

We need to work hard every day to protect the air,  
land and water that all creatures need to survive.  
Here are some...

## Things YOU can do:

### Conserve

- Reduce consumption of paper, water and other natural resources
- Reuse products, such as grocery bags and Styrofoam packing, as many times as possible
- Recycle paper, aluminum, plastic and glass

### Protect

- Build a backyard wildlife sanctuary
- Plant native trees, shrubs and grasses to prevent soil erosion and create effective habitats
- Avoid littering on land and water
- Keep cars maintained and properly dispose of oil
- Don't apply fertilizers before or during a rain shower

### Learn

- Learn as much as you can about wildlife and wild places in Alabama
- Visit zoos, nature centers and natural areas in Alabama

### Change

- Support local conservation efforts
- Clean up waterways
- Most importantly, share your knowledge with others; our positive impact together can make a difference.

For more information  
about how you can  
help protect the  
environment, go to  
[alabamapower.com](http://alabamapower.com) or  
[birminghamzoo.com](http://birminghamzoo.com).




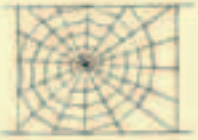

















# Field Guide

## Things to look for in

# Alabama Wilds

| Animal  | symbol                                                                              | track                                                                               | scat                                                                                 |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Otter   |    |    |    |
| Beaver  |    |    |    |
| Skunk   |    |    |    |
| Raccoon |  |  |  |
| Fox     |  |  |  |
| Snake   |  |  |  |

| Animal         | symbol                                                                                | track                                                                                 | scat                                                                                  |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spider         |    |    | too small to identify                                                                 |
| Eagle          |    |    |    |
| Wild Turkey    |    |    |    |
| Sandhill Crane |   |  |  |
| Opossum        |  |  |  |
| Bobcat         |  |  |  |

# Welcome to

# Grandma's Back Porch

This house may be a little different from yours. For one, Grandma doesn't have to go to the grocery store for milk or eggs or vegetables, or even meat. She grows or raises a lot of her own food.

And there's something else that's different. Here, the bathroom isn't in the house. Can you find where the bathroom is? What else is different about living in the country? List some of the differences here.



Alabama Power has worked with landowners to improve more than 1,000 acres of land through its Wild Power program.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Bye Grandma!

Now you're leaving Grandma's backyard and heading into Alabama Wilds. Some of the animals you see may be familiar, some may not. As you move deeper into the Alabama Wilds, don't forget to take notes. Mark down important information, such as the type of animal you see, their tracks and their "scat" - that's another word for their droppings. Use your Field Guide on pages 7-8 to record your observations.

You'll have a chance to discuss your observations and ask questions when you visit the Alabama Wilds Research Center.

# Field Guide

## Trail Challenge

The forest is an ecological community where plants and animals coexist. As you walk through the Alabama Wilds, keep your eyes open to find the following items. Check off the box next to each item you see.

- COLORED FLOWER**  
Attracts birds and bees for pollination
- BROAD LEAF**  
Can take in more light than a needle-like leaf
- SPIDER**  
Predator that eats insects
- SONGBIRD**  
Helps seeds get around the forest by eating them
- LEAFY TREE**  
Many animals live in or eat parts of the tree
- FROG**  
Spends part of its life in water and part of its life on land
- DRAGONFLY**  
Insect that lays its eggs in water
- NEEDLE-LIKE LEAF**  
Conserves water very efficiently
- TREE SCRAPED BY BEAR**  
Tree may die, letting in light for new plants
- FALLEN TREE**  
Fallen trees provide nutrients to the soil as they decompose
- MOSQUITOFISH**  
Eats mosquitoes and other pest insects
- FUNGUS**  
Breaks down fallen trees

The Longleaf Legacy Program sponsored by Alabama Power has restored 2,027 acres of longleaf habitat across the state.

# Field Guide

## Forest Clues

You may not always see animals in the forest, but if you look hard you will see the clues they leave behind.

Sometimes, people leave clues behind that they have been in the forest, too. Think back to all that you observed on the trail. Write down what you remember seeing.

| ANIMAL CLUES | PEOPLE CLUES |
|--------------|--------------|
|              |              |
|              |              |
|              |              |
|              |              |
|              |              |
|              |              |
|              |              |
|              |              |
|              |              |
|              |              |

### What To Look For – Signs Of Animal Life

- Scat (droppings)
- Tracks
- Nests
- Slides
- Bones
- Burrows and dens
- Trails
- Broken twigs
- Piles of leaves
- Shed skin, fur, feathers or exoskeletons
- Trees that have been scratched or rubbed
- Dust baths
- Holes in trees, logs or ground
- Tree cavities
- Chewed twigs, leaves or trees
- Remains of fruits and nuts

# Alabama Wilds Research Cabin

Welcome to the Research Cabin! This old cabin was once used by hunters and trappers, as you can see by some of the equipment they left behind. Now it has become a research center for field biologists – scientists who study things in the wild. They observe animal behavior, such as where animals go, what they like to eat, plants that are used for homes and food, and the effects people may have on animals or their habitats.

