

Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)

Habits

Raccoons are a nocturnal species native to North America. They breed from January-March and give birth to 2-5 kits after ~60 days. They have enhanced tactile senses on their hands and forearms, which help them search for prey items on land and water.

Coloration

The body on raccoons is a gray/brown color with black and gray ringed tails and black eye masks. They also have unique dexterous fingers that are able to grasp items similar to a human hand.

Habitat

Rural raccoons prefer dense woodlands. In urban spaces, they can be found in burrows, abandoned buildings, and sewer systems.

Diet

They are omnivorous, meaning they eat both animal and plant material. Their diet consists of insects, bugs, and fruiting plants. In urban areas, they will consume human subsidies (dog/cat food, leftover food waste).

Size

They can weight 10 - 44lbs.



Population Status

Least Concern



Coyote (*Canis latrans*)

Habits

Coyotes are a common canid species in North America. They are typically crepuscular, active at dawn and dusk, but can be seen during the day. In areas with high human activity, they become more nocturnal. Coyotes are monogamous, mating December-March. They are a social species and use vocalizations to communicate. The vocalizations are so complex that many people mistake one coyote vocalization as an entire pack.

Coloration

Color can range from light gray to black, with red tints on their extremities. They have a narrow snout and sharply pointed ears.

Habitat

They thrive in urban, suburban, and rural areas. In rural areas, they are found in prairies, forests, deserts, and shrublands. They prefer edge habitat and seek shelter in near-by cover.

Diet

They are opportunistic hunters. Most of their diet consists of small mammals and rabbits. They are known to eat carrion (dead animals) and fruiting plants. In urban areas, they consume human subsidies (trash, dog/cat food, poultry).

Size

They can weigh anywhere from 15-40 pounds.



Population Status

Least Concern



White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

Habits

White-tailed deer are native to North and South America. They are crepuscular but can also be seen at night and throughout the day. They breed October–December. Does (female deer) have one or two fawns during the late spring and early summer. Female fawns will stay with their mothers typically for two years, while male fawns will disperse after a year.

Coloration

They are sexually dimorphic, meaning males and females have differing physical characteristics. Male deer (bucks) grow antlers every year, while females do not. Fawns are born with white spots on their hindquarters and backs. Adults are a light brown color, with white tails, chinstraps, and stomachs.

Habitat

They can be found in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

White-tailed deer live in areas that have a mixture of grass and wooded areas.

Diet

They are an herbivorous species. Their diet changes season to season. In the spring and summer, they eat green, fruiting plants and berries, while in the fall and winter they feed on nuts, acorns, and agricultural products (corn and soybeans).

Size

Males weigh ~203 lbs.
Females weigh ~155 lbs.



Population Status

Least Concern



Virginia Opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*)

Habits

Virginia opossums are a natural species native throughout the eastern United States and some parts of Mexico. They are the only marsupial in North America, meaning they have a pouch to carry their young. Their prehensile tail helps grab branches.

Coloration

Their body is a dark grey color, with a white face and black legs and ears. They have a hairless, muscular tail, a pouch located on their stomach, and the most teeth out of any North American mammal.

Habitat

They prefer forested or heavy brush areas. They like to den in rock crevices, hollowed trees, and under buildings and porches.

Diet

They are an omnivorous species that eats carrion, plants, and insects. In urban areas, they also eat human subsidies like trash, dog/cat food, and food waste.

Size

They can range from 2-15 pounds.



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Population Status

Least Concern



Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Habits

The Red-tailed Hawk is a predatory species that can be found across North America. They soar high above ground and perch on high objects to search for their prey. They nest in trees and are known to build/refurbish nests with the same mate for life.

Coloration

From above, Red-tailed Hawks have a mottled brown body with bright red-orange fanned tail feathers. Their body is mostly white from below, but their distinct red-orange tail is still visible.

Habitat

Red-tailed Hawks are known to thrive across North America. They can inhabit grasslands, deserts, woodlands, and mountainous regions.

Diet

Mammals such as rabbits, squirrels, and mice make up a majority of their diet. They also eat smaller birds and reptiles.

Size

Their wingspan can range from 44.9-52.4 in. They can weigh between 24.3-51.5 ounces. Females are larger than males.



