

Points of Discussion for a Self-Guided Tour

Raccoon Exhibit - near lake

- Raccoons are a common mammal throughout Alabama.
- Nocturnal
- Omnivorous (plant and animal product) and opportunistic eaters
- Often referred to as the “masked bandit”.
- Do not feed raccoons in the wild. This can encourage them to become accustomed to humans, which puts them and humans in danger.
- Rabies vector species



Water Bird Exhibit - near lake

Brown Pelican

- Only brown for the first 2 years of their life – grey in color with a white head upon maturity
- Long bill with pouch to catch fish when they dive into the water
- Found in coastal regions of Alabama all year
- White pelicans are also found in coastal regions of Alabama during the winter time.



Laughing Gull

- Found around the coastal areas of Alabama
- Seasonal color changes – white head in cooler months, black head in warmer months



Wild Turkey

- Upland ground bird that make lots of noises...gobble, cluck, cackle, whine, yelp
- Male turkeys have a long “beard”



Song Bird Aviary - center of front yard

Blue Jay

- Can be loud and aggressive
- Prey on eggs of various species, as well as the young of many species
- Beneficial to other birds because they can chase predators, such as hawks, away
- Highly curious, considered intelligent



Pigeon

- Largely considered a nuisance
- Invasive species that is often referred to as a “city dove”



Box Turtle

- Omnivorous
- Defend themselves by hiding, closing their shell, and biting



American Alligator Exhibit – near front of building

- American Alligators are reptiles. Reptiles include lizards, snakes, turtles, and alligators.
- American Alligators are endemic to the southeastern United States.
- All reptiles are exothermic or “cold-blooded”.
- Carnivore
- Adult males can typically reach lengths between 11 – 12 feet.



Turtle Habitat – at front of building

- Aquatic turtles or water turtles are found in the exhibit.
- The shell of a turtle grows with them and offers protection.
- Not all turtles can swim.
- Common aquatic turtles in the Mobile area include red eared sliders, yellow bellied sliders, snapping turtles, and softshell turtles.



Deer Enclosure – behind privacy fence

- White-tailed deer are hoofed mammals.
- Mammals are endothermic or “warm-blooded”.
- Males are called bucks and females are called does.
- Bucks grow antlers, but typically, male deer in captivity will not grow antlers because they have been neutered.
- Herbivores
- Mostly crepuscular – mainly active at dawn and dusk
- Ruminant



Boardwalk

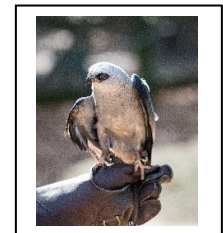
Broad-winged Hawk

- Birds of prey or raptors are carnivores consisting of hawks, eagles, osprey, kites, owls, falcons, and kestrels.
- Broad-winged hawks are a small bird of prey with broad wings that come to a point at the end.
- Will migrate together in large groups called kettles



Mississippi Kite

- Small bird of prey
- Adults have feathers of grey and black, juveniles have more streaking with brownish chests
- Kites, as well as hawks, falcons, kestrels, eagles, and osprey are diurnal (active during the day, resting at night)



Vulture

- Black vultures have a black head and are smaller than turkey vultures who have a red head.
- Vultures are nature’s “clean-up” crew, as in they eat carrion (deceased animals).



Board Walk Continued

Red-tailed Hawk

- Largest hawk native to Alabama
- Gets its name from its red tail of feathers
- Will soar in wide circles over open fields to find prey



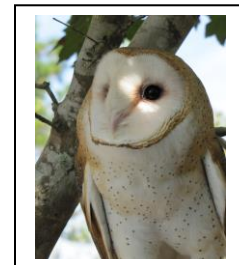
Bald Eagle

- Once on the Endangered Species List because of a pesticide called DDT
- Population is no longer endangered since DDT was banned
- Characteristic white head and tail feathers in maturity
- Young eagles are solid brown and experience a color change during the early years of their life.



Barn Owl

- All owls are nocturnal.
- Bird of prey that is light in color with a heart shaped face
- Feeds on a large quantity of mice and rats
- Not all owls hoot. The barn owl makes a loud screaming noise



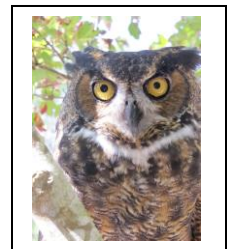
Barred Owl

- Gets its name from the characteristic stripes or “bars” running down its chest and across its back
- Makes an unusual hooting noise that some say sounds like they are singing a song stating “Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?”
- Often called a swamp owl because they often live in wet, swampy areas
- Owls can’t move their eyes in their eye sockets. Instead, they turn their head around to see what is happening around them.



Great Horned Owl

- Gets its name because of the tufts of feathers that rest on top of their head
- Because they make an actual hooting noise they are referred to as a “hoot” owl
- Powerful hunter with very strong feet
- Owls are silent flyers. They have fringes on the edges of their wings that allow them sneak up on their prey during the quiet hours of the nights.



Red-shouldered Hawk

- Medium sized hawk with red patches on their shoulders when mature
- Very vocal hawk
- Typically lives near wetlands



Great Blue Heron

- Large bird with long legs for wading in water to catch fish
- They will walk slowly and even stand statue-like waiting for a fish to come near
- Beak is sharp and pointed to aid in fishing



Board Walk Continued

Skunk

- Skunks are small mammals native to our area.
- Two types of skunks are present in our area. The spotted skunk and the striped skunk seen in this enclosure.
- Rabies Vector Species
- Main method of protection is to spray an oily, smelly liquid from a gland at the base of its tail
- Omnivorous
- Primarily crepuscular



Screech Owl

- The smallest of the owls that live in Alabama
- Makes a screechy noise, does not hoot
- Feeds on lots of bugs including roaches
- Screech owls can be red or grey in color.



Coyote Exhibit – at head of trail

- Canine mammal native to North America
- Males can reach close to 40 pounds at adulthood.
- Carnivorous
- Rabies Vector Species

