

Bear Hollow Zoo:

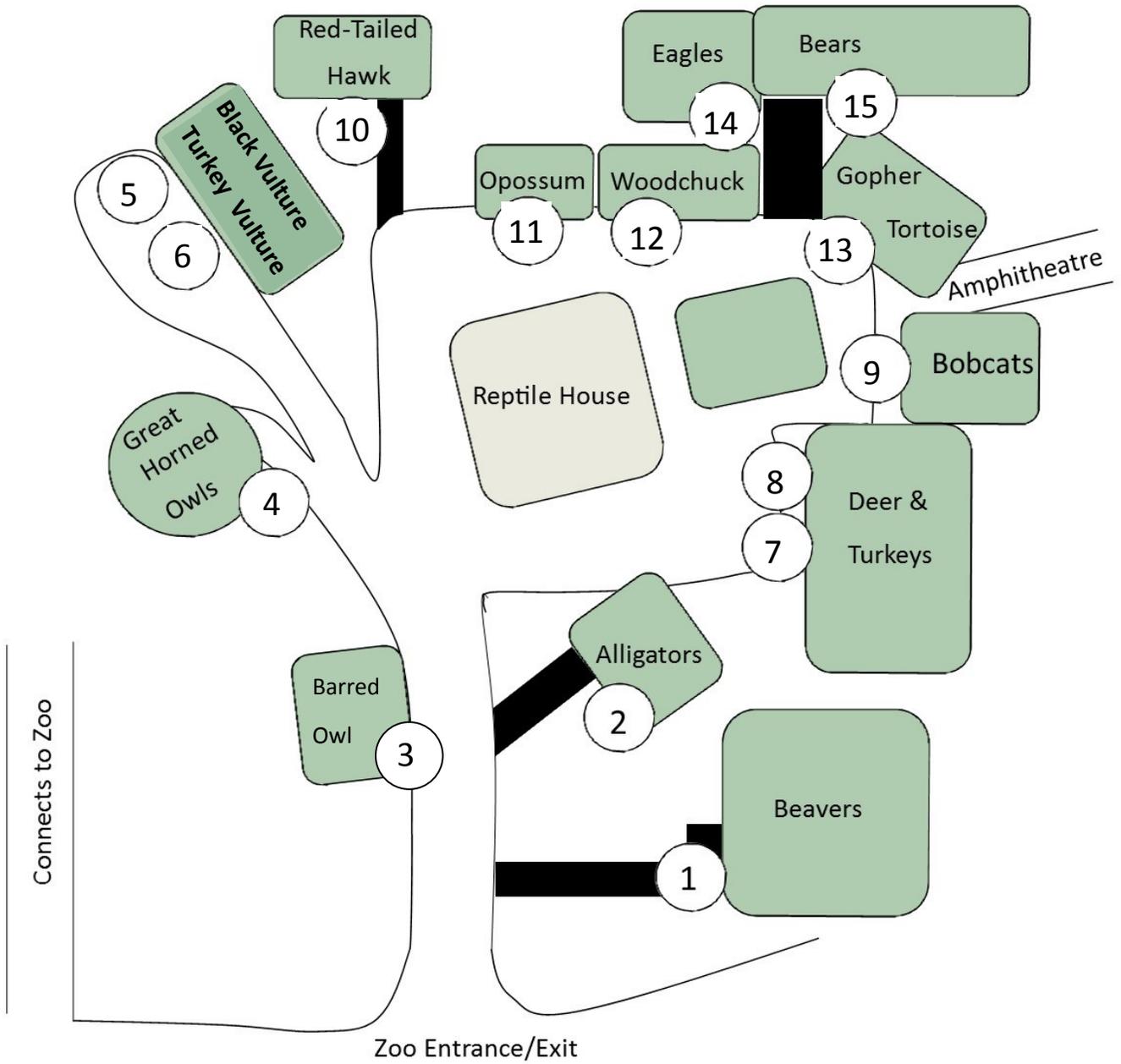
Self Guided Tour



The tour you are about to begin is designed to provide the life histories and engaging questions for many of the animals here at Bear Hollow Zoo. The questions are designed to be both educational and fun, and are based on interesting facts we hope all visitors will enjoy. On the last page, you will find a map that includes the recommended order of the tour and references the locations of each of the animal exhibits.

The Reptile House is open Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4 PM, provided we have volunteer coverage. It is occasionally open during the week as well, depending on volunteer availability. Thank you for your understanding!

Bear Hollow Zoo is a facility of the Athens-Clarke County Department of Leisure Services. Since its creation in the late 1940's, the zoo has undergone many changes: it started as a private collection of wild animals, which were donated to the zoo, but currently, the zoo houses only non-releasable native wildlife in natural habitat exhibits. The zoo is always growing and changing thanks to community support through volunteers and donations, yet it has always remained committed to conservation through the education of its visitors. By educating the public, Bear Hollow helps motivate people to protect wildlife and the habitats they depend upon.



