



BEAR TRACKS



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The Sly Foxes and Wiley Coyotes of Georgia

by Stephanie Shumacher, Zoo Assistant

Foxes and coyotes are the only wild members of the canid (dog) family still living in Georgia. They are related to domestic dogs, wolves and jackals. The earliest dogs can be traced back to the Eocene Epoch, 55 to 38 million years ago. Today, canids can be found on every continent except Antarctica. Canids presence on many islands is the result of human introduction of the animals.

There are two species of foxes currently living in Georgia, the gray fox and the red fox. The gray fox is native to the eastern forests of Georgia and the United States. They can be found through Central and South America as well. Although gray foxes are primarily associated with forested areas, they can also be found along woodland edges and in and around urban and suburban areas. The gray fox's main diet includes small mammals and birds; however they will also eat carrion, fruits, nuts, and berries. The gray fox feeds more heavily on plant material than other wild canids and is considered more omnivorous. The gray fox's ability to climb trees to elude predators is unique not only among foxes but also in the canine world.

The red fox was originally found in the forested areas of Canada but was introduced into America by European settlers. It is now found throughout most of Georgia and the United States. Red foxes are commonly found in areas of mixed pine-hardwood forests with fields, cropland, or grasslands. Red foxes are often found in urban and suburban areas because of the abundance of food found there. The red fox's diet is similar to that of the gray fox and it is known to hide or bury food when abundant. Their speed and ability to elude predators is what made this species popular for fox and hound hunting.

The adaptability of the gray and red fox to urban and suburban areas has caused them to be quite common

in cities, towns, subdivisions, and near rural home sites. Even though foxes are primarily nocturnal (active during the night) it is not uncommon to see them during the day. If you see a fox during the day near your home it is best to leave it alone. Foxes can carry a number of diseases and parasites including rabies, distemper, roundworms, fleas, and mange mites.

There used to be a family of five foxes living here at Bear Hollow Wildlife Trail in the enclosure that Amazon, the bald eagle, now inhabits. The names of the adults were Guinevere and Zorro. Because of their elusive nature it was difficult for visitors and staff to see the foxes. They burrowed down in the rocks and rarely came out. Of the five foxes, the three pups were trapped and put in to a release program while both adults died of natural causes.



Don't forget to visit our website at www.athensclarkecounty.com/bearhollow

Bear Tracks is a seasonal newsletter for Bear Hollow Wildlife Trail, a facility of the Athens-Clarke County Department of Leisure Services. If you are interested in adding your name to our mailing list, please contact us at:

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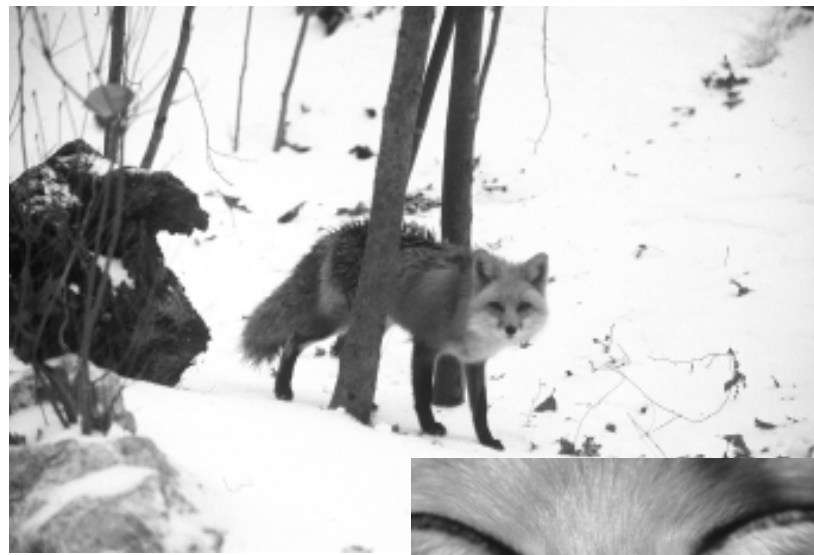
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**Hours of Operation:
9:00 a.m.- sunset everyday, no admission fee**



Zorro (above) in rare Georgia snow and Guinevere portrait (right)



The Sly Foxes and Wiley Coyotes of Georgia (continued)

Coyotes are a popular character in Native American stories. The coyote most often is known as a trickster but is sometimes portrayed as a buffoon or the butt of jokes. He is thought to be humorous and

clever but can he can also be greedy, impulsive, reckless, and jealous. Coyote's role in stories changes depending on the type of story and the culture in which the story originated.

