down to rafters and high places to roost, explore and find protection.

The diet of a chicken is omnivorous; they eat bugs, seeds and plants. Their gizzard allows the chicken to eat a wide variety of foods and even safely process the tiny bits of stone they consume when pecking about in the dirt for bugs.

Chickens forage and scratch for their food, using their talons to expose the tasty morsels that lay hidden from view.

Chickens are prized for the ability to provide on-going sustenance with their egg production.

- Are you flapping about noisily rather than quietly roosting?
- Use your instincts to uncover the hidden gems
- Are you avoiding something you fear, being “chicken?”
- Do not be distracted by debating which is first (chicken or egg); focus on what matters

## COW

Considered a sacred animal in some parts of the world, the cow has a complex digestive system that allows females the ability to produce large quantities of milk for a wide variety of foods.

The cow spends nearly all of its time grazing or resting. As adults, cows tend to move in a leisurely fashion unless they feel threatened, at which point they can move remarkably fast.

Happiest in herds, cows are able to withstand the climate in nearly all parts of the world; with different breeds adopting the coat required to endure Mother Nature.

- Do you need to move more?
- Are you spending too much time “chewing” things over?
- Are you nourishing the things that matter most?
- Allow time to digest information in order to gain clarity on a situation

## COYOTE

The call a coyote pack coordinating a hunt can send shivers up the spine. They use their voices to direct each other’s movements as well as to disorient and frighten the quarry. But coyotes also use their voices when calling to their mates. It allows them to find each other when traveling distances to find food, water and suitable shelter for pups.

Coyotes are also known for being clever often outsmarting would-be hunters by neatly side-stepping traps and still snagging the bait.

- Are you using your cunning for the right purpose?
- Are you clearly communicating to those in your inner circle?
- Allow yourself to accept the help of others in your pack on important matters



## CRANES

There is a wide variety of cranes throughout the world, but nearly all cranes have long legs, throats and bills. These attributes allow them stand above the water and target what lies beneath with precision accuracy and the requisite hunting tool, a long beak.

All cranes represent the three realms; earth, air and land. The long legs allow them to walk on the shore and give them a “birds-eye” view of what lies below

Different subspecies of cranes are known for their distinctive call.

- Are you maintaining the proper distance to assess the situation?
- Are you finding something difficult to swallow?
- Are you letting your unique voice resound to the flock?
- Are you standing tall?

## CROW

The clever crow shrouds itself in all-black plumage; the color of night and magic. Scarecrows are rarely a match for this bird.

Crows fly in groups called murders. They will call out to all in the forest when something unusual is spotted. Shiny objects, unique pebbles, bits of twine; all of these the crow will collect for pleasure. Crow uses his wits to bestow his treasures on others.

- Your magic is already there; it requires nothing more
- Bestow your treasures only upon the worthy
- There is strength in numbers, but large numbers may be “murderous”
- Use your voice to share your knowledge

## DEER

The fleet-footed deer is able to run and jump quickly. It is this ability to flee with speed that is its primary defense. Deer are also known to be quiet animals, unless in rut. Many humans are surprised to encounter a deer up-close in the woods because they heard no sounds before the sighting. They are also well camouflaged to their surroundings, sporting the same colors as the trees around them

The pupils of the deer dilate significantly in the night, allowing them to see over tricky footing. When sudden light hits them (headlights), they are temporarily blinded by the light and will freeze in place until their pupils adjust.

Bucks (male deer) will begin to grow antlers, which are defense tools, as they mature. Interestingly, these are shed and regrown throughout life.

- Are you being blind-sided by someone?
- Examine your fears; are they really worth fleeing?
- Do you need to shed your defenses and face your fears?

## DOG

Commonly considered humans' best friend, the canines which know as dogs today have evolved alongside of humans for millennium. The relationship proved mutually beneficial for both, shelter in exchange for protection and food in exchange for hunting. As a result, the dog is considered a symbol of loyalty and devotion; his futured is intertwined with that of his owner.

- Are you surrounding yourself with those who are truly loyal?
- Are you the giver or taker in this relationship?
- Are you overly devoted to work and working "like a dog?" without recompense?

