

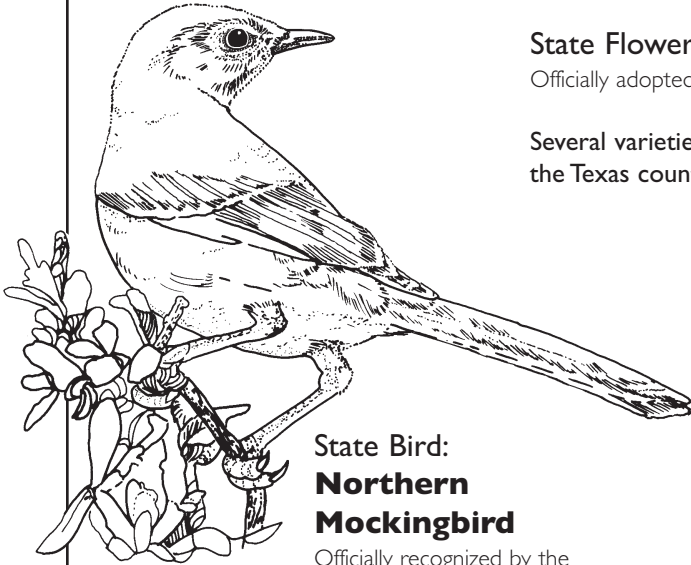
TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE



# SYMBOLS OF TEXAS

## AT TEXAS STATE PARKS

# TEXAS STATE SYMBOLS



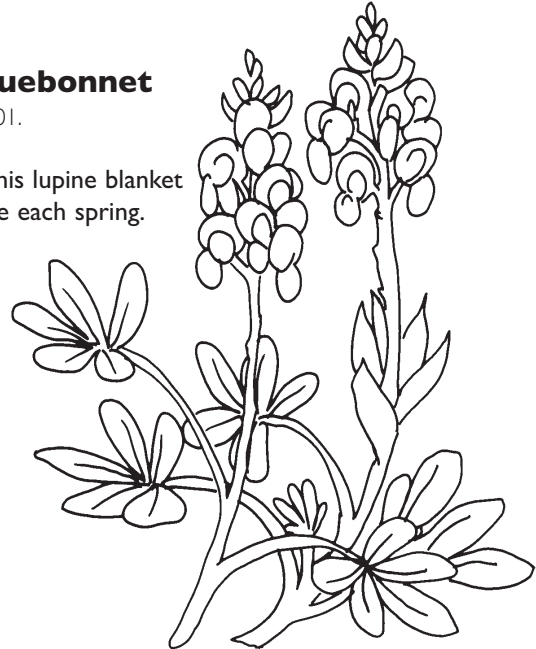
State Bird:  
**Northern  
Mockingbird**

Officially recognized by the  
Legislature in 1927.

State Flower: **Bluebonnet**

Officially adopted in 1901.

Several varieties of this lupine blanket  
the Texas countryside each spring.



