

# Wild FLORIDA Jaws, Paws & Claws

## Florida Habitats Scavenger Hunt

*This scavenger hunt is designed for all ages and groups of people. All you have to do is read the questions carefully and then look for the answers. Hint: don't forget to read the signs and look down for clues in the walkways!*

### Alligators

**Habitat:** Freshwater lakes, ponds, rivers, roadside ditches and the Everglades

**Wild Diet:** Fish, turtles, water birds, snakes, frogs, various invertebrates, and small mammals

**What determines which eggs will develop as males and which as females?**

Temperature: eggs incubated between 90°F and 93°F become male offspring, and eggs incubated between 82°F and 86°F become females. If incubated between 87°F and 89°F, the ratio of males to females is about even.

### Native Tree



Across from the alligators find the “knees” pictured here. What is the name of the tree with the knees? Cypress or Bald Cypress

This is a species of conifer (cone producing tree) that is also deciduous (loses its leaves in the winter months). Because it is highly sought after as mulch for landscaping beds, thousands of acres are lost every year, threatening the survival of Florida’s old growth forests.

### Reptiles & More

The exhibits feature murals of the habitats these Florida animals live in. List eight of these habitats:

Open forests	Mixed woodlands	Pine-palmetto Flatwoods	Near Water
Coastal Hammocks	Barrier Islands	Coastal Dunes	Scrub
Longleaf Pine	Turkey Oak Sandhills	Pine Forests	Oak Hammocks
Agricultural Areas	Cypress Stands	Dry Uplands	Hardwood Forests
Bottomland Forests	Savannas	Rivers	Streams
Marshes	Ponds	Sawgrass Prairies	Everglades

Find all of the venomous animals. List the animals and the habitats where they are found:

Species	Habitat
Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake	Pine-palmetto flatwoods, coastal hammocks, barrier islands
Southern Copperhead	Hardwood or bottomland forests
Dusky Pygmy Rattlesnake	Pine-palmetto flatwoods, bottomland forests, scrub, sandhills, savannas and longleaf pine forests
Florida Cottonmouth	Flooded woodlands, rivers, streams and ponds
Canebrake Rattlesnake	Hardwood forests (on slopes leading to creeks)
Eastern Coral Snake (not live)	Oak and hardwood hammocks, longleaf pine forests and rosemary scrub near water

### Florida Panther

A. How many square miles of habitat does one female need? 70 - 200 sq. miles

B. How many square miles of habitat does one male need? 500 sq. miles

Duval County has a total area of 774 sq. miles of land. How many females and how many males could live in Duval County?  
 $774 \div A = 11 - 4$  females     $774 \div B = 1$  males

## American Black Bear

**What is the main or primary threat to Florida's black bears?** Habitat destruction and wider roads with faster speed limits are the primary threats to the black bear's survival in Florida today.

**How fast is it happening?** Habitat is being destroyed at the rate of 20 acres per hour.

## Birds of Prey – Eagles, Hawks and Owls

**Name the birds of prey found in Wild Florida and circle the nocturnal one(s):**

Screech Owl

Cooper's Hawk

American Bald Eagle

**Did you know that one way to share habitats is by "niche switching"? The nocturnal birds of prey share habitat with the diurnal (day active) birds of prey. In this case of niche switching, there is a night shift and a day shift.**

## White-tailed Deer

**What is the name of the rarest subspecies of white-tailed deer?** Florida Key Deer

**Where is it found?** Big Pine Key

**Why is it so rare?** Habitat loss, overhunting and cars

**Sandhill cranes are also in this exhibit. What threatens their survival?**

Habitat loss and habitat destruction due to residential and commercial development

**What story do the tracks in the walkway tell as you walk from the deer to the wolf exhibit?**

Deer tracks become mingled with a set of wolf tracks. If you notice, the deer is at a walk while the wolf tracks are at a trot...one interpretation could be that the wolf has encountered the fresh tracks of a deer and is advancing to catch up. Just before the next viewing area there are leaping deer tracks into the wolf exhibit, possibly running and jumping to get away from the wolf that has been stalking it.

## Native Tree



**The leaf of this tree looks like a flower that is also its common name. Identify this tree** Tulip Tree, Tulip Poplar or Yellow Poplar. **Native Americans built canoes from its trunks; caterpillars eat its leaves; and, it is a common wood used in the making of cabinets and furniture.**

## Red Wolf

**Describe the wolf's home (where it would raise cubs):** Dens in hollow tree trunks, along streambanks or in sand knolls

**What happened to the wolves in Florida?** The last known pure wolf in Florida was killed in 1908, and the last hybrid in 1917.

## American Bald Eagle

**What is another name for a bald eagle nest?** Eyrie

**How large can these nests be?** One historic eyrie spanned 86 square feet on top and contained "two wagon-loads" of materials. Yet, another one was 10 feet across and 16.5 feet high. It is estimated that some of the larger nests may weigh a ton (2,000 pounds)!

**Why are they usually found near rivers, lakes and oceans?** They eat fish

## Whooping Crane

**When the first Europeans arrived in America, how many whooping cranes were there?** 10,000

**By the 1870's?** 1300 – 1400 **In 1944?** 21

**Why did they nearly become extinct?** Draining marsh habitat and overhunting for food and feathers

**The Wild Florida exhibit is home to some critically endangered species. Find at least two:**

Florida Panther, Red Wolf, Whooping Crane

**Why are they endangered?**

Florida Panther Overhunting, habitat destruction and fast cars

Red Wolf Overhunting

Whooping Crane Draining marsh habitat and overhunting for food and feathers

### **Bobcat**

How large is a bobcat's home range? 10 – 25 sq. miles

Duval County has a total area of 774 sq. miles of land. How many bobcats could live in Duval County?

$774 \div \text{your answer above} = 77 - 30$  bobcats

### **Native Plant**



On your back to alligators, you will find the plant pictured here. What is it? Pitcher Plant

This carnivorous plant had a prey-catching mechanism – insects check-in but they cannot get out. Once drowned, bacteria and enzymes dissolve the body and the plant absorbs the nutrients.