## DOLPHIN

Among the most sociable of water mammals, dolphins swim in groups called pods. They play games with one another, hunt collaboratively and actively seek engagement with other intelligent animals, including humans. Dolphins are frequently seen in the ocean performing acrobatic leaps out of the water and racing one another.

The dolphin uses a type of sonar of whistles and clicks for navigation and communication with other dolphins. Most dolphins surface to breath air every 3-7 minutes, reflecting the dual realm nature.

- Dual nature of water and air – are you straddling two worlds, or bound too much in one?
- Are you taking time to play and socialize?
- Allow your inner voice to guide you

## DONKEY

Strong of opinion, the wisest course for its two-legged owner is allow the mule/donkey to believe it was “his” idea. When a donkey makes up its mind, there is no changing it!

Donkeys are able to carry a large amount of weight relative to their size. They have compact bodies with solid legs allowing for better weight distribution of packed materials.

Surprisingly smart and quick, it is not unheard of for a mule to take down a large predator such as a coyote or mountain lion. Donkey are prized for their sure-footedness, making them ideal mounts for steep trails.

- Is your stubbornness costing you?
- Be open-minded.
- You have an innate ability to safely navigate a difficult situation.

## DOVE

In North American, the most common dove variety is the mourning dove, so named for its melancholic coo-ing. Doves are traditionally viewed as the symbol for peace and hope; it was a dove that brought Noah the olive branch indicating land was near. In historical times, doves were often used in sacrificial offerings; a “sending up” to the gods prayers for better times and blessings.

Doves are fruit and seed eaters, reflecting that those with this totem will do well to reduce the amount of meat in their diets.

- Look for signs of hope in your life; they are there
- Do you need to make peace with yourself or someone else?
- Are you allowing yourself to be someone’s sacrificial dove?

## DRAGONFLY

The dragonfly is a reflection of primordial times both physically and metaphorically. One look at its body and we are reminded of the dinosaur era when dragonflies of a larger variety soared through the skies, and this is a tie-in to past-life wisdom.

The dragonfly (and its cousin the damselfly) possess compound eyes, representing the ability to see things from many viewpoints. The wings are covered with a multitude of scales, reinforcing the notion of seeing things under different light.

- Consider how a distant past experience may be impacting your current path
- Are you seeing things clearly, and from all views?
- Use your ancient skills to navigate difficulties with agility and obtain what you desire

## EAGLE

The bald eagle is the most revered of raptors in North America, it is also one of the most formidable hunters of the sky, rarely missing its prey. Eagles symbolize freedom because of their ability to soar for great lengths of time on thermals.

Eagles, who mate for life, often exhibit a dramatic courting ritual, locking talons in mid-flight cartwheeling as they plunge earthward. This is symbolic of devotion in good times and bad in intimate relationships.

- Are those closest to you respectful of your freedoms?
- Consider what it is that you desire; will it truly serve you?
- Are you using your natural abilities to obtain what you desire?

## ELEPHANT

The largest mammal on land, the elephant is devoted to family. Herds are frequently led by matriarchs who remember migration routes from decades earlier.

The thick, tough hides of the elephant offer them protection from the elements. Their tusks represent power and strength (a primary draw for poachers). Elephants use their tusks to up-end trees and protect the herd from predators and challenges. Their long trunks are exquisitely dexterous, able to pluck a single blade of grass.

Elephants have been the possession of the wealthy and have endured much at the hands of greedy humans. Nobility and intelligence are key traits of this creature.

- Do not allow others to put you in service against your will
- Size and dexterity can co-exist
- Learn much from your memories and use those in your present life

## **FIREFLY/LIGHTNING BUG**

A type of beetle, fireflies have a light-emitting abdomen used by the bug to attract a mate. They prefer wet or wooded areas and become most active at dusk during the warm months, preferring to eat and “lay low” during the day.

The life span of the firefly is relatively short, typically only several weeks beyond the larval stage. As adults, they are carnivores, hunting smaller bugs for food. In contrast, they are not tasty bugs themselves, and this is their natural protection from predators.