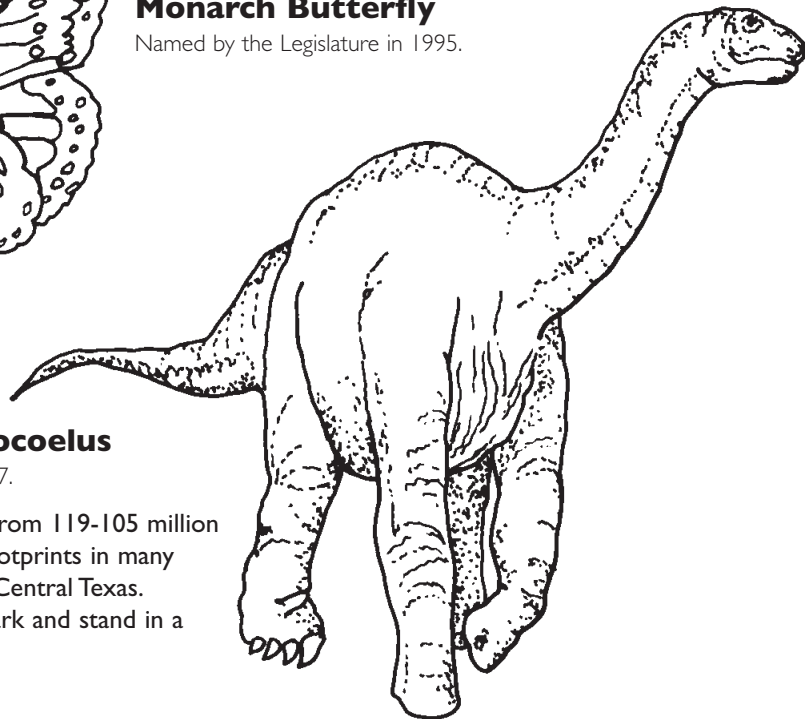
State Insect:  
**Monarch Butterfly**

Named by the Legislature in 1995.

State Dinosaur: **Pleurocoelus**

Named by the Legislature in 1997.

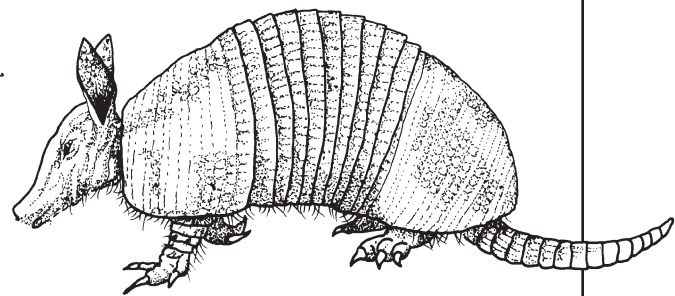
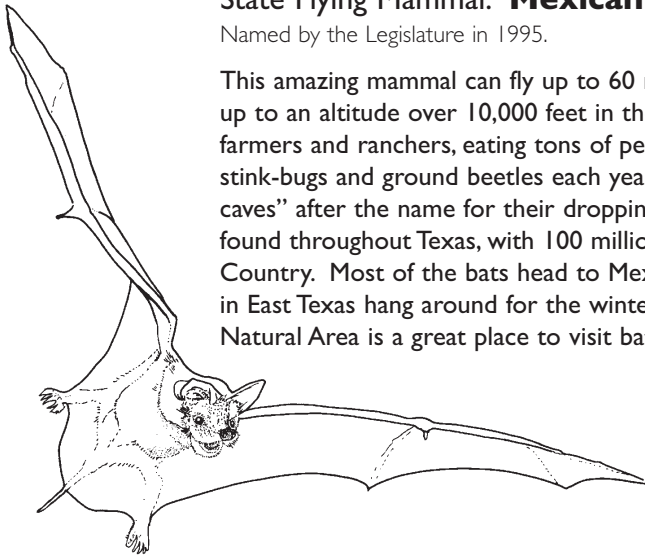
This 60-foot-long sauropod from 119-105 million  
years ago left its fossilized footprints in many  
parts of Central and North-Central Texas.  
Visit Dinosaur Valley State Park and stand in a  
real footprint!



### State Flying Mammal: **Mexican Free-tailed Bat**

Named by the Legislature in 1995.

This amazing mammal can fly up to 60 miles per hour with a tail wind and up to an altitude over 10,000 feet in the air! These bats are important to farmers and ranchers, eating tons of pests such as moths, flying ants, weevils, stink-bugs and ground beetles each year. They live in caves known as “guano caves” after the name for their droppings. Mexican free-tailed bats can be found throughout Texas, with 100 million spending the summer in the Hill Country. Most of the bats head to Mexico to avoid cold weather, but those in East Texas hang around for the winter months. Devil’s Sinkhole State Natural Area is a great place to visit bats.



