

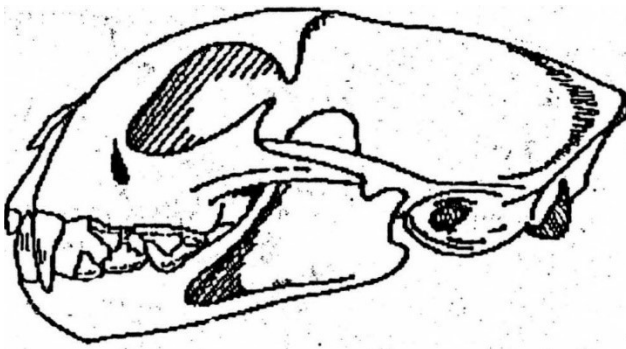


Wildlife Lesson/Activity

Magnificent Mammals – reference: skull/fur; animal photo & profile link

Carnivores

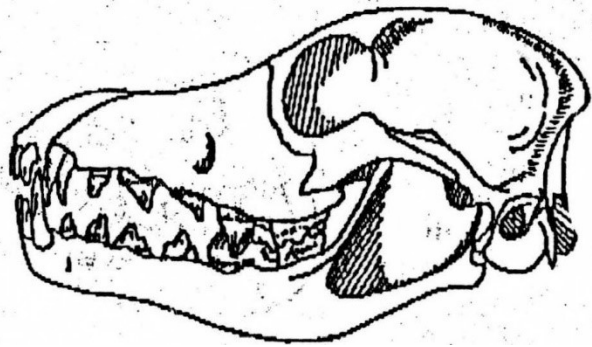
Bobcat



The bobcat can be found all over the state of North Carolina, but mostly in the coastal plains and mountain habitats. They favor bottomland hardwoods, pine stands, swamps and wetlands in the coastal plain and mature forests with openings in the mountains. They are carnivores that prefer rabbits and mice but their diet also includes other animals such as white-tailed deer, birds, opossums, raccoons, snakes, rodents and sometimes farm animals. Bobcats on average have a gestation period of 62 days and litter sizes of 2 to 4 kittens. Male bobcats usually live about 3 to 4 years and females live about 4 to 5 years.

<https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Profiles/Bobcat.pdf>

Coyote



Once only found in the Great Plains, coyotes adapted and expanded their range to most of North America and parts of Central America. Where there's food, coyotes can live there; whether that's a farm field, forest or urban environment. Coyotes have a wide range of foods in their diet, they eat whatever is available to them. They are a valuable predator to keeping rodent populations in check but they also eat fruits and berries, rabbits, deer, birds, snakes, frogs, insects, roadkill, pet food and garbage. Usually mating for life, coyotes have a gestation period of 63 days and average litter size of 4 to 6 pups. If coyote pups reach adulthood their average life span is 4 to 6 years but can live to 13 or older.

https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Conserving/documents/Profiles/Coyote_Update033017.pdf

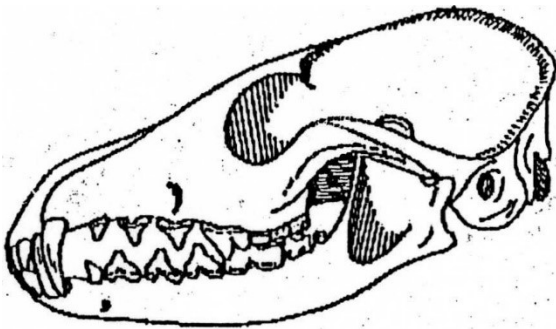
Gray fox



The Gray fox is found statewide, but the biggest numbers are found in the Piedmont and northern Coastal Plain. They do best in diverse habitats and are able to use many different types of habitats, like connected forests and open farmland. Gray foxes primarily forage on small mammals such as mice and rabbits. Native fruits and crops are fed on more often by gray foxes than any other species of fox. Gray foxes on average have a gestation period of 59 days and a litter of 3 to 5. Few live to be older than 6, living on average 1 to 2 years with an annual mortality rate of over 50%.

https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Profiles/Gray_Fox.pdf

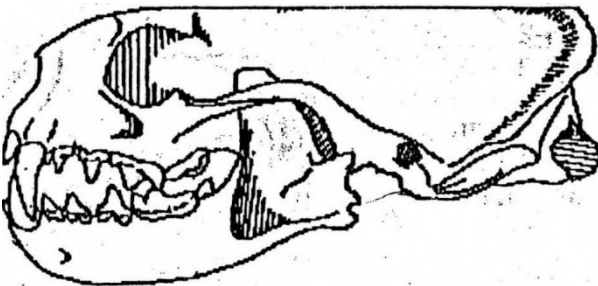
Red fox



The red fox is found almost statewide in diverse habitats of farmland, pastures, brushy fields and open forest stands. Red foxes mostly feed on mice, rabbits and voles like other canines but will also eat other things such as insects, birds, eggs, fruits and berries, and sometimes carrion or garbage. Red foxes have a gestation period of about 52 days and average litter size of about 5 pups. They have a life expectancy of about 5 years but due to many factors they usually don't live that long.

