

Living With Wildlife



***TO HEAL HEARTS AND MINDS THROUGH
RESCUE, SANCTUARY, AND EDUCATION.***



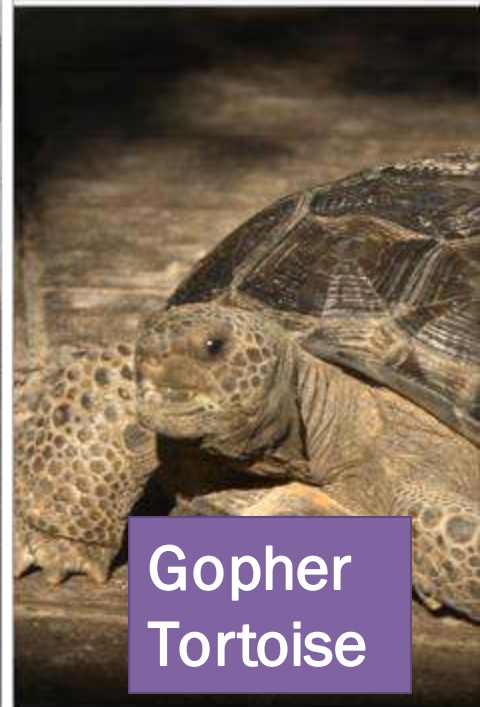
Panther



Bobcat



Coyote



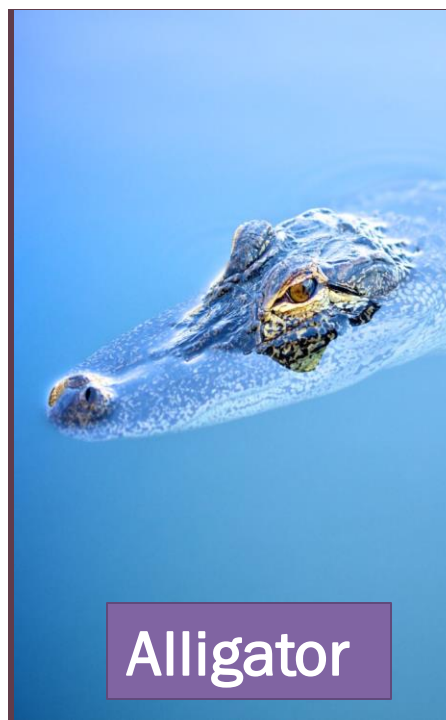
Gopher
Tortoise



Raccoon



Skunk



Alligator

**What
wild-
life
lives
here?**

Gopher Tortoise

(*Gopherus polyphemus*)

Endangered Animal Native to Florida

- **Omnivore** – eats plants and insects
- Rarely drinks water
- **Keystone species** – provides habitat to 360 other species



Gopher Tortoise



- **Keystone Species** - A species that plays a critical part in maintaining the structure an ecosystem
- **Ecosystem** – all of the living things in a given area interacting with each other and their non-living environment
- **Their existence or absence effects many other organisms in the ecosystem.**

What do I do if I encounter one?

Why does the tortoise cross the road?

- To get to the other side – help them cross – place them in the direction they are travelling
- Don't mess with their burrows or relocate them
- Keep dogs away from them
- If flipped upside down – turn them over or they will die
- **Basically, leave them alone!**



FUN FACT: Burrow length average is 15' & record length is over 47' long!

Bobcat

(Lynx rufus)

- Lives in North America from southern Canada to the middle of Mexico
- Hunt animals up to 8 times their size (known to hunt deer in the Everglades)

Carnivores – a consumer that eats only other animals



How is the Bobcat Identified?



Coat is brown or grey with spots



Like to mark their territory



Short “bobbed” tail

Florida Legal Status – Native Species (Imperiled)



- Unless sick or injured they are generally elusive & non-aggressive to people
- There is a legal hunting season in Florida or they can be taken as a “nuisance”
- Can be shot with landowner’s consent or permission
- Euthanasia of a live captured bobcat is prohibited & it must be released
- Use of deterrents is recommended for control

FUN FACT: Bobcats help control other pest species like rats.