- Time is key when drawing the lime light to oneself
- Use your time in the life efficiently; be brief to make your point
- Your productivity is highest for the matter at hand during twilight and evening

## **FISH**

Many species of fish congregate in large groups, called schools, for safety and breeding. Pay attention to the type of fish that shows up in your life; the color, social habits and primary habitat, as this will give you specific clues about the situation at hand.

Fish require water to breath, drawing water in through their mouths, extracting the oxygen through the filaments in the gills. This represents the use of energy; learning to draw it in one way for use and absorption through a different path, before expending that which no longer serves.

Fish use the entire bodies to move about in the water, reflecting that wholeness is an important consideration.

- Are you drawing your energy from the right place?
- Are you focusing your energy too much on one area at the expense of the whole?
- Are you moving freely in life or is there something impeding your movement?

## FOX

Foxes inhabit most every part of the world except Antarctica. Known for the bushy tails, pointy muzzles and triangular ears, the fox is perhaps most famous for his cunning.

The fox is an omnivore and uses a peculiar pouncing spring to surprise attack its prey, after crouching low in camouflaging brush. When he has excess food, he buries it for later consumption, hiding it under snow, leaves and thickets.

Foxes are known to outsmart many predators, doubling back on their tracks to elude capture. They are quick and capable of covering rough terrain finding hiding spots until the danger has passed.

- Is your den safe from danger?
- Are you using your wits to outsmart the enemy?
- Utilize your skills of camouflage to close in on what you desire

## GOAT

The goat is characterized by the ability to thrive in inhospitable terrain and on seemingly inedible materials. The goat is a survivor. They are excellent climbers, have tough hooves and the solid stomach to withstand eating tough and scrubby plants.

Goats are also prized for their nutrient dense milk, creamy cheese and in many parts of the world, their meat.

A highly adaptable animal, goats are able to withstand a wide array of climates and altitudes. Most bucks (males) have horns used for defense as well as play.

- There is no obstacle you cannot surmount
- You are able to withstand more than you think
- Do you need to rethink your environment?

## GOOSE

Wild geese, such as the Canada Goose, hold their necks straight up when swimming or flying. They feed on graze and sprouting grains. They are known for their long- distance migrations.

Geese mate for life and share in the raising of their young. They are fierce defenders of their goslings and nest and can be quite territorial.

The feathers of a goose have been used as writing instruments in centuries past, and the softer under-fluff used to create feather mattresses, pillows and warm, down-filled comforters and coats.

- Do not allow anything or anyone to obstruct your voice
- Are you properly insulating yourself from toxic people or hazardous environments?
- Do you need to take steps to protect the vulnerable people in your life?

## HERON

Largest of the common wading birds, the Great Blue Heron flies with a slow, powerful beat, making it an impressive sight. Herons are frequently found near lakeshores and ponds.

When hunting, the heron will slowly wade or stand quite still, waiting for its prey to move into shallow waters. The crane strikes in lightning-quick motion with its dagger-like bill.

The Great Blue Heron tends to be a solitary creature outside of mating season. When breeding time rolls around, large numbers gather in colonies near water sources.

- Are you carving out time for reflection and recharging of the soul?
- Observe your foes; then act quickly
- Ensure you eat a balanced diet of lean meats and green vegetables
- Protect your neck from injury and weather extremes
- Use stance to your advantage



## HORSE

Horses live in herds with a distinct hierarchy consisting of a lead mare and breeding stallion, and a number of other mares and young horses (male and female). Herds are able to cover long distances and use their numbers and swiftness to avoid predator attacks. Watching a herd of horses running is a truly impressive sight; the thundering of hooves, rapid movement of such power and grace.

A large mammal, the horse has partnered with humans for well over 6000 years. It is said that the expansion of civilization has more to do with this partnership than any other.

- Is there something or someone who is impinging on your freedom?
- Are you partnering with the right people?
- Surround yourself with the protection of your group.
- Are you running away from that which you fear?

## HUMMINGBIRD

Hummingbirds are among the tiniest birds in the world, but are also among the fastest. They are extremely agile, able to quick dodge and duck from predators. Hummingbirds also have the unique ability to hover, which is especially helpful when feeding from delicate flowers using their long, needle-like beaks. They rank near the top of important pollinators. The rapid beating of their wings creates a drumming sound, which is often the first clue that the tiny creature is nearby.

