Bobcats

NATURAL HISTORY

Bobcats are members of the feline family. Their habitat range covers the entire continental United States. They inhabit places with dense vegetation and plenty of prey. However, as their natural habitats shrink, they are increasingly common in urban areas. Bobcats live in dens, which can be in a tree trunk, cave, brush pile or fallen tree. Bobcats are carnivores, meaning they eat only meat. Their preferred food is rabbit, but they will also eat rodents, insects, snakes, birds and even deer! The bobcat sneaks up on its prey before ambushing it with a lethal bite. Bobcats are crepuscular - meaning they are most active during dawn and dusk.

Breeding Season & Litter

Bobcats breed from February through March. They are considered polygamous and do not form lasting bonds. The kittens are born after a 62-day gestation period in April or May. Females produce one litter per year consisting of 1 - 4 kittens.

Tips on avoiding Interactions

Do not feed wildlife! This increases the chances that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.

Do not leave small pets outside unattended. Left outside at night, small pets may become prey for bobcats. Properly secure domestic birds to reduce their risk of becoming prey.

Do not move "abandoned" baby bobcats! Bobcat mothers leave their babies alone while they hunt for food. Baby bobcats found alone are typically not orphaned.

Keep your dogs on a leash! When out on a walk, keep your pets leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.

Call (830) 249-2456 For More Info
Mountain Lion

NATURAL HISTORY

Mountain lions are members of the feline family. Mountain lions are a large, slender cat with a smallish head and noticeably long tail. Its fur is a light, tawny brown color which can appear gray or almost black, depending on light conditions. Mountain lions are also called cougars, pumas, panthers, painters, and catamounts. They are carnivores that prey on a variety of animals; some favorites include deer and wild hogs. Other prey animals included in the mountain lion’s diet are rabbits, jackrabbits, javelinas, and rodents. Some lions occasionally kill livestock or dogs. They are found in the brushlands of south Texas and portions of the Hill Country.

Breeding Season & Litter

Breeding can take place throughout the year. Most females give birth between May and October, following a three-month gestation period. Average litter size is three kittens. Each year about 50% of adult female mountain lions produce kittens, while another 25% have dependent kittens from the previous year.

Tips on avoiding Interactions

Do not feed wildlife! This increases the chances that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.

Do not leave small pets outside unattended. Left outside at night, small pets may become prey for mountain lions. Properly secure domestic birds to reduce their risk of becoming prey.

Do not move "abandoned" baby mountain lions! Mountain lion mothers leave their babies alone while they hunt for food. Baby mountain lions found alone are typically not orphaned.

Keep your dogs on a leash! When out on a walk, keep your pets leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.

Call (830) 249-2456 For More Info
Coyotes are medium sized, slender members of the canine family. They have adapted easily to the expansion of human communities into their habitat and can occasionally be found in urban and suburban neighborhoods. Coyotes may live alone or in small “packs” of up to six. They hunt at all hours of the day and night but may be seen more often in the early morning or just before sunset. Coyotes are opportunistic feeders and will eat almost anything, alive or dead, garbage, meat, fish, vegetables, berries or whatever they can find easily. Their natural diet consists mostly of rabbits, rodents and carrion. They do not normally pose a threat to livestock, however, hungry coyotes may occasionally take small domestic animals or poultry.

Breeding Season & Litter

Coyotes breed from January through March. They are considered monogamist. Coyotes have a litter with 4 - 7 pups. The puppies are born in March - May after a gestation period of 60 days.

Tips on avoiding Interactions

Do not feed wildlife! This increases the chances that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.

Do not leave small pets outside unattended. Left outside at night, small pets may become prey for mountain lions. Properly secure domestic birds to reduce their risk of becoming prey.

Do not move "abandoned" baby coyotes! Coyote mothers leave their babies alone while they hunt for food. Baby coyotes found alone are typically not orphaned.

Keep your dogs on a leash! When out on a walk, keep your pets leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.
The Gray fox is the most common fox in Texas and found statewide. They have gray hair on their back and a black tip on their tail, and they also have reddish hair on their chest, legs and ears. Foxes act like cats and have some of the same adaptations, but they are actually in the canine family like dogs. Like cats, they use their long tail to balance; this is very important for the gray fox when moving along tree branches. Gray foxes are found in different habitats but are commonly found in places with trees like a forest. The reason they need to live somewhere with trees is because they are arboreal. This means that they can climb and live in trees. Gray foxes are one of only two members of the canine or dog family that can climb trees. They will den in trees and other places like underground burrows or between gaps in rocky places. Like the red fox, they are omnivores and will eat different foods like rabbits, fruit and insects.