### State Small Mammal: **Nine-banded Armadillo**

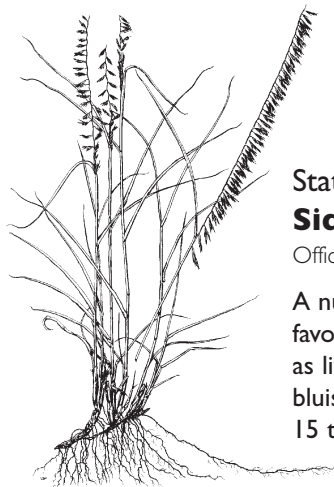
Named by the Legislature in 1995.

Spanish conquistadors named this strange mammal “little man in armor.” Armadillos grunt almost constantly while digging for beetles, ants, termites and earthworms to eat. Females always give birth to four identical babies. Imagine having three brothers or sisters exactly like you!



### State Tree: **Pecan**

Officially adopted in 1919.



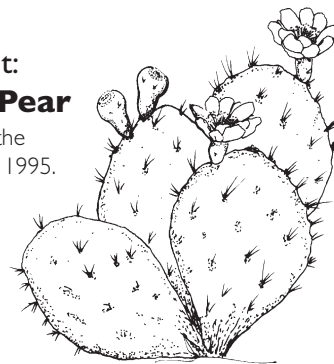
### State Grass: **Sideoats Grama**

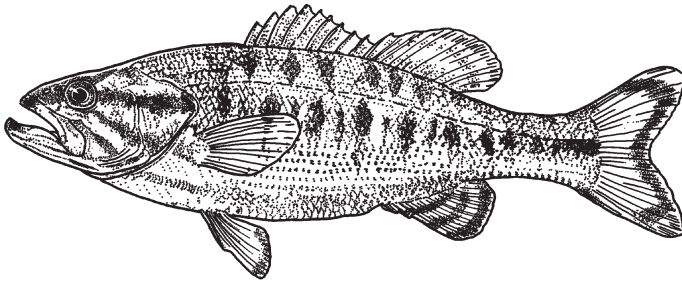
Officially adopted in 1971

A nutritious native species favored by wildlife as well as livestock. Look for a bluish-green grass reaching 15 to 30 inches tall.

### State Plant: **Prickly Pear**

Adopted by the Legislature in 1995.

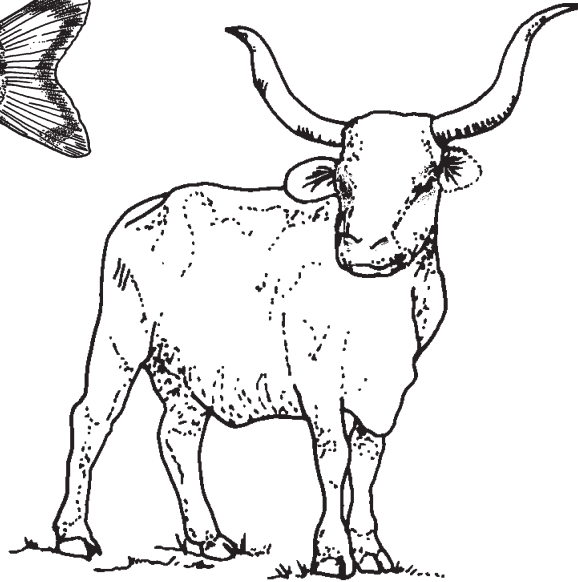




**State Fish: Guadalupe Bass**

Named by the Legislature in 1980.

This native freshwater fish is greenish on top, yellow-white on bottom and has 12 bars along its side. It can grow as long as 15 inches. Found only in Texas, you can catch the Guadalupe bass in parts of the Guadalupe River, the Colorado River, the Brazos River and the Nueces rivers.



**State Large Mammal: Longhorn**

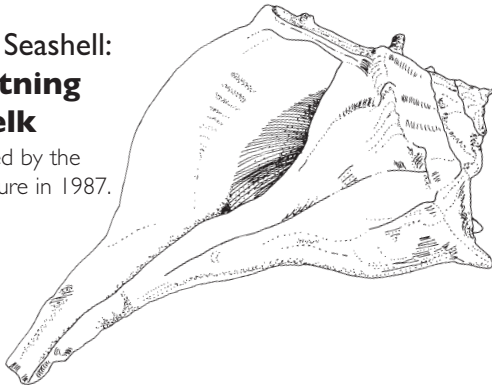
Named by the Legislature in 1995.