Beaver (2)

Exhibit 1

These beavers came from South Georgia, where their den was destroyed and they were orphaned due to construction. They were 3-4 weeks old and needed a home! They were brought to Bear Hollow in November of 2012. Their names are Cypress and Beech.

Question:

What do beavers do in rivers and creeks?

They build dams and lodges to live in and use them as a retreat to avoid attacks from predators.

What do they use their tails for?

When beavers are in water, they use it for swimming. While on land, however, their tails are used for maintaining balance and regulating body temperature. Their tails are also used for warning other beavers of potential predators. They'll slap the surface of the water with their tail to say "Danger!"

Why do these beavers chew on the fence?

The beavers chew on the fence because their teeth are constantly growing. The chewing allows them to keep their teeth at a healthy length. Although we offer fresh plants on a daily basis, the beavers seem to enjoy the fence.

American Alligator (1)

Exhibit 2

This alligator arrived at Bear Hollow in March of 2009. She hatched at UGA's Savannah River Ecology Lab. She is full grown at six feet long and weighs 75 five pounds, about the same weight as an eleven-year-old boy. Our alligator sometimes likes to spend her time underwater, and has been known to stay under for up to two hours.

Questions:

What are some examples of other reptiles?

Crocodiles, snakes, lizards, turtles, dinosaurs.

How heavy was the largest alligator ever weighed?

727 lbs, captured in Mississippi, September 2013.

What is the difference between an Alligator and a Crocodile?

Alligators have shorter and wider U-shaped snouts, and Crocodiles have longer and thinner V-shaped snouts.

Barred Owl (1)

Exhibit 5

This Barred Owl was hatched in the wild and brought to Bear Hollow in January of 2012. He was found in the wild, injured, after being hit by a car. Preferring mature open forests, Barred Owls prey on small mammals, fish, birds, and insects.

Questions:

How far can an owl turn its head?

Contrary to popular belief, an owl cannot turn its head all the way around. It can, however, turn its head really far - 3/4 of the way around, or 270 degrees!

What kind of sound does the Barred Owl make?

Their call is very distinctive and sounds like someone saying "Who cooks for you, who cooks for you all?"

Can an owl digest an entire small mammal?

No, owls cannot digest the bones and fur, so they spit up these parts in a neatly packed pellet.

Great Horned Owl (2)

Exhibit 4

These Great Horned Owls are named Eeyore and Winnie the Hoo. Eeyore was brought to Bear Hollow in 2000, after having surgery on his left wing. He is also blind in his right eye. Winnie the Hoo was brought here in 2008 after being struck and caught in a car's grill. She travelled all the way from Indiana to Athens, GA.

Questions:

What do you think the Great Horned Owl's favorite food is?

They mainly feed on other birds and mammals, including: mice, rabbits, skunks, and even other owls! They have also been known to feed on reptiles, fish, and insects.

How wide is the wingspan of an adult Great Horned Owl?

3-5 ft.

How did the Great Horned Owl get its name?

The feathers on its head look like horns.

Black Vulture (1)

Exhibit 5

This vulture was brought to Bear Hollow in 2011 with an injury to its left wing. This bird cannot be released back into the wild due to the injury. This species is found commonly here in the Southeast and enjoys open forests and shrub land. It feeds off of carrion, but will eat eggs and small animals when available.

Questions:

What kind of noises do you think the Vulture makes?

It actually has no vocal cords and can only hiss or grunt.

How does the Vulture find its food?

Turkey Vultures have a strong sense of smell and use it to locate carrion (dead animals). Black Vultures do not have a strong sense of smell, so they follow the Turkey Vultures!

What kind of feathers are on top of the Vultures head?

Trick question, they don't have any on their head! This helps keep them clean when eating messy meals.

Turkey Vulture (1)

Exhibit 6

This vulture was brought to Bear Hollow in summer 2013 with an injury to its left wing. Found standing in a garage, this bird was brought to the UGA Wildlife Treatment Crew at the UGA Veterinary Hospital. X-rays revealed that the injury had healed in a position that will permanently hinder flight.

Questions:

How do Turkey Vultures cool themselves off when it's hot outside?

They poop on their feet!

Do vultures fly silently like owls?

They do not. Vultures eat dead things, so there's no need to sneak up on them.

What do Turkey Vultures do if they feel they are in danger?

They vomit! It's very smelly, and reduces their weight in case they need to make a quick take off.

Wild Turkey (6)

Exhibit 7

Wild Turkey are native to the Southeastern United States and Central America. They were originally domesticated by the Native Americans in Mexico. Today, the turkey you probably eat on Thanksgiving can't fly because it has been bred for large amounts of meat.

Questions:

How many feathers does the average turkey have?

Five to six thousand!

How do turkeys use feathers?

They keep them warm and dry, feathers assist in flight, and they are used by male turkey to attract a female.

Did you know a turkeys head can change color? If so, what colors?!

When excited, a turkey's head turns blue. However, when upset or distressed, it turns red.