The biologists have made an ecosystem tank to keep baby turtles and frogs that they will study to learn how fast they grow. When the animals are bigger, they will be released into the Wilds. Look in the Amphibian and Reptile Ecosystem and record the animals you see.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Field biologists need to know what the weather is like, because it can change the way an animal behaves. For example, some animals don't like to come out when it is too cold. Look for the weather station. Help the field biologists by writing down today's weather conditions.

|                 |              |                      |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Date:           | Temperature: | Barometric Pressure: |
| Rainfall:       | Time:        | Humidity:            |
| Wind Direction: | Wind Speed:  |                      |

If you were a field biologist what would you study? \_\_\_\_\_

## The Wilderness is our Teacher

The Alabama Wilds provides a place to learn about nature in its "natural" setting. Here you have a chance to explore animals and plants in their own habitats, or natural surroundings. Use this page to draw an animal you have seen. Apply your powers of observation to notice the small details.

Thanks to the "Power of Flight" program, sponsored by Alabama Power, 1,500 acres of land have already been restored and another 800 are scheduled for the enhancement of quail habitats.

# Animals of Alabama Wilds

## Funky Facts and human impacts

Here are some things you may not have known about the animals you'll find in Alabama Wilds:

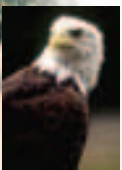
**Sandhill Crane (Grus canadensis)** – Cranes have an elaborate courtship dance in which they bow, jump and toss sticks in the air. The sandhill crane is a threatened species and has protected habitat in Alabama.



**Gray Fox (Urocyon cinereargantus)**  
The gray fox is common across all of Alabama. Foxes are beneficial because they prey on farm pests such as mice and rats. A female fox is called a vixen, a male is called a reynard, a baby is called a kit and a group of foxes is called a skulk.



**Bald Eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus)**  
Our national symbol, the bald eagle was at one time an endangered species. Thanks to successful conservation efforts, the number of bald eagles is increasing in Alabama and across the nation, but it is still threatened.



**Raccoon (Procyon lotor)**  
Raccoons have long, delicate fingers that they can use to open latches and jars, untie knots and even turn doorknobs. Their prints look like tiny human baby handprints and footprints.

**Striped Skunk (Mephitis mephitis)** – Despite our dislike for them, skunks help humans by feeding on insect and rodent pests. Skunks can spray a terrible smelling liquid up to 10 feet and may stand on their front legs with their back legs in the air to spray higher.



**Wild Turkey (Meleagris gallopavo)**  
In 1941 there were less than 13,500 wild turkeys in all of Alabama. Today, there are over 500,000! Benjamin Franklin wanted the wild turkey to be our national bird because of its bright plumage and "respectable courage."



**Bobcat (Lynx rufus)** – Bobcats are found throughout rural Alabama. The bobcat looks a little like a housecat but is about twice its size, with longer hind legs. It gets its name from its short, bobbed tail.















**Virginia Opossum (Didelphis virginiana)**  
– The Virginia opossum carries its immature offspring in a pouch, just like a kangaroo. It's too large and heavy to hang by its tail from trees, despite what many people think. Opossums will "play dead" when threatened because most predators won't eat dead animals.



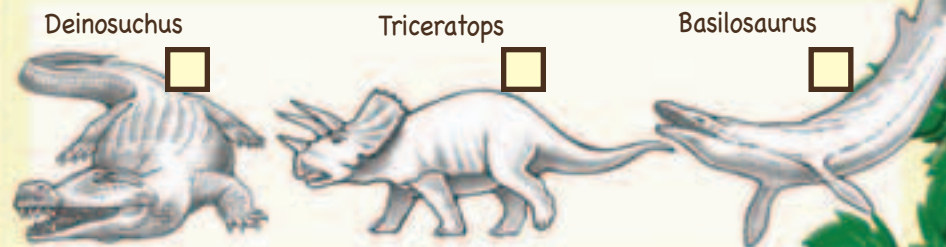
## Welcome to the Alabama Fossil Digs A Paleontology Lab

Alabama has a long and interesting history, some of which is hidden in the earth. A paleontologist's job is to uncover and piece together this history by examining what he/she finds.