Ways to deter Bobcats



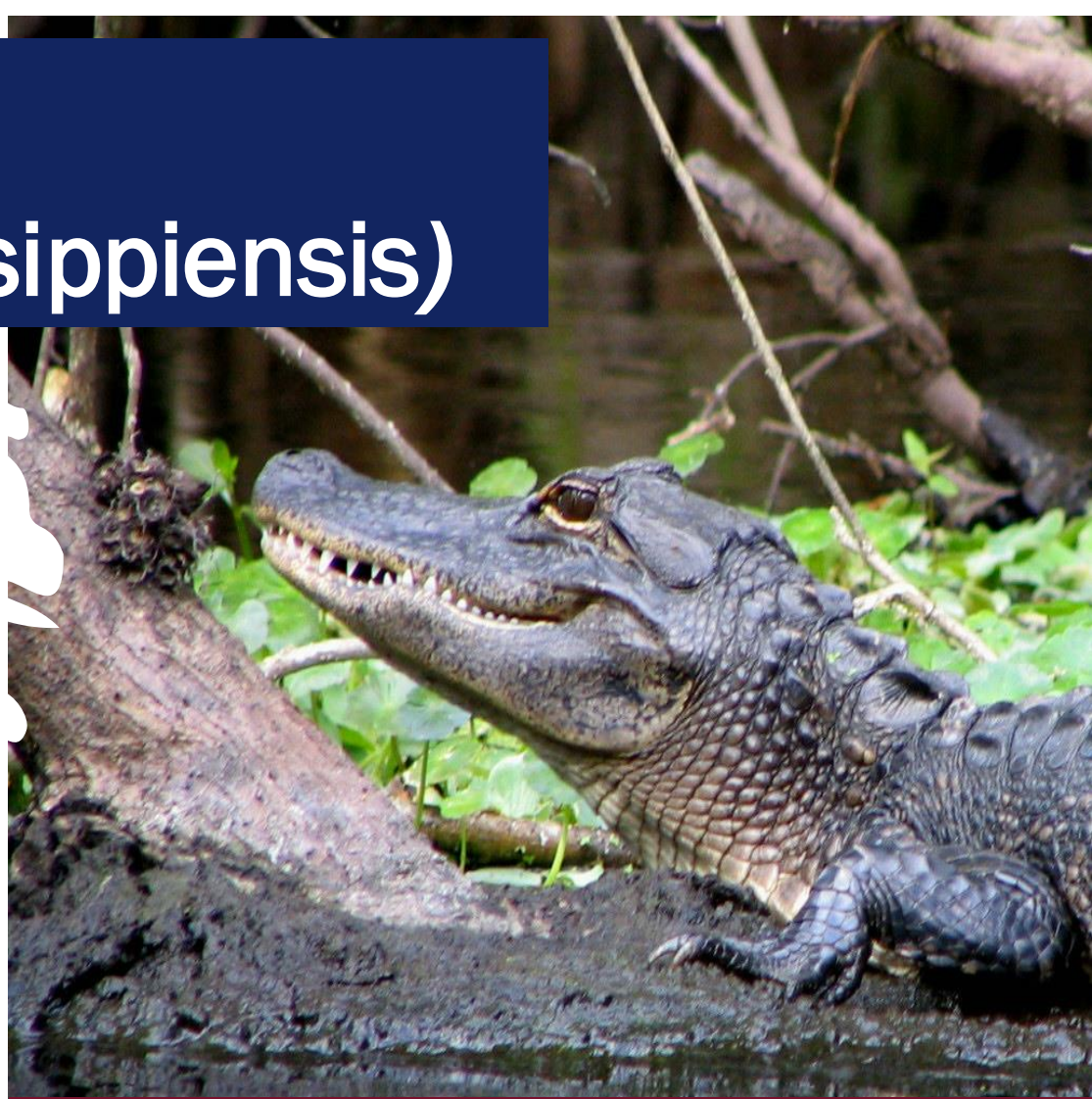
- Don't directly feed bobcats or other wildlife – they are a prey species
- **Haze** a bobcat with loud noises: yelling, air horns, throwing rocks towards (not at) the bobcat
- Secure dumpsters & garbage from rodents who are prey
- House farm animals in secure enclosures (six-sided)
- Random movements: use an “air dancer” or balloons filled with helium

FUN FACT: Bobcats help control other pest species like rats.

Alligator

(Alligator mississippiensis)

- Live from southeast Oklahoma and east Texas to North Carolina and Florida in the east. They prefer lakes, rivers and wetlands.
- **Opportunistic feeders – eats what is available.** Baby alligators eat insects, amphibians, small fish, and other invertebrates. Adults eat snakes, fish, turtles, birds, and small mammals



The Florida record for length is a
14 foot 3-1/2 inch male.



What do I do if I encounter one?