Longhorn herds can be seen at these parks: Abilene State Park, Big Bend Ranch, Copper Breaks State Park, Fort Griffin State Park and Historic Site, Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site, Palo Duro Canyon State Park and Possum Kingdom State Park.

**State Seashell:**

**Lightning Whelk**

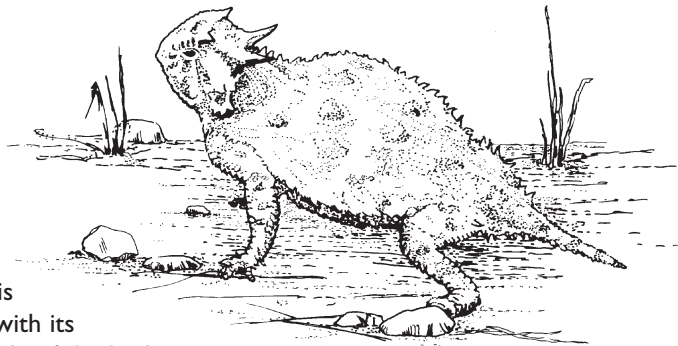
Adopted by the Legislature in 1987.



**State Reptile: Horned Lizard**

Named by the Legislature in 1993.

Once common throughout Texas, this interesting lizard, often miscalled a “horned toad,” has become relatively rare. It is typically found in open country where it can run surprisingly fast before ducking into a rock pile or clump of vegetation. This prehistoric-looking, reddish-brown reptile, with its head spines and fringed scales along each side of the body, is one of three species of horned lizard native to Texas. To discourage predators, this lizard can squirt blood from the corner of its eyes. It feeds on insects (usually ants), spiders and sowbugs. You can win an outdoor adventure kit by participating in the Hometown Horned Lizard Contest! To learn more, visit: [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/texas\\_nature\\_trackers/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/texas_nature_trackers/)



# VISIT STATE HISTORIC SITES

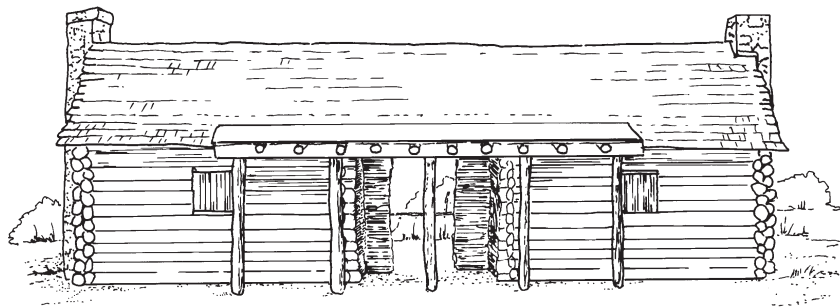


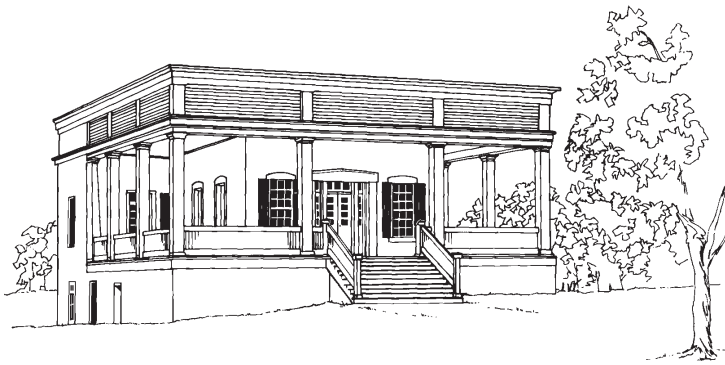
**Casa Navarro State Historic Site** in San Antonio, Texas. Casa Navarro is the restored home of Tejano patriot Jose Antonio Navarro. He was an influential person in the fight for Texas independence.