**Breeding Season & Litter**

The breeding season for the gray fox ranges from February to March. During this time, it is not uncommon for males to fight aggressively in competition for females. After mating, a male will stay with a female to provide her with food during denning and to assist in caring of the young. After a gestation period of 53 days, young are born in a litter ranging in size from one to seven pups.

**Tips on avoiding Interactions**

Do not feed wildlife! This increases the chances that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.

Do not leave small pets outside unattended. Left outside at night, small pets may become prey for mountain lions. Properly secure domestic birds to reduce their risk of becoming prey.

Do not move "abandoned" baby foxes! Fox mothers leave their babies alone while they hunt for food. Baby foxes found alone are typically not orphaned.

Keep your dogs on a leash! When out on a walk, keep your pets leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.
Porcupines are North America’s second-largest rodent after the beaver. They are solitary and nocturnal. They climb trees, so heavily wooded areas are a prime habitat, but they may also build nests in rocky areas. Porcupines are very vocal; they grunt, whine, moan, and click their teeth loudly in “battle chatter.” Mating season can feature both sexes screeching at a siren-like pitch. Porcupines are not aggressive with other species, but if threatened they will turn around, spike up their quills, and shake their tail. Their diet changes seasonally. In the winter, they primarily eat evergreen needles and the inner bark of trees, often feeding heavily on a single tree causing damage or death to the tree. In the spring and summer, porcupines shift to eating berries, seeds, grasses, leaves, roots and stems.

Breeding Season & Litter
Porcupines have a low reproductive potential and a long gestation period (remarkably long for a rodent). They may not reproduce every year and if they do, a female gives birth to just a single baby, and they don’t become sexually mature until they are two or three years old.

Tips on avoiding Interactions
Do not feed wildlife! This increases the chances that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.

Do not leave small pets outside unattended. Porcupine quills can even enter joints, harm internal organs or cause abscesses.

Invest in repellents. To protect plastic tubing and hoses, you can use a capsaicin-based “hot sauce” repellent that is registered for use against porcupines.

Keep your dogs on a leash! Stay alert and keep dogs leashed, or canine curiosity may be rewarded with a painful lesson for them and an expensive vet visit for you.
Striped Skunk

NATURAL HISTORY

The striped skunk is a medium-sized, robust-bodied skunk with a white stripe on either side of its back that extend up over the head and down the sides of its bushy tail. Striped skunks are largely nocturnal and rarely leave their dens until evening, returning early in the morning. In late fall they become extremely fat. In Texas, they seem more active in winter than in the heat of summer. Skunks are social animals. The skunk is found in wooded or brushy areas and farmlands. They prefer taking shelter in rocky outcrops or under large boulders, but when these are unavailable, skunks choose to den in the abandoned burrows of other animals. They eat a varied diet of both plants and animals. Insects form the bulk of their diet, but they also eat reptiles, small mammals, birds, and vegetation.

Breeding Season & Litter

Their breeding period begins in February or March. The young are born in early May, with average litters consisting of five offspring. Some females have two litters a year, but one litter per year is more common. Baby skunks must remain hidden in their nest until they can see and are strong enough to follow their mother.

Tips on avoiding Interactions

Do not feed wildlife! This increases the chances that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.

Do not leave small pets outside unattended. Left outside at night, small pets may become prey for mountain lions. Properly secure domestic birds to reduce their risk of becoming prey.

Do not move "abandoned" baby skunks! Skunk mothers leave their babies alone while they hunt for food. Baby skunks found alone are typically not orphaned.

Keep your dogs on a leash! When out on a walk, keep your pets leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.

Call (830) 249-2456
For More Info
Opossums are cat-sized mammals with a pointed snout, grayish fur, small ears, and a long, scaly tail. It can use its tail to hang from tree branches, and it has paws with opposable "thumbs." Males are usually larger and heavier than females. The opossum is active only at night, and is a solitary animal. They have an eclectic diet and will eat both plants and animals, including rodents, young rabbits, birds, insects, crustaceans, frogs, fruits and berries, and vegetables. Opossums are primarily woodland creatures, but are also frequently found in prairies, marshes, and farmlands. Although they prefer to live in hollow trees and logs, opossums will also shelter in woodpiles, rock piles, crevices in cliffs, under buildings, in attics, and in abandoned underground burrows dug by other animals.

Breeding Season & Litter
Females usually have two litters a year. The babies are born after just 11-12 days, and are about the size of a honeybee. They are blind, furless, and do not look anything like adult opossums. After they are born, they crawl all by themselves unaided into the mother’s pouch and immediately begin to nurse.