Coyotes are native to the southwest desert but their home range has extended because of the decline of wolves, habitat availability, and their ability to adapt. Today, coyotes can be found throughout North America from Alaska to Central America. There are now probably tens of thousands of them in Georgia. Coyotes prefer wooded forests bordered by fields and brushy areas but can adapt and thrive anywhere food, water, and shelter can be found.

A coyote's diet consists of voles, cottontails, squirrels, mice, snakes, and birds. Part of the coyote's success comes from their dietary adaptability. Coyotes will eat almost anything from human garbage to domestic pets. Fruits and vegetables are a significant part of a coyote's diet in the autumn and winter months. A coyote's eyesight is six times greater than man's and their sense of smell is more than 23 times better than man's. They use these senses for hunting and detecting scents left by other coyotes.

In areas where coyotes are hunted and trapped they tend to be wary of humans. In urban areas, where they are more likely to associate people with a dependable food source, they lose their fear of humans. In order to protect yourself and your home from coyotes you should not feed them, leave pet food out where they can get to it, or leave small pets out to run free, especially at night. It is important to secure garbage cans, position bird feeders so coyotes can not get to the feed and to clear brush or weeds which is home to small mammals which coyotes like to eat. Although coyote sightings do occur, they are timid and shy animals and tend to stay away from humans. A coyote displaying abnormal behavior and appearing fearless of humans is unnatural and could mean that the animal has rabies, parvovirus or distemper. If this happens it is best to call someone to come get the animal to prevent further spread of the disease.

I am a Red Fox (*VULPES FULVA*).

Color by number. 1=red, 2=white, 3=black



Awesome Upcoming Events and Programs!

GROUNDHOG DAY AT BEAR HOLLOW-Festivities include an official proclamation at 7:30 a.m.. There will be hot cocoa, goodies and a variety of programs throughout the morning to celebrate the day. **Ages:** For all ages **Date:** Saturday, Feb 2 **Time:** 7:30 a.m.-noon **Fee:** Free and open to the public.

WEE WINTER WONDERLAND-Join us for a special series of programs for pre-school children and their parents. Learn how plants and animals cope with the freezing temperatures each week as we explore outside and play games. Please dress for the weather! **Ages:** 2 – 4; parents must accompany! **Program Dates:** Thursdays: Jan. 17 & 31 and Feb.14 & 28 **Time:**10:00 – 11:00 a.m. **Location:** Zoo Operations Center **Registration:** (706) 613-3616 ext. 22 Pre-registration required! **Fee:** \$2/ ACC Residents \$3/ Non-ACC Residents

ANIMALS IN ART-Show us your talents and help us decorate our Exhibit Hall with you art work. Participants and their families will be invited to a special viewing ceremony where the winners will be announced. Prizes will be awarded for specific age categories. **Ages:** 4-18 **Date:** All entries due by March 1st. Entries may be dropped off at the Zoo Operations Center by appointment only. You may pick up an entry form at the zoo or through your school. **Location:** Bear Hollow Wildlife Trail 706-613-3616 ext 22 **Fee:** \$3 per art work for ACC residents (limit of 2/person), \$5 Non-ACC residents (limit of 2/person)

TEEN NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAM-NEW!-Learn the basics of photography including film development and the how to's of nature photography in the classroom and outdoors. Participants are required to bring their own 35mm camera plus color film to the first session. Each participant will display 1 work during a special viewing ceremony upon completion of the program **Ages:** 13-18 **Program Dates:** Saturdays, March 1-22 and April 5-28 (no session March 29) **Time:** 1:00-4:00 p.m. **Location:** Bear Hollow and Lyndon House Arts Center **Registration Dates:** February 1 until full; call 706-613-3616 ext. 22 **Fee:** \$0-\$68/ ACC residents (based on scholarship eligibility) , \$101 Non-ACC residents.