At night, hummingbirds rest in a near torpid state, appearing almost dead on the branch.

Hummingbirds come in a wide array of iridescent jewel colors.

- Pay attention to your sugar intake and blood sugar levels
- You can outmaneuver your foes
- Cherish your freedom
- You have hidden inner jewels of wisdom

## LION

Most lion species live in challenging environments, some with extreme weather. The pride, or family, will rest during the heat of the day to conserve energy for the hunt, which often occurs at dawn or dusk, when their prey is out searching for food.

Lions can be quite affectionate with one another, playing and rolling around. They use low rumbles, grunts and roars to communicate feelings of affection, alarm or warning.

The lioness tends to do most of the hunting, but it is not uncommon for lions to team up and attack from multiple flanks to obtain their quarry.

- Are you roaring threats without reason?
- Are you getting sufficient rest?
- Are you delegating tasks according to the skills of each?

## MEDICINE HORSE

The Medicine Horse is the most powerful of symbols. It represents divine wisdom and healing on all levels: spiritual, mental, emotional and physical. When the Medicine Horse appears look for small miracles to manifest and for larger issues, previously assumed unsolvable, to begin to shift for the better.

The Medicine Horse is a call to seeking inner wisdom; look deep into oneself to find the answers you seek. The Medicine Horse also represents a connection to the divine.

- Look for little miracles all around
- Pay attention to your dreams! Answers are found there.
- Make note of animal totems all around; there are messages in the combinations and the Medicine Horse will unlock those
- Trust in the divine.

## MONKEY

Members of the primate family, monkeys share many traits with humans. They are capable of problem solving, tool-building, and their range of emotional expression is astonishingly similar to ours.

Many varieties of monkeys have long tails which they use for balance as well as a fifth limb. These strong tails allow them to swing from branch to branch and balance when walking upright.

Monkeys are excellent mimics; monkey see, monkey do!

- Are you being resourceful in your problem solving?
- Are you monkeying around with things that are not good for you?
- Are you balancing your work, family and personal life?
- Learn well by close observation

## MOUSE

The tiny, humble mouse has much for which to be admired. Possessed of a collapsible skeleton, a mouse can temporarily flatten itself to squeeze through a quarter inch crack. Mice are able to penetrate all but the most fortified of enclosures by chewing, digging or condensing their bodies to fit tiny openings. They are among the most fertile rodents, able to reproduce every six weeks.

Mice are nocturnal, doing most of their foraging under cover of darkness. They collect paper, hair, twigs and other materials to build their nests. The short legs and long toenails allow mice to easily climb as well as balance on thin ledges.

- Keeping as quiet as a church mouse will serve you well
- Size does not dictate success; the mouse is small but mighty
- Lay low, stay out of the lime light to achieve your goal

## OPOSSUM

The only marsupial in North America, the opossum carries its young in a pouch on its belly. This reflects the importance of keeping vulnerable ones close at hand. As the youngsters grow, they will cling to the mother's back as she forages for food.

Opossums are nocturnal; during the day they sleep in their nests. When they feel threatened, opossums pretend to be dead so that predators lose interest. When cornered, they curl back their lips in a sinister snarl but rarely actually bite.

- Sometimes it's better to play dead than take the bait
- Are you issuing false threats?
- Keep what is dear to you close to your heart
- The things that nourish your soul are all around

## OTTER

Play is as much a part of the otter's daily life as anything else. The otter enjoys floating on its back in the water, slipping and sliding around with friends and cracking open shells for food.

Otters spend most of their time in the water, reflecting strong feminine energy, but they are capable of moving about on land, just more slowly.

The otter has a luxurious coat that shields it from cold temperatures. The powerful tail is used to swiftly propel him through the water.

- Are you taking time to play every day?
- When you find your element, you will thrive
- Shield yourself from extreme people
- Don't be afraid to express joy

## OWL

Owls are nocturnal raptors. They have special feathers that allow them to rapidly swoop down on their prey without sound; they are silent but deadly when hunting.

