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NOTE: To preserve scenic beauty and ecology, fences and warning signs have not been installed in some park locations. Caution and supervision of your children are required while visiting these areas.

Watchable Wildlife tips printed with permission from Watchable Wildlife Incorporated
www.watchablewildlife.org

Photos—Front cover: top, screech owl; bottom, raccoon; **Third panel:** wild turkey; **Inside:** top row, left to right, black bear; geese in flight; second row, left to right, adult white-tailed deer; mockingbird; bottom, armadillos



A GUIDE TO WILDLIFE WATCHING AT

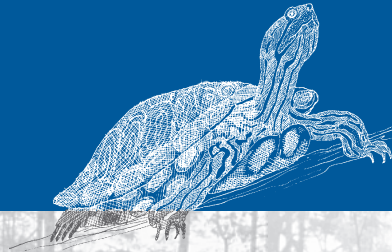


Delta Heritage Trail State Park

Watching Watchable Wildlife in State Parks

The first 14 miles of the Delta Heritage Trail is ready for you to walk or bicycle. This section of the trail begins just south of Lexa and ends in the community of Lake View. Following the historic route of the Missouri Pacific railroad's *Delta Eagle*, the trail will eventually travel 73 miles, crossing the White and Arkansas Rivers before ending near Watson in southeast Arkansas.

Location, however, is more than nearby towns. The location of this trail—in the heart of the Arkansas Delta and the famed Mississippi



Flyway—makes every trip down the trail an opportunity to encounter wildlife. Migrating butterflies, songbirds, ducks and geese fly through this region of Arkansas by the millions each fall and spring. In addition, Arkansas is on the edge of the eastern forest and the western plains and migrants and strays from both areas find their way here.

Arkansas has twenty-six state parks selected for inclusion in the national Watchable Wildlife program. Implemented on a state level, this national program identifies locations where outstanding habitat or migration qualities attract wildlife and offer you the best chance of seeing wildlife, large and small. Be sure to look for the *Arkansas Watchable Wildlife Guide*. Look for watchable wildlife sites noted on the state highway map and identified by the Watchable Wildlife binocular logo on highway signs.

Let park staff know you are seeking watchable wildlife and they will direct you to be best wildlife watching locations.

TIPS FOR SEEING MORE WILDLIFE

We've all had it happen. You look up from the trail just in time to see an animal dive out of sight—a swoop of wing, a flash of antler. Most animals see, hear, and smell us long before we see them. They size us up and decide whether to stay or flee. The ultimate wildlife watching experience is "behavior watching" without interrupting the animal's normal activity. Instead of a glimpse, you can have an encounter—a chance to identify the animal, but also to identify with it.

PUT ALL YOUR SENSES TO WORK

You can encounter wildlife with senses other than sight. "Feel" all that is around you by deepening your awareness of your sense of smell, taste, touch, and hearing, as well as sight.

- Cup your hands around the back of your ears to amplify natural sounds.
- Use your peripheral vision rather than turning your head.
- Feel and smell the breeze.
- Look above and below you. Animals occupy niches in all vertical and horizontal layers of a habitat.
- Total silence can speak volumes. Animals may fall silent when a predator is passing through an area.