Tips on avoiding Interactions
Do not feed wildlife! This increases the chances that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.

Do not trap opossums: Opossums are normally transient animals, staying only 2-3 days in an area before moving on. If opossums are eliminated, the population of pests will increase.

Stash your trash. Secure trash and compost in closed bins to prevent midnight raids.

Keep your dogs on a leash! When out on a walk, keep your pets leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.

Call (830) 249-2456
For More Info
NATURAL HISTORY

Bats are nocturnal, they hunt at night and roost during the day in trees, bat boxes, under eaves and in buildings where they can gain access through open spaces in roofs, attics or walls. Most active in the spring and summer, many bats migrate or hibernate during the winter. Bats are the only mammals capable of true flight. Contrary to popular belief, bats are not blind and they don't get entangled in people's hair. They have fairly good eyesight but do navigate and find food primarily by using a sonar-like system called echolocation. Healthy bats prefer to keep their distance from humans. Bats can be rabid, although this is an exaggerated danger. That said, there are rare instances of rabid bats biting humans and other animals.

Breeding Season & Litter

Most bats give birth to a single baby which is unable to fly for several months. Babies cling to their mothers until they are too big to be carried, and are then left behind in a nursery colony while the adults hunt.

Tips on avoiding Interactions

Do not feed wildlife! This increases the chances that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.

Do not touch. Bite bites can cause injury and carry disease.

Understanding reduces fear. Bats are often feared & misunderstood by humans, but they are incredibly beneficial Creatures. They help pollinate plants and eat unwanted insects.

Keep your dogs on a leash! When out on a walk, keep your pets leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.

Call (830) 249-2456
For More Info
NATURAL HISTORY

Raccoons are curious, unique, and intelligent creatures. These characteristics help them survive in the wild, but can also make for annoying neighbors. Wild raccoons accustomed to being fed by well-intentioned people will generally lose their natural fear of humans and seek to move closer to their food source - your house. Once raccoons take up residence in an attic or outbuildings they can become very destructive and difficult to remove. Malnutrition, diseases like rabies, and predation by humans, coyotes and bobcats take their toll, but raccoon populations are not in decline in most areas of Texas. They can find their way into a house to get food. Their diet includes fruits and nuts, insects and aquatic invertebrates, fish, small rodents, frogs, bird eggs, carrion and human garbage.

Breeding Season & Litter

Males reach sexual maturity at 2 years; females at 1 year. Their mating season is from mid to late summer. Sixty to 74 days after mating, up to 4 cubs will be born. Baby raccoons’ ears and eyes open about 18 to 24 days after birth. Males do not stay to help raise the young. Raccoons can live 10 to 15 years in the wild.

Tips on avoiding Interactions

Do not feed wildlife! This increases the chances that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.

Do not touch. Never touch a raccoon! They are known to carry rabies and distemper.

Tightly cover garage and compost bins. Open bins encourage scavenging.

Keep your dogs on a leash! When out on a walk, keep your pets leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.

Call (830) 249-2456
For More Info
Copperhead

NATURAL HISTORY

Southern copperheads prefer mixed pasture and wooded lowlands, usually within a river bottom, where leaf litter, logs and branches provide places to hide. They are sometimes present in wooded suburbs, adapting to the presence of humans. Southern copperheads are diurnal (active during daylight hours) during early spring and late fall, at which time they will generally depend on the ability of their bodies to blend in with their environment to obtain prey and avoid enemies. They are nocturnal during the summer heat, actively hunting for prey during the cooler evening hours. Copperheads feed on baby cottontails, swamp rabbits, rats, mice, birds, snakes, lizards, baby turtles, frogs, toads, and insects, especially grasshoppers and cicadas.

Breeding Season & Litter

Copperheads, like other pit vipers, do not lay eggs. Instead the eggs are kept inside the female’s body until the eggs are ready to “hatch.” Incubation time is 105 to 110 days. The 4 to 8 young, 7 to 10 inches (17 to 25 cm) long, weigh less than an ounce (28g) at birth. Although duller in color, they look much like adults with yellowish tail-tips. (Tail-tips fade after third or fourth year.) Females provide no parental care after birth.

Tips on Snake Bites

Bring in the dead snake only if this can be done safely. Do not waste time hunting for the snake, and do not risk another bite if it is not easy to kill the snake. Be careful of the head when transporting it – a snake can actually bite for up to an hour after it’s dead.

Restrict movement. Immobilize the site of the bite and keep it below heart level to reduce the flow of venom.

Do not apply a tourniquet. Do not apply ice or cold compresses to a snake bite. Do not try to suck out the venom by mouth.

Keep your dogs on a leash! When out on a walk, keep your pets leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.

