

White-Tailed Deer

Physical Description

Coat is reddish-brown in the spring and summer and turns grey-brown throughout the fall and winter. Can be recognized by the characteristic white underside to its tail, which it shows as a signal of alarm by raising the tail during escape. Males one year of age or older have antlers.



Females give birth to one, two or even possibly three spotted young, known as fawns, in mid- to late-spring.

Habitat

Throughout North America from southern Canada through Central America.

Food Source

Twigs, leaves, bark, shrubs, the fruits and nuts of most vegetation, as well as lichens and other fungi.

Predators

They have few predators. A young fawn may be killed by a coyote or a fox, but mostly the bucks are hunted for sport.

Raccoon

Physical Description

Face has black mask outlined in white. Tail bushy, with 4-6 alternating black and brown or brownish-gray rings. A raccoon is an excellent tree climber and is not bothered by drops of 35 or 40 feet.



Raccoons are known for washing their food and are strictly nocturnal.

Habitat

A well-timbered containing several large, mature trees and includes a combination of grain crops and water. Has been known to adapt to life in a city as well.

Food Source

Berries, insects, eggs and small animals.

Predators

Mountain lion, bobcat, gray wolf, red fox, coyote, fisher, and owl.

Other hikes available include:

- Sloper Historical Hike
- 7 Natural Wonders of Sloper Hike
- Sloper Tree Identification Hike
- Sloper Wetlands Hike

Striped Skunk

Physical Description

Similar in size to a house cat. Nocturnal. Broad white stripes meet at the shoulders of its black back. Tail is black with a white tip or fringe. The unique characteristic of the skunk is its ability to spray a putrid, oily, yellowish musk 10-15 inches. This fluid in the eyes causes intense pain and a fleeting loss of vision. Ammonia or tomato juices are best to remove the odor.



Habitat

Skunks range from Canada, across the United States, and into northern South America. They are very adaptable and live in various types of areas though they prefer woodlands near water. They prefer to den in trees but will use burrows when necessary.

Food Source

Insects, grubs, small mammals, the eggs of ground-nesting birds, amphibians, beetles and their larvae, grasshoppers, crickets, earthworms, butterfly and moth larvae, spiders, snails, ants, bees, wasps, and crayfish.

Predators

Owl, hawk, and fox.

Red Fox

Physical Description

Red fox have a long snout, pointed ears and a long, bushy tail, which is carried horizontally. They have an orange-red coat with black feet and a very bushy tail. The fox's eyes are gold to yellow and have distinctive vertically slit pupils, similar to those of a feline. Its strong legs allow it to reach speeds of up to 45 miles per hour.



Habitat

A familiar sight in suburban and even urban environments both in Europe and North America, but also found in prairies and forest settings.

Food Source

Rodents, insects, fruits, worms, eggs, birds, and other small animals.

Predators

Humans: hunted for their coats.

YMCA CAMP SLOPER Wildlife Identification Hike



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YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. The YMCA is a non-profit 501c(3) organization.

BIRDS

Turkey Vulture

Physical Description

Very large, broad-winged, soaring bird. Longish, hooked beak; spends most time soaring, wing flaps are slow and laborious; featherless head.

Habitat

Exist in a wide range of habitats from deserts to savannahs and grasslands, to tropical and temperate forests. Range extends across much of the continental United States, into Central America, and throughout most of South America.

Food Source

Feeds on medium-sized dead animals.

Predators

Has few natural predators.



Mallard

Physical Description

Large floating duck with silvery-white wing linings. Female predominantly light brown in color. Male has a yellow bill while the female's is orange.

Habitat

Found in all wetland habitats.

Food Source

Insects, larvae, aquatic invertebrates, seeds, grain acorns, aquatic vegetation.

Predators

Nests are often poached by animals like the coyote, snake, and certain types of birds.



Canada Goose

Physical Description

Large long-necked goose, black bill, black head and neck. White throat patch extends up to cheek.

Habitat

Found all year long across the northern part of the United States and during the summer in most of Canada. Tends to spend winter months in the southern half of the United States.

