

#7 INSECTS

Without insects like dragonflies, water bugs and mosquitoes we would have no *water bugs, frogs, fishes, or turtles* in Creekfield Lake. All of these larger animals depend on insects for *food*. List four insects that are found here.

1)mosquito 2)water spider 3)dragon fly 4)whirligig beetle
5)back swimmer 6)diving beetle 7)mayfly nymph

#8 THE LAST OF THE RULING REPTILES

Alligators roamed the earth 225 million years ago. Adaptations are ways that animals have changed or evolved in order to survive. What adaptations does an alligator have for living under water?

webbed feet, it can close its nostrils and ears, a third eyelid, special scales around its mouth to detect scent

Name three examples of reptiles.

1)red-eared slider turtle
2)american alligator
3)broad-banded water snake

There are four kinds of animals that are reptiles. Can you name one kind missing from this list? Lizards

What do all of these animals have in common that make them reptiles. scales, cold blooded, lays eggs, breathe.

IN THE END.....

Take a close look at the next display. Can you find all 13 kinds of animals camouflaged here?

1)Owl (barred) 2)opossum 3)opossum babies 4)deer 5)rabbit 6)turtle
7)armadillo 8)alligator 9)great blue heron 10)bullfrog 11)ducks
12)vulture 13)snakes

We hope you enjoyed your hike and have gained an understanding and appreciation for wild things.

In the end...

we will conserve only what we love;
we will love only what we understand;
and we will understand only what we are taught.

CREEKFIELD LAKE



SELF GUIDED TRAIL MANUAL & SCAVENGER HUNT

(This paved, 1/2 mile trail is all accessible.)

The Creekfield Lake All-accessible Trail is the first of its kind in Texas State Parks. You will notice that the exhibits have raised letters, Braille, and touchable bronze carvings to help everyone “see” wildlife. Please be aware of people with all capabilities using the trail. No bicycles, skateboards, roller blades or roller skates are allowed on the trail.

For your safety, stay on the trail at all times and do not attempt to pass larger alligators basking next to or on the trail.

You will need the Animal Tracks Identification Handout to help you identify tracks.

ENJOY A SAFE WALK

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ANIMAL TRACKS

Just because we do not see an animal it does not mean that it is not here. Study the animal track molds in the clay portion of the trail. Can you identify them? (Each display features the same tracks.)

Deer Bird Raccoon Skunk

#1 & #2 WETLANDS

Stop at the covered display and read about wetlands. Name two reasons why wetlands are important.

1) Like a sponge they soak up floodwater and help purify our supplies of drinking water.

2) Plants and animals depend on them for survival.

As you proceed down the trail notice that you are walking through a woodland area. You just left a parking lot. You will soon be entering a wetland. An ecosystem is a group of plant and animals that depend on each other for survival; i.e. a forest, a wetland, a grassland. All three of these ecosystems exist in the park. An ecotone is the area where two ecosystems meet. You will be walking through an ecotone several times as you walk around the lake. You will be entering one as you approach exhibit number three.

#3 BIRTH OF A WOODLAND

Can you identify a black willow tree, southern wild rice and duckweed? Creek-field Lake is gradually filling in and becoming a shallow marsh.

Bald Cypress Trees are the trees next to the trail that have “knees”. “Knees” may be a way for the tree to aerate its roots and also to help stabilize the tree in its moist habitat. Notice also how the tree’s trunk is wider at the bottom. This “buttressing” also helps the tree “hold its ground”.

#4 FISHING FOR FOOD

Name three ways wading birds “fish” for food.

1) Use beaks to stab their prey

2) Use their feet to stir up the bottom

3) Use insects as bait to catch fish

Which bird in the display is using which of these methods?

Be on the lookout for another ecotone area. Notice how much time you spend walking through this one.

#5 NOCTURNAL ANIMALS

This display lists a few animals that are nocturnal. Name four animals that are mainly active at night.

1) Flying Squirrel 2) Raccoon 3) Virginia Opossum 4) Gray Squirrel
5) White-tail Deer 6) Armadillo 7) Swamp Rabbit

What animal has been digging along the sides of the trail? armadillo. What is it looking for? food, mainly insects

Did you know that diurnal animals are mainly active during the day?

THE FOREST

Look for decaying trees and logs. Dead trees and logs are never removed from the forest because their role is much too important to the health of the ecosystem. Why do you think they are important? (Never disturb or turn over dead limbs or logs! You may disturb a venomous spider or snake.)

Take a closer look at the forest. Do you see layers? How many layers do you see? There are five: floor, herbal, shrub, under story, and canopy.

How old do you think this forest is? Most forests have three stages of growth: pioneer, middle, and final or climax .

Other things to look for in the forest are vines, Spanish moss, bird nests, squirrel nests and holes at the bases of trees and higher up. Also notice the shapes of leaves.

#6 FISH (walk to the end of the pier)

Catfish have poor eyesight. Their whiskers are very sensitive to touch and they have good hearing. They also have taste buds over much of their bodies that help them sense food in the water. Name three of the fish that live in the wetlands of Brazos Bend.

1) mosquitofish 2) bowfin 3) gar 4) sunfish 5) catfish

IT IS TIME TO CLOSE YOUR EYES AND LISTEN. How many different sounds can you hear?