Owls have large eyes that allow them to see well in the dark. A tiny mouse is easily spotted from the owl perched fifty feet above, and will never know he was being stalked until it's too late. It is the size of their eyes that has led many to associate them with wisdom.

They range greatly in size, as does the distinctive hoot of the various owl species.

- Look to your inner wisdom for guidance
- You will do best if you go about your business quietly
- You will find your creativity peaks after sunset

## PURPLE MARTIN

Purple martins have a collaborative relationship with humans, since they do not build their nests in trees. Instead, these members of the swallow family look for gourds and other cavities frequently provided by humans in which to create a home for their eggs.

The presence of these birds is a welcome sight by farmers and lake dwellers because purple martins consume large quantities of insects as they swoop around freshly mown fields or rustling wetlands.

The purple color is associated with divine healing. Those with this totem may find amethyst a very helpful crystal as well.

- Your presence is welcome
- You have an innate ability to remove small problems for others
- Healing and good fortune are at hand

## RABBIT

The rabbit belongs to the lagomorph family, plant eating mammals with two pairs of upper incisors. Also referred to as bunnies, rabbits have only their ability to hop quickly as a defense against predators. Mother Nature gifted bunnies with an abundant fertility to make up for their frequent demise as predator food. Rabbits are able to produce as many as four or five litters of kittens each year. The mother may only nurse her kittens once a day, but the milk she produces is highly nutritious and among the richest of all mammals.

Rabbits are known for the acrobatic leaping during play as well as during courtship and/or fending off a competing male.

- Do you need to take a leap of faith?
- Allow your fertile mind room to expand
- Trust in abundance
- Use your treasured resources wisely

## RED TAIL HAWK

The red tail hawk (and the closely related red shouldered hawk) is one of the soaring raptors. It's broad tail fans out in flight and, as the name implies, it is frequently marked with chestnut coloring.

Hawks are known for the incredible sight. Soaring on the thermals from high above, they are able to spot small rodents, snakes and other potential meals, before sharply diving, talons outstretched, to capture their prey. Another hunting tactic used by this raptor is to perch on a pole or tree, waiting and watching for its next target to appear before swooping down. The red tail will carry small prey back to the perch, but consume a good portion of larger victims on the ground.

- Watch and wait; plan your target
- Use long-range vision to achieve your goal
- Timing is everything
- Soar above, leave problems below

## ROBIN

The largest member of the thrush family, the robins is considered a herald of spring. Robins raise two or three broods of young each year, representing new life and growth.

Being centered over the heart chakra, the orange color seen on the breast of the robin is a sign of love and vitality. The robin is an early morning caroler, one of the first to begin its lovely songs.

The robin is known for its upright stance, running and hopping around yards. It frequently builds its nest on porches, light fixtures and windowsills.

- Morning is your time for creativity
- Allow love to be your song
- A time of new things and personal growth is on the horizon

## ROOSTER

The cock is known for strutting about, fanning his feathers and crowing about his superiority to the world. Roosters are often aggressive, using their beaks and spurs to keep competing males or would-be aggressors away from their hens. That doesn't mean the hens like them; quite the contrary, since they can also be quite rough when breeding.

Rooster represent vanity and sexuality at the same time. Observation of the rooster's behavior makes it clear his primary goal is to look and sound impressive to all who see him.

- Are you being vain or too concerned about appearances?
- Are you crowing too much about your own accomplishments?
- Is your sexuality being expressed in a healthy, decorous manner?

## SEAHORSE

Seahorses are a unique type of fish which live in shallow coastal waters. They have a horse-like head with a tubular snout, have independently moving eyes, a prehensile tail used for steering and a brood pouch. The bodies of seahorses are covered with bony plates. Since they are slow swimmers, seahorses use camouflage as their primary protection from predators.

Aside from their unusual appearance, male seahorses carry the fertilized eggs in brood pouch. The female deposits her eggs in her mate's pouch, at the base of his tail, where they remain for 10 days to 6 weeks before hatching. Once hatched, the babies receive no further care.

- Make sure you are balanced in your masculine and feminine energies; both will serve you well
- Do not fear unusual distribution of work efforts; you are capable
- When in Rome, do as the Romans do; blend in

## SEAL

Athletic, dexterous and quick to enjoy play, the seal knows how to have fun and relax.