Food Source

Strictly plants, berries, and various grasses.

Predators

Predators vary widely among areas and include fox, coyote, wolf, bear, wolverine, gull, eagle, and raven.



Red-Tailed Hawk

Physical Description

Short, dark, hooked beak, large, red, broad-tailed hawk, excellent hearing and sight. Usually had pale chest and dark band across belly.

Habitat

Throughout North America and Canada.

Food Source

Small rodents, snakes, squirrels, fish, and other small birds.

Predators

Humans: pollution, pesticides, and land development.



Killdeer

Physical Description

Medium-sized shorebird. Legs moderately long, short neck, brown back.

Habitat

Throughout North America and Canada. Found in the gravel parking lots of YMCA Camp Sloper.

Food Source

Earthworms, grasshoppers, beetles and snails, occasionally small vertebrates and seeds.

Predators

These birds will frequently use the "broken-wing act" to distract predators from their nests. Involves walking away from its nesting area, holding its wing in a position simulating an injury, and flapping around on the ground letting out a distress call. Predators think they have easy prey and are attracted to this seemingly injured bird and away from its nest.



REPTILES

Snapping Turtle

Physical Description

Powerful jaws, sharp beak, no teeth, long tail. Webbed foot has five clawed toes. No vocal cords, can only make hissing and grunting sounds. Grows up to 18.5 inches long and can weigh up to 85 lbs.

Habitat

The common snapping turtle can be found in almost every state from the Great Plains eastward.

Food Source

Eats anything that can fit into its mouth including fish, frogs, small birds, and a wide variety of plant life.

Predators

They are not threatened, but land development may affect them in time.



Painted Turtle

Physical Description

Brightly colored shell (typically orange but can also be yellow or green), long neck, very good swimmer. In captivity, can survive more than 20 years.

Habitat

Can be found sitting on logs on the edges of lakes, ponds, and slow moving streams.

Food Source

Snails, insects, crayfish, leeches, tadpoles, small fish, and many types of plants.

Predators

Humans because in some places they are turned into soups and stews.



Black Rat Snake

Physical Description

Non-Poisonous – Large, slender, agile, and fast moving, 42 to 72 inches in length, completely black.

Habitat

Found from New England to southern Florida, west to Texas, and north up to Wisconsin.

Food Source

Mice, rats, chipmunks, moles, and other small rodents.

Predators

Scared humans and hawks are their main predators.



Garter Snake

Physical Description

Non-Poisonous – Coloration highly variable, but back and side stripes, usually well-defined. Small, less than 24 in. in length. Stripes tend to be yellow in color and run lengthwise.

Habitat

Most commonly found snake. Tend to be found in vacant lots and gardens.

Food Source

Slugs, earthworms, leeches, lizards, amphibians, birds, and rodents.

Predators

There has been a slight decline due to people collecting them as pets. Also, larger bullfrogs, bass, and hawks may feed on them.



Copperhead Snake

Physical Description

Poisonous – hardly ever to humans. Coppery colored head and neck. Commonly only 1.5 ft long, but may grow up to 3 ft. Body is slender.

Habitat

Found in 27 states, including Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Food Source

Ninety percent of their diet is small rodents, such as mice and rats.

Predators

Hawks and a variety of other snakes are their main predators.



MAMMALS

Coyote

Physical Description

Stands less than 2 ft tall, varies in color from white-gray to tan with sometimes a reddish tint to its coat. A coyote's ears and nose appear long and pointed, especially in relation to the size of its head. Weighs between 20-50 lbs., averaging 31 lbs. Identified by its thick, bushy tail, which it often holds low to the ground.

Habitat

Native to North America; found from Alaska to Panama.

Food Source

Rabbits, mice, shrews, squirrels, insects and sometimes sheep, and fish.

Predators

Are protected in 12 states and hunted in others because they feed on livestock and house pets.



All of the animals detailed here are native to YMCA Camp

Sloper. This property is part of the natural habitat of these animals. Please be cautious and respectful when hiking at YMCA Camp Sloper. More mammals on back page.