The Kreische Home at **Monument Hill and Kreische Brewery State Historic Sites** in La Grange, Texas. Kreische Brewery contains ruins of a unique 1870s German brewery. The tomb of Texas martyrs, victims of the Battle of Salado (1842) and the notorious "Black Bean Incident" (1843) is located at Monument Hill.

Dogtrot Cabin at **Stephen F. Austin State Park and San Felipe State Historic Site** in San Felipe, Texas. The site of the township of San Felipe is known as the "Cradle of the Texas Liberty."

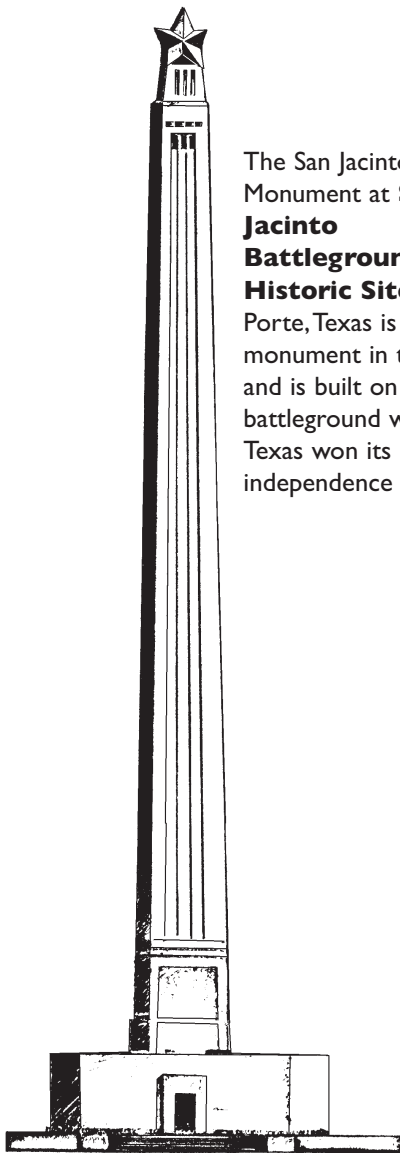




This 1850s Greek Revival house at **Sebastopol House State Historic Site** in Seguin, Texas is constructed of limecrete.



Independence Hall at **Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site** in Washington, Texas is the birthplace of the Republic of Texas.

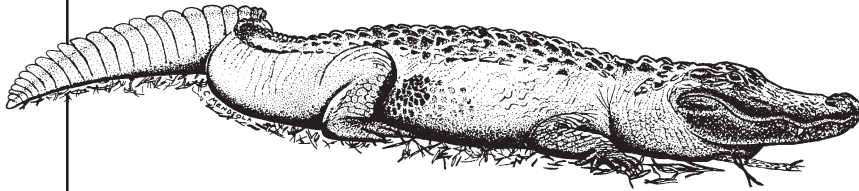


The San Jacinto Monument at **San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site** in La Porte, Texas is the tallest monument in the U.S. and is built on the actual battleground where Texas won its independence from



The Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm at **Lyndon B. Johnson State Historic Site** in Stonewall, Texas is a restored 1918 German farmstead. Watch people milk a cow and learn how to make real butter.

# REPTILES AT TEXAS STATE PARKS

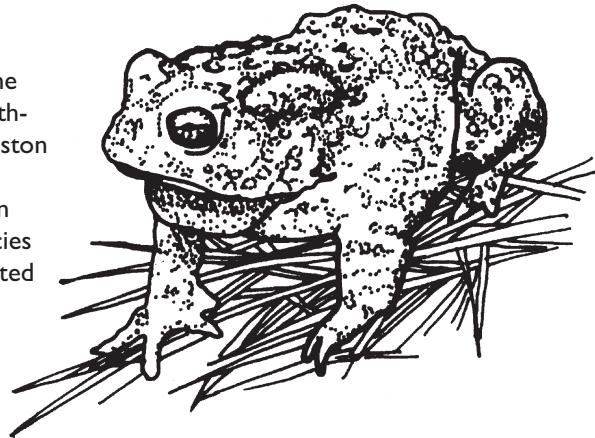


To spot an **alligator**, watch for two knobby eyes and two nostrils sticking out of the water. This means the rest of the alligator is just below the surface. Alligators can be found at **Choke Canyon** and **Brazos Bend** state parks.