Use a brush to uncover the fossils in the Alabama Digs. Identify what you have found by putting a check mark by the appropriate fossil below.

|              | Skull                                                                                                          | Rib                                                                                                            | Foot                                                                                                           | Vertebra                                                                                                       |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Deinosuchus  |  <input type="checkbox"/>   |  <input type="checkbox"/>   |  <input type="checkbox"/>   |  <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Basilosaurus |  <input type="checkbox"/>   |  <input type="checkbox"/>   |  <input type="checkbox"/>   |  <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Triceratops  |  <input type="checkbox"/> |  <input type="checkbox"/> |  <input type="checkbox"/> |  <input type="checkbox"/> |

Now that you've uncovered the individual fossils, put a check mark in the box beside the animal that you think left these bones behind.



# From Land to Water

So far you've learned about some of the animals of Alabama Wilds that live mostly on land. Now you're going to learn about some Alabama animals that live mostly in the water. These are freshwater creatures, and you'll be amazed at how well they are adapted to their very special habitats. Be sure to note your observations in your Field Guide.

## Did you know that beavers...



- are the largest rodents in Alabama
- have oily fur that insulates them from cold water
- have valves inside their noses and ears that seal under water
- have teeth that never stop growing
- constantly chew on hard things like wood to keep their teeth worn down
- build their own homes by damming rivers and streams with the trees they chew down.

## Did you know that North American river otters...



- have long, heavy tails 1/3 the length of their bodies
- are born blind and stay that way for 3-5 weeks while their mom cares for them
- eat fish, frogs, snails, insects, earthworms, and even snakes
- live in beaver lodges, overhanging banks or already excavated burrows
- are found in 45 states and every Alabama county.

The Alabama Power Christmas Tree Program has utilized almost 50,000 discarded Christmas trees to create over 2,000 fish habitats in the state's lakes.

# Alabama Wilds Otter/Beaver Tic-Tac-Toe

Be an ethologist! That's a person who studies animal behavior. Take a few minutes to watch the beavers and the otters. Put an X on each behavior you observe. If you see a behavior more than once, put a dot in the box. Then add up how many times you observed each behavior.



|                        |                        |                       |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Otter Eating</b>    | <b>Beaver Sleeping</b> | <b>Otter Swimming</b> |
| <b>Beaver Swimming</b> | <b>FREE SPACE</b>      | <b>Beaver Gnawing</b> |
| <b>Otter Grooming</b>  | <b>Beaver Grooming</b> | <b>Otter Sleeping</b> |

# Water: Wonderful & Fragile

Volunteers have pulled millions of pounds of trash from Alabama waterways through the Renew Our Rivers program, spearheaded by Alabama Power.