Call (830) 249-2456
For More Info
The western diamondback often hunts at night. It ambushes victims along trails or attacks them in their burrows. Sometimes they strike and swallow an animal which weighs more than the snake. The western diamondback will coil, rattle fearsomely, and stand its ground when threatened. It bites hundreds of people a year, which is more than any other venomous snake in the United States. Their rattles are used as a defensive warning sign - "stay away". Rattles are a series of interlocking segments that bounce against each other to emit the rattling sound. They are hollow and made of keratin just like fingernails. In the autumn, these rattlesnakes head for the community den (hibernacula) - in a cave or rocky recess - where they hibernate over the winter. The western diamondback eats small mammals such as chipmunks, prairie dogs, gophers, ground squirrels, rabbits, mice and rats. The snake will also eat birds within reach.

Breeding Season

The rattlesnake reaches sexual maturity at 3 years. Mating occurs in the spring following emergence from hibernation. The gestation period lasts for 167 days. The birthing process may last for 3 to 5 hours and produce 10 to 20 young. The young are born complete with fangs and venom, armed and dangerous at birth.

Tips on Snake Bites

Bring in the dead snake only if this can be done safely. Do not waste time hunting for the snake, and do not risk another bite if it is not easy to kill the snake. Be careful of the head when transporting it – a snake can actually bite for up to an hour after it’s dead.

Restrict movement. Immobilize the site of the bite and keep it below heart level to reduce the flow of venom.

Do not apply a tourniquet. Do not apply ice or cold compresses to a snake bite. Do not try to suck out the venom by mouth.

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Call (830) 249-2456
For More Info
CottonMouth

NATURAL HISTORY

The cottonmouth is extremely aquatic and is most at home near or in the water. Its cousin the copperhead is frequently found away from actual water and can be seen deep in woodland habitats. The cottonmouth is also fond of frogs, mammals and other snakes. Although it may be commonly seen in lakes and ponds, areas frequented by humans, few human fatalities are recorded as a result of bites by cottonmouths. When a cottonmouth feels threatened, it will coil its body and open its mouth wide to expose the white coloration of the inside of its mouth. They may stand their ground against potential predators, including humans, by using defensive behaviors.

Breeding Season

The neonates are live-born, emerging from their mothers in late summer and early fall. The number per litter averages five snakes, with the snakes measuring 15-28 cm (6-11 in). Juvenile cottonmouths often look drastically different than their parents, as they may have a distinct pattern of black crossbands over a tan or grey background.

Tips on Snake Bites

Bring in the dead snake only if this can be done safely. Do not waste time hunting for the snake, and do not risk another bite if it is not easy to kill the snake. Be careful of the head when transporting it – a snake can actually bite for up to an hour after it’s dead.

Restrict movement. Immobilize the site of the bite and keep it below heart level to reduce the flow of venom.

Do not apply a tourniquet. Do not apply ice or cold compresses to a snake bite. Do not try to suck out the venom by mouth.

Keep your dogs on a leash! When out on a walk, keep your pets leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.

Call (830) 249-2456
For More Info
Coral snakes exist in the southern range of many temperate regions of the United States. They can be found in pine and scrub oak habitats in parts of their range, but sometimes inhabit hardwood areas and pine flat woods that undergo seasonal flooding. They like to live under logs, in leaf litter, and in moist rotted wood and mulch. Coral snakes feed on other smaller snakes, both harmless and venomous. They also eat lizards, especially small skinks. They are also known to be cannibalistic, occasionally feeding on other coral snakes. The coral snake is mainly nocturnal, but can sometimes be seen in the early morning hours. Coral snakes are non aggressive. They actually are very shy and secretive. They account for less than 1% of snake bites in America. Their venom is a neurotoxin, which paralyzes the nerves. Coral snakes must chew on their prey to introduce venom into a victim’s system due to their small teeth.

Breeding Season

Females likely breed just once yearly, between March and May, but it is possible that they mate a second time in the fall, after laying their first brood of eggs. Males make multiple breeding attempts between March and May, competing with other males for access to females.

Tips on Snake Bites

*Bring in the dead snake only if this can be done safely.* Do not waste time hunting for the snake, and do not risk another bite if it is not easy to kill the snake. Be careful of the head when transporting it – a snake can actually bite for up to an hour after it’s dead.

*Restrict movement.* Immobilize the site of the bite and keep it below heart level to reduce the flow of venom.

*Do not apply a tourniquet.* Do not apply ice or cold compresses to a snake bite. Do not try to suck out the venom by mouth.

*Keep your dogs on a leash!* When out on a walk, keep your pets leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.

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For More Info