Deer (2)

Exhibit 8

The deer are named Ginger and Rocky. Both came from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Ginger in June 2005 and Rocky in June 2013. They cannot be released back into the wild because they were raised in the care of people, and have become reliant on people to fulfill their survival needs. They are not able to fend for themselves.

Questions:

What are the common names for male, female, and baby deer?

Male- buck, bull, stag. Female- doe, cow. Baby/young - fawn or calf.

How fast can a deer run?

40 mph

Humans have 1 stomach, how many stomachs does a deer have?

4

Bobcat (2)

Exhibit 9

The bobcats at Bear Hollow are named Katie and Danielle. Katie was born in 2000 and came to Bear Hollow in 2006. Danielle was born in captivity in 1992 and arrived in 1996. They can live up to 16 years in the wild and up to 32 years in captivity. Bobcats are carnivores and generally hunt small to mid-sized mammals.

Questions:

How do bobcats mark their territory?

They scratch on trees and mark their scent around their area.

How are bobcats different from house cats?

Bobcats have longer whiskers, tufted ears, and bobbed tails.

Red-tailed Hawk (1)

Exhibit 10

This red-tailed hawk was hatched in the spring of 2002. Found injured in the wild, the hawk was brought to a wildlife rehabilitator in Lithonia, GA. The right eye needed to be removed. It was brought to Bear Hollow in 2003. Red-tailed Hawks are birds of prey. The Red-tailed Hawk also mates for life, laying a clutch of 1 to 3 eggs at a time.

Questions:

What is another name for the Red-tailed Hawk?

The “Chicken Hawk”, though they rarely prey on chickens themselves!

What kind of animals do Red-tailed Hawks eat?

Small mammals and reptiles

Virginia Opossum (2)

Exhibit 11

These opossums are siblings, they were brought to Bear Hollow in February of 2010. Opossums are the only marsupials found in the United States, meaning that the mothers carry their offspring inside a pouch. Opossums are also known for “playing ‘possum” (pretending to be dead) when frightened or scared.

Questions:

What are some marsupials other than the Opossum?

Kangaroos, Koalas, Wombats, Wallabies, and the Tasmanian Devil

How else, other than in her pouch, does a mother opossum carry her babies?

On her back!

Can Opossums hang upside down by their tails?

Actually, they are not capable of hanging by their tails, though they do use them like another hand.

Woodchuck (1)

Exhibit 12

The woodchuck you see was born in captivity on April 27, 2007. It was brought to Bear Hollow two months later from Wildlife Wonders in Cleveland, GA. Better known as a Groundhog, the Woodchuck belongs to the same family as Ground Squirrels, also known as Marmots. Woodchucks live in burrows and feed primarily on grasses and other vegetation. They reproduce once a year with a litter containing 2 to 6 offspring.

Questions:

Are Woodchucks vegetarian?

No, they are not. Though they mainly eat plants, they also eat insects and snails.

Which February holiday features a Woodchuck under a better known name?

Groundhog Day!

How much wood would a Woodchuck chuck if a Woodchuck could chuck wood?

As much as he could!

Gopher Tortoise (3)

Exhibit 13

The three Gopher Tortoises are named Faith, Shrek, and Fiona. Faith was hatched in the wild and came to Bear Hollow in 1997. Shrek and Fiona were hatched in captivity in 2005. They are known for their burrowing abilities and can eat over 300 different plant and mushroom species. They can live for around 40 years with some reaching up to 70 years.

Questions:

What do burrows offer other than a home?

Protection from fire and predators.

How long does the average gopher tortoise live?

Between 40 to 70 years.

Bald Eagle (2)

Exhibit 14

The bald eagle is the national bird of the United States of America. Formerly an endangered and threatened species, it is now flying free in the lower 48 states! It mainly feeds on fish and prefers to nest in old growth forests. Often found in pairs, the bald eagle mates for life and lays up to 7 eggs per season.

Questions:

What keeps Bear Hollow's Bald Eagles from flying away?

Old injuries prevent either bird from being able to fly.

What do bald eagles normally eat in the wild?

All kinds of meat, but mainly fish.

Black Bear (3)

Exhibit 15

While Black Bears are the most common bear native to North America, they are also the smallest. Brought to Bear Hollow in January 2006, D.J. was orphaned at 8 weeks old and is the oldest of the 3. The other two Black Bears are sisters, Athena and Yonah. They were also orphaned at 2 weeks old and were brought to Bear Hollow in April 2010. Their love to climb the trees in their enclosure.

Questions:

How much does a black bear weigh?

Adult males can weigh between 125 and 550 lbs, while females can weigh from 90-370 lbs. Black bears tend to weigh much more in autumn before they go into hibernation.

What kind of food do black bears eat?

Black Bears are omnivores, so they eat both plants and other animals. In the summer, they eat a lot of fruits, especially berries. During the autumn they eat nuts like hazelnuts, acorns, and pine nuts. A large part of the Black Bears diet also consists of bees, yellow jackets, ants, and their larvae.

How do Black Bears communicate with each other?

By marking trees using their teeth and claws.