The seal uses its entire body to move easily and swiftly through the water. On land, he moves much more slowly, even though as a mammal, he requires air to breathe.

The seal is a carnivore, eating small fish, squid, mollusks and crustaceans. Their bodies are covered with an insulating layer of fat that allows them to tolerate cold water temperatures with ease as well as providing buoyancy to them. Their flippers are quite powerful and are used to produce bursts of speed, allowing playful leaps out of the water.

- Water is the creative energy; are you using your creativity in a playful manner?
- You have what you need within you to stay afloat
- Conserve your energy for when you really need it
- Pay attention to your dreams



## SKUNK

These black and white mammals are often smelled long before they are seen. Skunks are peaceful creatures by nature, however, since they do not see well, they use their powerful scent glands to ward off would-be attackers. They are especially prone to using their scent defense when startled.

The black and white coloring of the skunk reflects the yin/yang and kundalini energies. Kundalini is considered the feminine energy, represented by the white stripe on the skunk. Yin and yang are reflections of cosmic duality; the balance of the universe.

- Seek balance in all things
- Do not always trust what you see, but rather what you sense
- Aromatherapy is key for you; artificial scents are disastrous

## SPIDER

Arachnids come in tens of thousands of varieties, but all share a few common traits. Spiders possess 8 legs and their bodies are divided into two parts rather than three. The shape of the spider's body is that of the infinity symbol, also the number 8.

All spiders are carnivores, either capturing tiny insects in webs they spin or by pouncing on unsuspecting prey. Not all spiders spin webs; some live in nooks and crannies waiting for something tasty to meander by.

Spiders play an important role in the ecosystem by keeping other insect populations in check.

- Is your web one of dreams or lies?
- Are you hanging on by a thin thread or a fiercely strong strand?
- Are you better served by laying low or by inconspicuous high places?
- There is an element of infinity in your life; pay attention to the magic being woven there

## SQUIRREL

A chatty rodent known for collecting and hoarding nuts for winter, the squirrel makes its way through the world by climbing, jumping, running and balancing. Most squirrels have a bushy tail that is used for balance as well as for warmth, by curling the thick furry appendage around its body to sleep.

Tree squirrels have flexible joints that can be rotated to allow for quick descent from trees and high places. They possess long, sharp claws which facilitate rapid climbing and sure-footedness on thin branches.

- Consider the words you use when addressing others; are they scolding?
- Do you chatter aimlessly, never conveying any real meaning about yourself?
- Are you hoarding things that do not serve you?
- Yoga is a powerful exercise for those with this totem

## SWAN

Adult swans epitomize the concept of grace and elegance. In centuries past, it was also considered a symbol of sexual relationships, when the Greek god Zeus turned into one after plotting to seduce Leda while pretending to be her husband.

Swans are the largest waterfowl species, have long, graceful necks and are heavy bodied, big-footed birds that sail majestically on the water. In flight, their slow, powerful wingbeats can be heard from a great distance.

In North America most swans are white as adults. A beloved children's' book, *The Ugly Duckling*, is the story of transformation and belief in one's own inner beauty.

- Grace is more than appearance, it is also a divine gift
- Beauty is in the eye of the beholder
- Your inner beauty is of far greater importance than superficial appearances

## TIGER

The tiger uses the surprise element to capture its prey. The striped coat allows the big cat to blend in easily with the jungle foliage and avoid detection. Despite their large size, tigers are capable of quiet stealth, moving so carefully that no sound is heard by the unsuspecting. They are excellent swimmers and able to cover long distances in a single day.

Many tigers prefer solitary life except to mate, which is a powerful and sensual experience. Mother tigers are quite devoted to their young, teaching them to hunt at night, using the skill of ambush.

- Allow your sensuous self to surface; there is great power there
- Keep your plans close to your chest; confidentiality serves you well
- Your most creative time is at night
- Solo work is well-suited to you

## TOAD

Toads have the unfortunate experience of being named among the ugliest of creatures. To be called a toad is to imply unpleasant appearances and/or possessing poor manners.