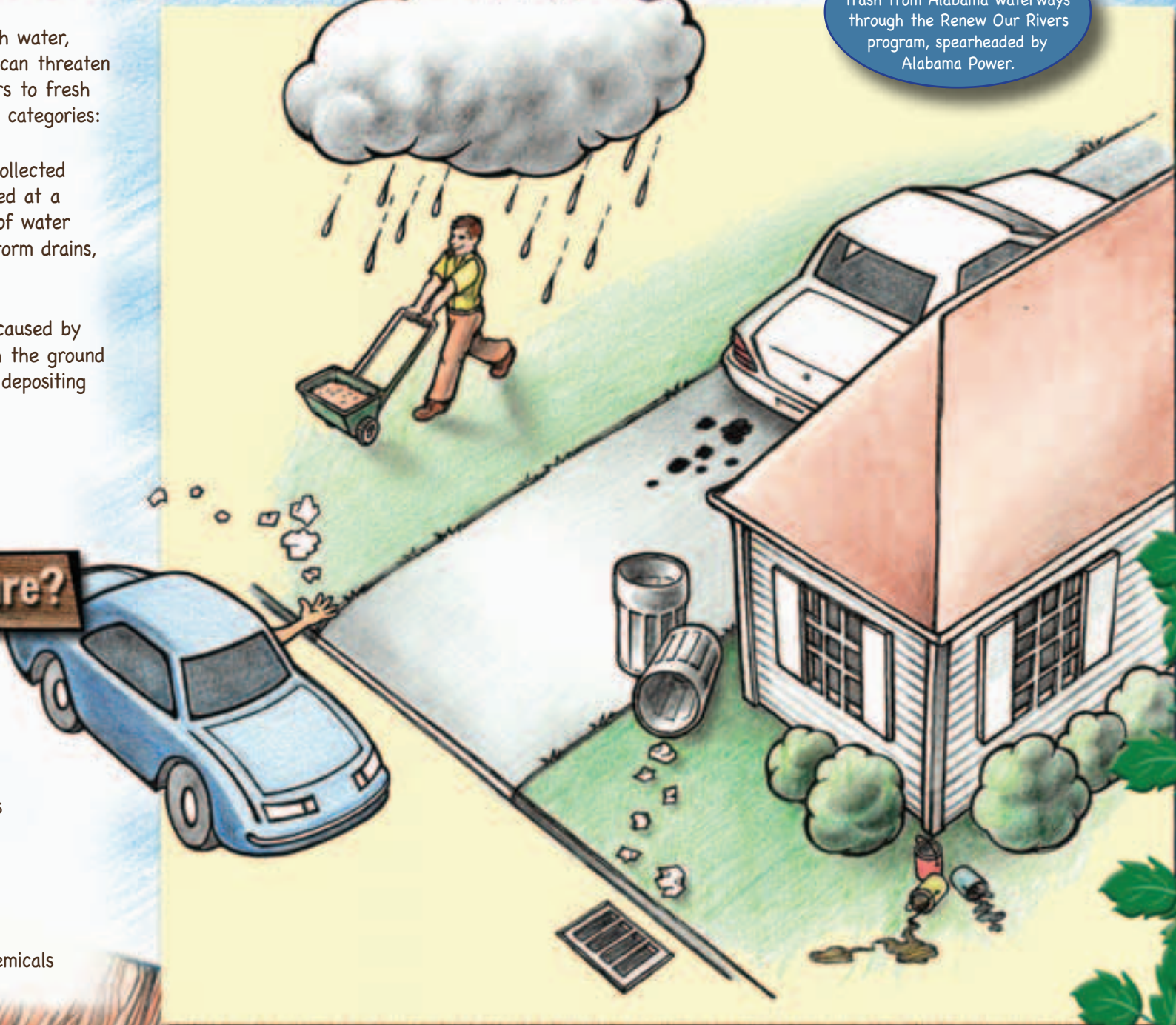
While life on Earth depends upon fresh water, there are many human activities that can threaten it. Pollution, one of the biggest dangers to fresh water sources, generally falls into two categories:

- **Point source pollution** – generally collected by pipes and ditches and is discharged at a single place into the receiving body of water (i.e. wastewater treatment plants, storm drains, factories)
- **Nonpoint source pollution (NPS)** – caused by rainfall that moves over and through the ground picking up pollutants on its way and depositing them in lakes, streams, etc.

**What's wrong with this picture?**

Unlike point source pollution, NPS can be hard to collect or prevent. Try to find and put a check by the following NPS in this picture.

- Fertilizers and pesticides
- Car leaking oil
- Litter in storm drains
- Improper disposal of chemicals



## An Alabama Wetland Nature's Sponge

Wetlands, the link between water and land, are the most biologically productive natural ecosystems in the world. Those in Alabama are often in the form of a swamp, floodplain forest or flat open area covered by shallow water. If wetlands are destroyed, streams can become contaminated with pollution that can damage plant and animal habitats. The pollution can also jeopardize drinking water supplies.

Besides filtering pollutants out of water, wetlands:

- are homes to thousands of plants and animals
- help prevent floods
- control erosion and trap sediment
- protect shorelines from wave damage
- feed farm animals
- offer places to fish, hike and boat
- are in every county of every state.

While visiting Alabama Wilds, you probably saw a number of creatures that make their home in a wetland. Do you remember seeing any of the animals and plants shown on this page?



## Leaving Alabama Wilds

Thank you for visiting Alabama Wilds. You've had just a glimpse of the many animals and plants that live in Alabama's wild places, and in your own backyard. Alabama is blessed with an incredible array of animal and plant life. And much of it is right under our noses!

We must do what we can to protect Alabama Wilds and the plants and creatures that live here. One of the best ways is to learn all you can about them. Try this final activity and see how much you've learned so far:

### Creature Features

Animals of the forest come in an endless variety of shapes, colors and sizes. They live on the ground, in the trees and in the water. They get around in different ways: fly, climb, hop, swim, slither. They also eat a variety of different foods. Thinking back to what you've learned today, draw a line from the animal on the left to his adaptations and behaviors on the right.



- Backward angled teeth for pushing prey down throat
- Oily fur for water-proofing
- Claws for digging
- Powerful leg muscles for lifting and carrying prey
- Dense fur for keeping warm
- Ears and nose that close to seal out water
- Talons for grasping prey
- Feathers for keeping warm
- Hollow bones for a light-weight body
- Horny scales to prevent water loss
- Keen eyesight for finding food