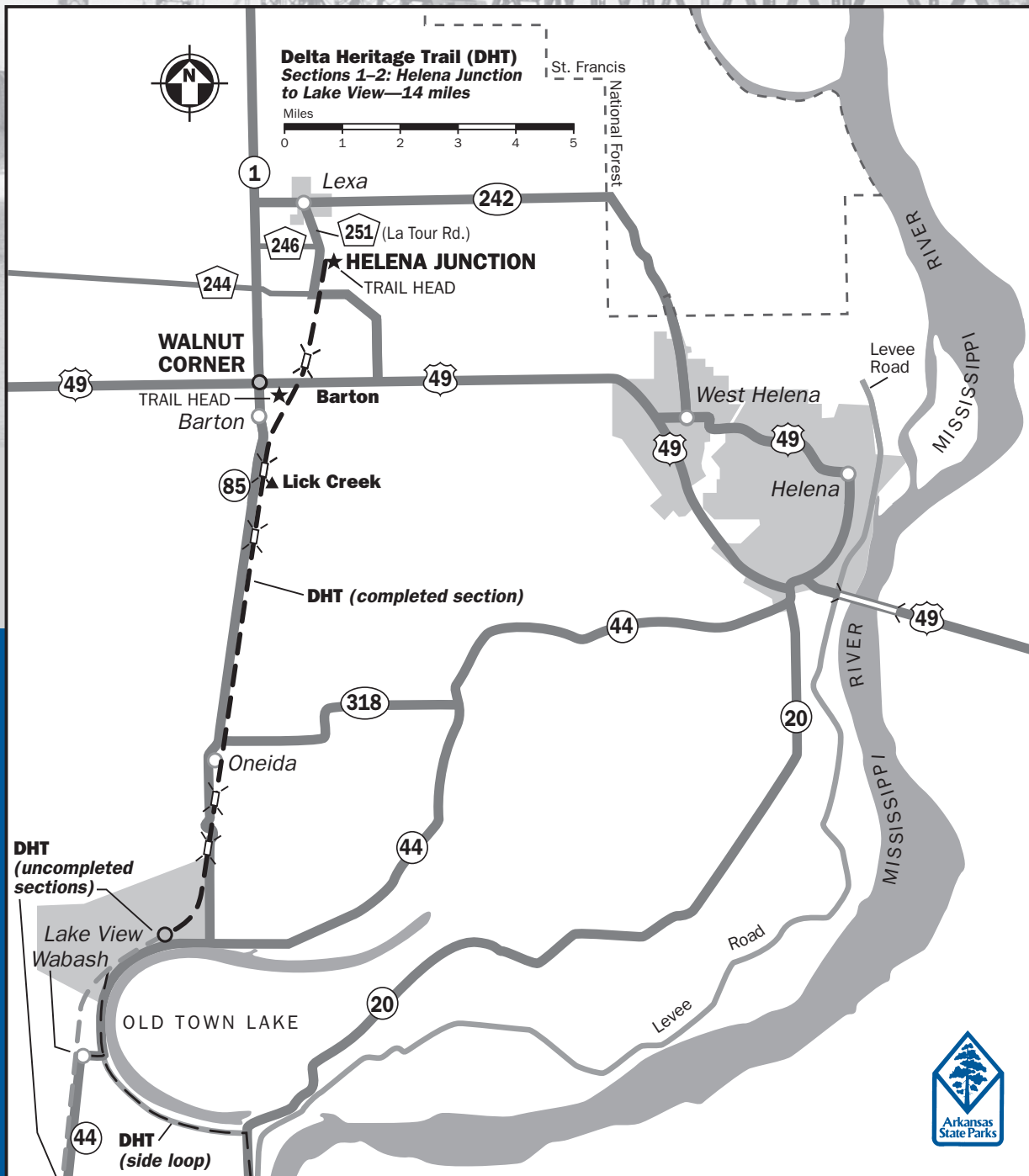
THINK LIKE AN ANIMAL

Imagine how the animal you are seeking spends its days. Check field guides to find out about the animal's life history and habitat.

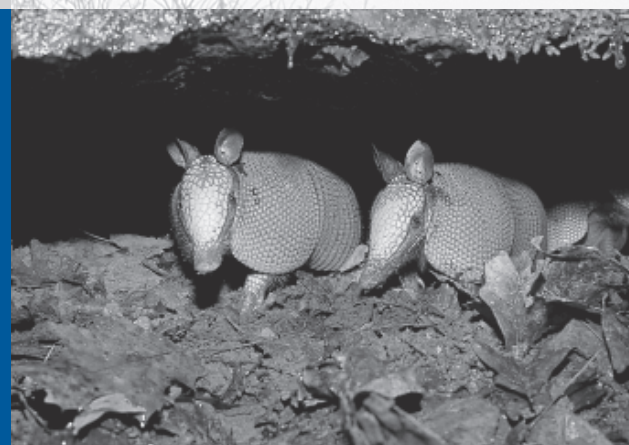
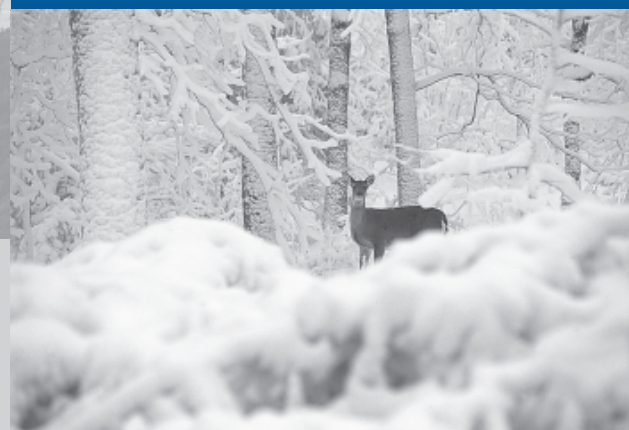
- The edge between two habitats (field and forest, shoreline, etc.) is a good place to see residents from both habitats.
- Dusk and dawn are best bets for viewing, and are good for photos, too.
- Anticipate likely areas: game intersections, perches, ledges overlooking open areas, and drinking sites.

- Take note of the season and guess whether the animal will be searching for a mate, feathering its nest, fattening for the winter, or preparing to migrate.
- Consider the weather. After rain, for instance, many animals emerge to feed.
- When you see one animal, be quiet and watch; often there will be others nearby.





Delta Heritage Trail State Park



FADE INTO THE WOODWORK

- Wear unscented lotions and natural colors that help you blend with nature.
- Remove glasses that glint.
- Walk gently and move carefully so as not to snap twigs or rustle leaves or trample wildflowers.
- Crouch behind boulders or vegetation to blend your

- shape and break up the outline of your body.
- Use binoculars rather than trying to get too close to an animal.

LET ANIMALS BE THEMSELVES

- Resist the temptation to “save” baby animals. Mom is usually watching from a safe distance.
- Give nests a wide berth. Your visit may lead predators to the nest or cause the parents to leave, exposing eggs or young to the elements.
- Let animals eat their natural foods. Sharing your sandwich may harm wild digestive systems and get animals hooked on handouts.

HOW TO USE BINOCULARS

- Focus your binoculars on a tree limb or other clear object so they’ll approximate the focus you’ll need to see wildlife.
- Find the subject with your unaided eyes.
- Bring the eyepieces just under your eyes.
- Sight the subject over the tops of the eyepieces.
- Slowly bring the binoculars to your eyes.