Toads are amphibious reptiles with thick hides, typically covered with raised wart-like bumps. Many toads excrete a nasty tasting liquid to deter predators looking to make a meal of them. Born in water, the tadpoles transform into land-roaming toads in 4-12 weeks. Toads use their powerful hind legs to hop. The tongue, which is anchored at the front of the mouth, is able to quickly dart out and ensnare a passing bug. Toads use their skins to blend in nicely with leaves to evade notice. They are also able to puff themselves up to appear more threatening.

- Are you using your natural defenses for protection?
- Do not be deceived by ugly appearances
- You will make transformative progress by taking leaps of faith

## TURTLE

Slow and steady wins the race, as the turtle proved when pitted against the hare. The turtle carries its home and defense on its body. A tough, protective shell defends the inner organs and tissues from attack.

Turtles come in many different shapes and sizes; some live in water, some on land. Even the so-called land or wood turtles choose locations close to water sources such as ponds, creeks or even culverts.

Turtles have a slow metabolism which accounts for their longevity. Even smaller species can live for decades; and the larger tortoises for well over a hundred years.

- Protect your soul from those who would be careless
- Pay attention to what you eat, choosing lean proteins and low glycemic foods
- Return to the well of your creativity for solutions
- Pace yourself

## VULTURE

Vultures play a surprising role in mythology. It is said that the vulture agreed to sacrifice the beautiful plumage on his head to move the sun so that the earth would not burn up, burning his head so that no feathers ever grew back. They are able to soar for extended periods of time, watching and waiting for opportunities. While vultures do hunt, they are just as likely to feed on carcasses left by other predators or accidents for their food. Their strong immune system protects them from bacteria and parasites often found in the dead bodies they consume.

Vultures play an important part of the ecological chain, allowing little to go to waste.

- Bid your time and wait for the prize to be delivered
- What others deem unworthy, is more than sufficient to sustain and feed you
- You are able to stomach few others would dare

## WHALE

The largest mammals in the world, whales are capable of diving to great depths of the ocean where little light is available. They use sonar to navigate the waters and many species travel great distances, over several oceans for feeding and mating.

All whales have blowholes. When they surface the muscle contracts, opening the hole to exhale in a large burst of vapor, before drawing in great amounts of air and submerging again.

Many of the toothed whales swim in family groups called pods. Baleen whales, such as the humpback, usually travel alone or in small groups.

- Take time to surface from your work
- Breathe deep to draw in energy
- You are well equipped to dive deeply into soul expansion

## WOLF

The wolf's life centers around its pack; family is central to its survival and loyalty to the pack means everything.

Wolves are cooperative hunters but function with a highly defined pack hierarchy, with an alpha male and female making nearly all the decisions for the group. To cross an alpha is to risk expulsion from the pack. They have a complex system of communication that involves body language and low vocalizations.

The alpha male and female frequently mate for life; their pups are cared for and taught by all members of the pack.

- Family and close friends are extremely important for your wellbeing
- Use your keen intelligence to obtain your goals
- You avoid confrontations unless a line has been crossed, but you are fearless about standing your ground

# WOODPECKER

A walk through the woods and the familiar tap-tap-tap is a sure sign the woodpecker is nearby.

Woodpeckers represent vibration. They use their heads to rhythmically tap the wood to reveal the small insects burrowing beneath the bark.

Many woodpeckers have a red crown; an indication of direct connection to divine knowledge.

Woodpeckers often create their nests by creating or utilizing existing cavities in tree trunks through their excavation efforts and pecking.

The woodpecker represents deep, analytical thinking with its characteristic trait.

- Use your head to obtain what you desire
- Your intelligence is the path to raising your spiritual vibration level
- Your intuition is connected to your highest thoughts

## Celtic Cross lay-out, comprehensive

Use this layout to gain insight into the present situation by understanding the elements, past and present, which influence, and how it might play out in the future.

- 1) Present situation
- 2) Influences hindering or helping present situation
- 3) Conscious beliefs about this situation
- 4) Unconscious beliefs about this situation
- 5) Past influences (recent endings)
- 6) Future influences (beginnings)
- 7) Your beliefs and attitude about situation
- 8) Outside energies influencing the situation
- 9) Your hopes, fears
- 10) Outcome of situation