- Enjoy them from boardwalks and wildlife viewing areas.
- It's illegal to feed wild alligators. They become used to people and become nuisances
- Keep small pets away from them
- If you have a close encounter with an alligator a few yards away, back away slowly.
- **Time OUT - leave them alone!**



FUN FACT: Alligators can run up to 35 miles per hour for short distances on land.

Coyote

(*Canis latrans*)

- Once only lived in the prairies and deserts of North America.
- Today lives in forests, mountains, farmlands, suburbs, even cities.
- Now classified as “Native” in Florida & can be released

How are they able to survive in so many different habitats?



Top Canine Predator in North America - NOW



Adaptable & Intelligent

- Omnivores: Eat meat and plants
- Opportunistic eaters
- Can live alone, in mated pairs, or in a pack
- Use multiple hunting strategies
- Secretive and smart
- Have a tolerance for humans



Co-existing with Coyotes



- If a coyote approaches stand your ground & act scary – wave & make noises to scare it away
- Walk pets at other times than dusk & dawn & always accompany pets out
- Carry noise makers: air horn, pebbles in a can, pennies in a can, etc.
- Make sure the coyote runs away & not just a short distance, otherwise it may learn to wait out the distraction
- **Coyotes will have larger litters the next year if you try to remove them**

FUN FACT: Coyotes have been known to breed with wolves.



Florida Panther (*Puma concolor*)

- A subspecies of the puma that only lives in Florida
- Cat with the most names: cougar, mountain lion, panther, puma, painter, screamer, Nittany lion
- Critically endangered
- Largest cat that can purr
- Always tan NEVER black
- How have human activities impacted this species?

FUN FACT: Panthers, Cougars, Mountain Lions,
are all the same species.

Protect & Conserve

- In the 1980s only 20-30 panthers were left in the wild
- Today: 100- 160 wild panthers exist
- Each one needs 200 square miles to roam

Every individual is critical to species survival!



FUN FACT: Can live 20 years in captivity.

Living near Panthers

- Secure garbage cans & farm (prey) animals
- Motion deterrent: Air Dancer has been proven effective out West due to the random movements & noises
- Don't run if you encounter one – stand your ground & get as big and noisy as possible



FUN FACT: Air Dancers are as cheap as \$35



RACCOONS

(*Procyon lotor*)

- One of the most intelligent Florida mammals
- Love to play in trash cans & feeders
- Considered a rabies-vector species so DO NOT handle or pick up (even babies)
- Just because you see them during the day does not mean that they are sick
- If you run across a baby, don't assume it is orphaned & please do call a wildlife rehabber who knows how to handle them for release

FUN FACT: Raccoons wash their food to activate nerve sensors in their paws so they can determine what they are eating.

Mischievous Guest?



- Will enter houses through pet doors so lock them or have radio activated doors
- Don't feed wildlife, squirrels or birds and not expect the raccoons to come a-calling
- Gardens are attractive to raccoons
- Difficult to get rid of them once they have settled into an area
- Store food in secure containers in garage
- Pick up fallen fruit, nuts and bird seed



SKUNKS

(*Spilogale putorius* & *Mephitis mephitis*)

- Don't live in the Keys
- Can spray you from 15' away
- Chief predator is the Great Horned Owl
- Usually active at night
- Attracted by insects commonly in lawns, fruit trees, gardens or where food scraps are kept
- Considered a rabies-vector species
- Live in brush piles, wood piles & areas with high grass
- Live 8-10 years in captivity



FUN FACT: Skunks sold as pets are de-scented.

Detererring a skunk...

- **Keep lawn mowed and clear of piles or debris**
- **Keep food secured in garage**
- **Install bright lights in yard**
- **Use obnoxious odors**
- **Citrus peels are a natural repellent**
- **Motion activated sprinklers**



FUN FACT: tomato juice may help remove the smell from pets attacked by skunks.

Other Florida Residents



[This Photo](#)

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BATS...SQUIRRELS...SNAKES...SKINKS...ALL WILDLIFE MATTERS!



References

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

<https://myfwc.com/conservation/you-conserve/wildlife/>

Texas Parks and Wildlife

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/species/alligator/safety/index.phtml>

Microsoft Stock Images

For more information:



Every animal plays an important
role in the natural world.

We can learn from these animals and help
protect them and their environment.

HOW CAN I HELP?

VOLUNTEER DONATE ADOPT FOSTER



shywolfsanctuary.org

THANK YOU!



Shy Wolf Sanctuary
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