Population Status

Least Concern

Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*)

Habits

Blue Jays are song-birds native to the eastern United States. They mate for life and have complex social structures. Their head crests and vocalizations help them to communicate with others.

Coloration

Blue Jays are known for their bright blue and white pattern. They also have a head crest and a black pattern around their head.

Habitat

Blue Jays are common in both urban and suburban areas but prefer areas with oak trees and forest edges.

Diet

Blue Jays are an omnivorous species, consuming both insects and plant material (seeds, nuts, and fruits). They may also eat injured small vertebrates.

Size

Their wingspan ranges from 13.4-16.9 in. They weigh between 2.5-3.5 ounces.



Population Status

Least Concern

American Robin (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Habits

American Robins are a song-bird that can be found across North America. During the fall and winter, they spend more time in groups and trees.

During the spring, males will sing to attract females. They build their nests on tree branches and lay 3-5 baby blue eggs.

Coloration

American Robins are characterized by their black heads, gray wings, and bright orange colored breast.

Habitat

American Robins can be found in lawns, forests, tundras, and fields. During the winter, they are more commonly seen in wooded habitats.

Diet

The American Robin's diet consists of invertebrates and fruits. During the summer, they eat insects and fruiting plants.

Size

Their wingspan can range from 12.2-15.8 in. They weigh between 2.7-3 ounces.



Population Status

Least Concern

Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)

Habits

Northern Cardinals are a song-bird that is native to the eastern United States and parts of Mexico. They forage by hopping along the ground in search of food. They communicate with one another through their crest position.

They build nests on small branches, which will hold 2-5 eggs per season.

Coloration

The male is a bright red color with a black face and bright orange beak. The female cardinal is a dull brown color with a black face and bright orange beak. They both have head crests.

Habitat

Cardinals can be seen in both urban and suburban areas. They thrive in areas with a mixture of open fields and dense shrubby material.

Diet

Their beaks are thick and built for cracking seeds and fruit, but they will also supplement their diet with insects.

Size

Their wingspan can range from 9.8-12.2 in. They weigh between 1.5-1.7 ounces.



Population Status

Least Concern

Brown Thrasher (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Habits

Brown Thrashers are a common song-bird found in the southeast

United States. They spend a majority of their time hopping around on the ground in search of food. They stay with the same mate during their breeding season and are known to defend their nests from predators like snakes, mammals, and birds of prey. They are the state bird of Georgia!

Coloration

Brown Thrashers have a cinnamon-brown upper body, with a white chest covered in deep brown streaks. They have bright yellow eyes.

Habitat

Brown Thrashers thrive in areas with lots of thick brush. They can also be found along forest edges in urban areas, parks, and in backyards.

Diet

Their diet consists mostly of insects, but they will also supplement their diet with seeds and fruits .



Size

Their wingspan ranges from 11.4-12.6 in. They weigh between 2.1-3.1 ounces.

Population Status

Least Concern

Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Didelphis virginiana*)

Habits

The Red-bellied Woodpecker is native to the eastern United States. They can be seen perched on the sides of trees, where they use their beak to bore into trees in search of food. Males will use the sound of drilling into a dead tree to attract a mate. They build nests in tree cavities.

Coloration

Red-bellied Woodpeckers have a bright red cap on their head, with black and white mottled wings and a white chest and face. They have a long black beak for drilling into trees.

Habitat

They can live in forests and wooded urban areas. They are more commonly found in wetlands.

Diet

Their diet consists mostly of insects, spiders, and other invertebrates that live on or in trees. They may also eat seeds or nuts in the winter months.



Size

Their wingspan ranges from 13-16.5 inches. They weigh between 2-3.2 ounces.

Population Status

Least Concern

Eastern Kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getula*)

Habits

Kingsnakes are constrictors and primarily fossorial, meaning they spend most of their time underground. When threatened, they emit a musky odor and mimic a rattlesnake by shaking their tail against leaves.

Coloration

Eastern kingsnakes are black with white to yellow chain-like striping around their body, but patterning can vary widely with individuals.

Habitat

Kingsnakes can live in rural, suburban, and urban habitats in the Eastern USA. In urban environments, they can often be found near bodies of water or hiding under sidewalks, porches, tree stumps, or leaf litter.