https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Profiles/RedFox_1.pdf

River otter

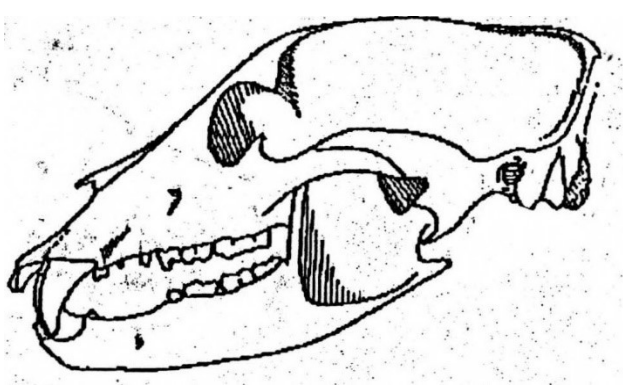


River otters are scattered all over North Carolina due to restoration efforts. Otters live in a variety of salt and fresh water habitats. The bulk of their diet is fish and crayfish but they also feed on other aquatic species like crabs and amphibians. Otters are capable of "delayed implantation", so pups might not be born until after a year. The average litter size is 2 to 3 pups and the life expectancy ranges from 10 to 15 years.

https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Profiles/AmRiverOtter_Update.pdf

Omnivores

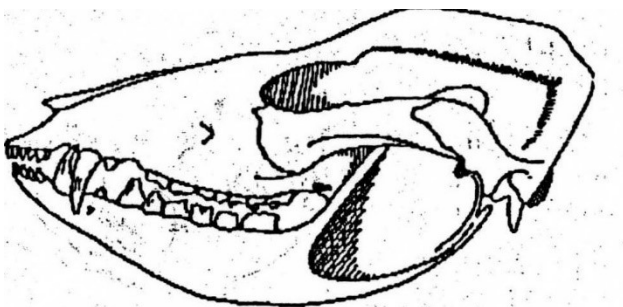
Bear



Black bears were once much more abundant in the forests of North America and the state of North Carolina, but because of hunting by early settlers their population declined dramatically. Today bears are commonly found in the mountains and coastal regions of the state, and increasing in the piedmont region. Their more favorable habitats consist of large uninhabited woodlands and densely covered swamplands. Bears enter their dens between late October and mid January in North Carolina and come out in the spring depending on environmental factors such as weather and food. The omnivorous diet of a black bear includes acorns, berries, carrion, corn, fish, frogs, fruits, grasses, grubs, honey, insects, larvae, nuts, peanuts, reptiles, roots, seeds, small mammals, soybeans and wheat. Life expectancy is 4 to 6 years.

https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Conserving/documents/Profiles/Black-Bear_Profile.pdf

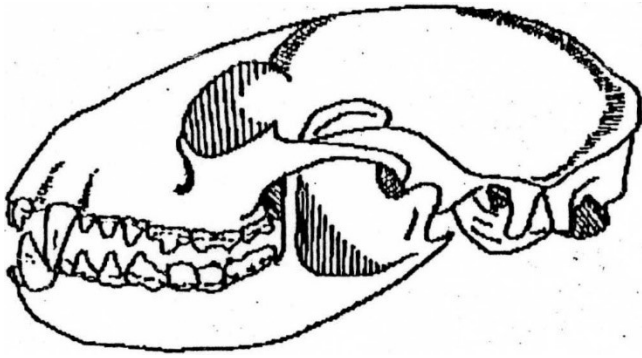
Opossum



Found statewide in North Carolina, the opossum is the only native marsupial in North America. Opossums use a variety of habitats but prefer deciduous woodlands. The opossums diet of the opossum consists of whatever is readily available and digestible. With a short gestation period of 12 days, opossums breed up to twice yearly typically having 4 to 7 young on average. The young will then pull themselves to the mothers pouch to a nipple where they will continue to grow and develop for 48 days. Opossums usually only live to be 1 to 2 years only in the wild.