BOOK CRAWL AT THE HOLLOW-Celebrate Read Across America Day at the zoo, while participating in storytelling and enjoying books about animals that live at Bear Hollow. **Program Date:** March 3, **For ages:** **Pre-school – 2nd grade**-time: 10-11 a.m. **For ages: 3rd grade and up**-time: 4-5 p.m. **Location:** Exhibit Hall in zoo **Fee:** FREE!

KIDS IN ACTION!-Volunteer in the zoo along with staff on a special project. All volunteers must be comfortable around mammals, birds and reptiles. All must not be afraid of hard work. Volunteers will be closely supervised. Each volunteer will receive a Bear Hollow T-shirt upon completion of the program. Volunteers will also present a program to parents on the last day! **Ages:** 10-12 **Program Dates:** Tuesdays, March 4-April 22 **Time:** 3:30-5:00 p.m. **Location:** Zoo Operations Center 706-613-3616 ext 22 **Registration dates:** February 1 until full; limited space; *Pre-registration required!* **Fee:** \$0-\$28 ACC residents (depending upon scholarship eligibility), \$33 Non-ACC residents

WEE TODDLE THROUGH THE PARK-Join us for a special series of programs for toddlers and their parents. Dance, make music and toddle about as we explore Memorial Park's lake, trail and the zoo. Please dress appropriately for the weather and wear comfortable walking shoes. **Ages:** 2-3; parents must accompany! **Program Dates:** Thursdays, March 6-April 24 (no session on March 13) **Time:** 10:00-11:00 a.m. **Location:** Zoo Operations Center 706-613-3616 ext 22 **Registration Dates:** February 1 until full; *Pre-registration required!* **Fee:** \$0-\$14/ACC residents (depending upon scholarship eligibility), \$21 Non-ACC residents.

More Winter Programs!

WEE WALK THROUGH THE PARK-Join us for a special series of programs for older toddlers and their parents. Dance, make music and walk about as we explore Memorial Park's lake, trail and the zoo. Please dress appropriately for the weather and wear comfortable walking shoes. **Ages:** 4-5; parents must accompany! **Program Dates:** Thursdays, March 6-April 24 (no session on March 13) **Time:** 11:00 a.m.-noon. **Location:** Zoo Operations Center 706-613-3616 ext 22 **Registration Dates:** February 1 until full; *Pre-registration required!* **Fee:** \$0-\$14/ACC residents (depending upon scholarship eligibility), \$21 Non-ACC residents.

GIRL SCOUT JAMBOREE-*New!*-Join Bear Hollow for an overnight extravaganza! The "Creatures of the Night" program focuses on animals that are awake when its dark. Girl Scouts will have an opportunity to spend the night with their troop as well as other troops from Athens and surrounding areas. Each scout will earn a special Bear Hollow patch for participating in the program **Ages:** Daisies through Cadettes **Program Dates:** Friday March 7 for Daisies and Brownies, Friday, March 28 for Juniors and Cadettes **Time:** 6:00 p.m. until 10:00 a.m. **Location:** Zoo Operations Center 706-613-3616 ext 22 **Registration Dates:** February 1 until full; limited space! **Fee:** \$0-\$20 ACC residents depending upon scholarship eligibility), \$27 Non-ACC residents

SPRING BREAK CAMP-STEPPIN' INTO SPRING-*Spring Break will be here before you know it! Spend the week with having fun at the park and zoo! We'll play some games, make some cool crafts, learn about the animals in the zoo, do a little healthy cooking, and enjoy a local trip or two!* **Ages:** 6-12 years **Program Dates:** March 10-14 **Time:** 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. **Location:** Drop off & pick up at Memorial Park Recreation Hall **Registration Date:** February 4- March 5. **NO LATE REGISTRATION ALLOWED.** Minimum 10 participants, maximum 40 participants. **Fee:** \$50 ACC resident/ \$60 Non-ACC resident



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