Diet

Kingsnakes are immune to the venom of other snakes in Georgia. Because of this, they readily prey upon copperheads and rattlesnakes as well as small rodents, turtles, and lizards.



Population Status

Least Concern

Size

Up to 5 feet long

Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*)

Habits

Unlike most turtles, Eastern box turtles live on land. They will live their entire lives in a home range less than 2 acres. They are active in Georgia from April to October. To protect themselves from predators, they have a hinged plastron (bottom half of the shell) that can close their head inside their shell.

Habitat

Box turtles live in a variety of habitats across the Eastern USA, including forests and grasslands. They are also common in urban areas such as backyards and parks. They spend much of their time under logs, porches, or leaf litter.



Coloration

Box turtle shells and legs can be various shades of brown with orange and yellow patterning. Males have bright red or orange eyes. Females have dark red or brown eyes. Box turtle shells are highly domed or bowl-shaped.

Diet

They are omnivores and eat both plant material and invertebrates.

Size
Up to 6 inches long

Population Status

Least concern

It is illegal to harvest or keep Box turtles as pets in Georgia.

Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*)

Habits

Red-eared sliders are commonly found basking in groups. They are often found doing this on logs or rocks in ponds and lakes. When approached, they will quickly slide into the water, hence their name. Turtles are slow on land but fast in water. They lay eggs on land and the newly hatched young move to the water.

Coloration

Most adults have a dark brown or green shell with yellow and red markings. They get their name from two red patches of skin on either side of their head. As they get older, these yellow and red markings may fade.

Habitat

Red-eared sliders are native to North America, but have become invasive in Western and Central Europe and Southeast Asia. This species is popular in the pet trade, and it is believed that released pets are the cause for this invasion. They can be found in urban habitats and prefer bodies of water with muddy bottoms.



Diet

They are omnivores and will eat anything from aquatic plants to small fish.

Population Status

Least Concern

Size

Up to 10 inches long

Green Anole (*Anolis carolinensis*)

Habits

Anoles are diurnal lizard. Males defend their territories by displaying a bright pink throat pouch and making a push-up motion. During the summer months, females lay one egg at a time every two weeks in soil or leaf litter. Anoles have specialized toe pads that allow them to climb easily.

Coloration

Anoles can change color! Their skin can be dark brown to bright green depending on the color and temperature of their surroundings. Their tails can take up two-thirds of their total body length.

Habitat

Anoles are highly adaptable and live in various habitats across the Southeast. They are arboreal (spend most of their time in trees), but in urban areas can also live on fences, walls, and roofs.



Diet

Anoles are carnivores and eat invertebrates, including insects, spiders, and worms.

Population Status

Least concern

Size

Up to 8 inches long

American Toad (*Anaxyrus americanus*)

Habits

American toads are a nocturnal amphibian. They have high site fidelity, meaning they tend to use the same areas to rest and hunt for prey every day. In urban environments, toads often hunt for prey near porch lights that attract insects. Toads do not cause warts in humans, but they do release a toxin when threatened that can irritate human skin and eyes.

Coloration

American toad coloration can vary widely among individuals, but most adults are gray to brown with red, yellow, and orange patterns across their backs.

Habitat

American toads are widely distributed across the Eastern USA. They can live anywhere from urban, suburban, and rural habitats, including forests and grasslands. Although as adults they are terrestrial, they need to live near water to lay their eggs.



Diet

Toads eat invertebrates, including insects, spiders, and worms.

Size

Up to 4 inches long

Population Status

Least Concern

Spring Peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*)

Habits

Spring peepers are a nocturnal amphibian and spend most of their time on the ground hiding under leaves or sticks. They are rarely seen but can often be heard in the evening and at night. Their call sounds like a high-pitched whistle.

Coloration

Spring peepers are tan to brown with an imperfect 'x' stripe on the back. Their undersides are lighter in color than their backs.

Habitat

They live in forested areas near water sources. In urban areas, they can live near creeks, ponds, or large puddles in backyards, parks, and other small patches of greenspace.



Diet

As tadpoles, they eat primarily algae. As adults, they eat insects and spiders.

Size

Up to 1.5 inches long

Population Status

Least concern