<https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Profiles/opossumvirginia.pdf>

Raccoon



Raccoons are found to be most abundant in bottomland forests, hardwood swamps and marshes, habitats associated with water. They are often found in urban areas scavenging for food also. Raccoons being omnivores have a wide range of food in their diet such as, wild berries and fruits, acorns and other nuts, vegetables from gardens, insects, frogs, fish, shellfish, small mice, occasional birds, and bird eggs. Typically they have a gestation period of 64 days and litter size is usually 2 to 3. Raccoons have been found to live up to 16 years in the wild but unfortunately only live to be about 2 and a half.

https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Profiles/Mammals/Raccoon_Wildlife_Profile.pdf

Herbivores

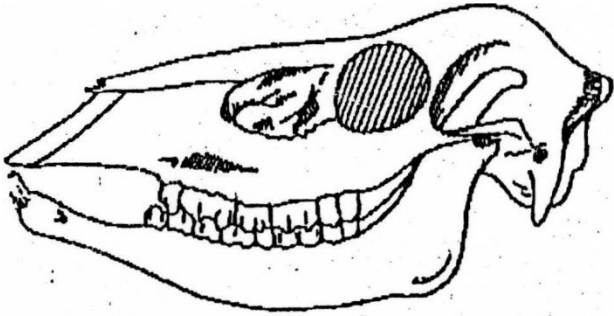
Beaver



Beavers were once wiped out of North Carolina because early settlers over trapped them for their fur. Thanks to the agency that is now the Wildlife Resource Commission, they were reintroduced and are now thriving statewide where trapping is much more regulated. The inner bark of trees being the primary food source for beavers, they also feed on twigs, leaves, pond lilies, reeds, duckweed, alfalfa and clover. Famously known for building dams, they sometimes live in lakes or rivers where a dam isn't necessary. Beavers mate for life, producing one litter each spring with about 2 to 6 kits. Beavers can live up to 20 years but usually only make it to 10 years.

<https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Beaver.pdf>

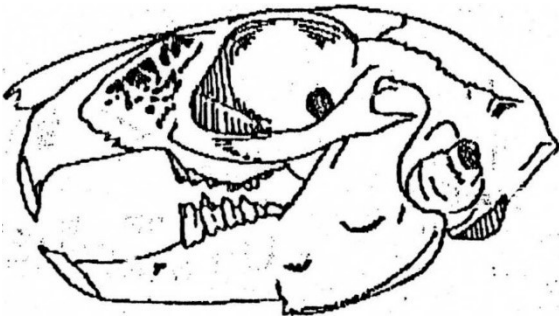
Deer



The whitetail deer population in North Carolina was once very threatened when European settlers over harvested them with no thought about conserving the species. Today, the deer population has increased drastically and they are all over the state. The adaptable species is found in creek and river bottoms, oak ridges, pine forests, farmlands and other habitats where necessities are available. The herbivores diet includes green leaves, succulent plants, tender woody vegetation, grasses, berries, acorns, and crops. 1 to 3 fawns are born after about a 196 day gestation period. The life expectancy for bucks is about 2 to 5 years and 3 to 6 years for does.

https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Conserving/documents/Profiles/White_Tailed_Deer.pdf

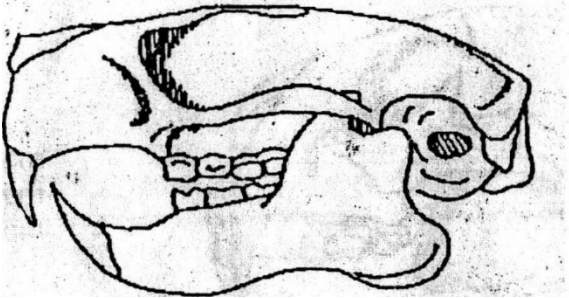
Rabbit



Early settlers mainly harvested large mammals for food, so that meant the smaller mammals of prey, like rabbits increased significantly. Cotton tail rabbit populations aren't as large as they once were but they range all across the state where there is good browse and cover. Rabbits prefer herbaceous plants but also eat plants from the bean and aster family, and inner bark of shrubs and saplings. They can have up to seven litters a year of about 3 to 5 young. Rabbits with their high reproductive rates, have high mortality rates of about 80% to 90%.

https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Profiles/Mammals/Eastern_Cottontail_Wildlife_Profile_2017.pdf

Squirrel



Squirrels aren't as abundant as they once were years ago, but they are still plentiful in the old-growth hardwoods and urban environments of North Carolina. Although squirrels rely on nuts and acorns, they also feed on seeds, fruits, mushrooms, tree buds, blooms and the occasional insect, bird egg or small bird. Having a 44 day gestation period they can have up to 2 litters of about 2 to 4 young per year, usually one in early spring and one late summer. Death is high in young gray squirrels but some can live to be 7 to 8 years old.

https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Profiles/Mammals/Gray_Squirrel.pdf