## Alligator Etiquette Rules

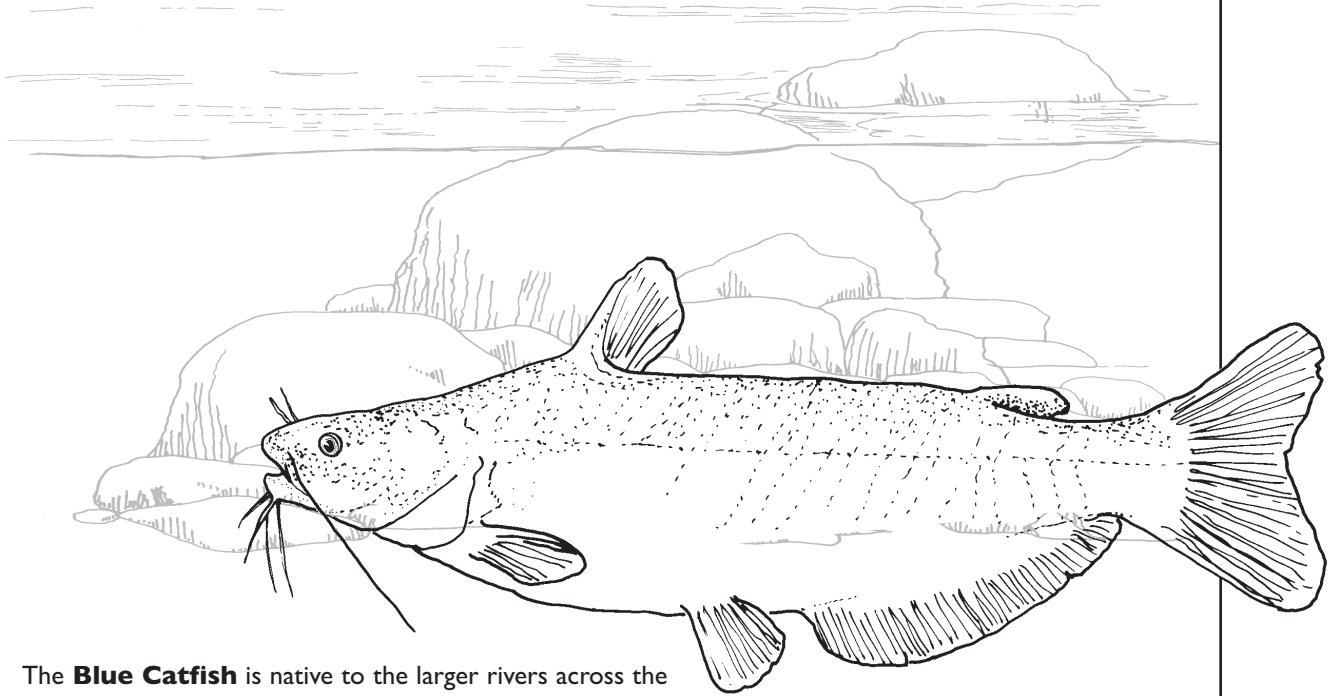
1. Absolutely do not feed or annoy alligators.
2. If you love your pet, keep it on a leash.
3. Do not assume alligators are slow-moving or sluggish.
4. Keep a safe distance at all times – at least 30 feet from any alligator.
5. If you hook a fish, an alligator may go after your catch.
6. When an alligator stands its ground, opens its mouth and hisses, you have come too close.

The **Houston Toad**, named after the city where the animal was first discovered, closely resembles its northern relative, the American toad. Historically the Houston toad probably bred in temporary ponds throughout Texas' pine-oak forests and post-oak woodlands, or in small pools along the sandy, gravelly creeks. The species is now largely restricted to Bastrop County and is listed as an endangered species. The Houston toad can be found at **Bastrop State Park**.

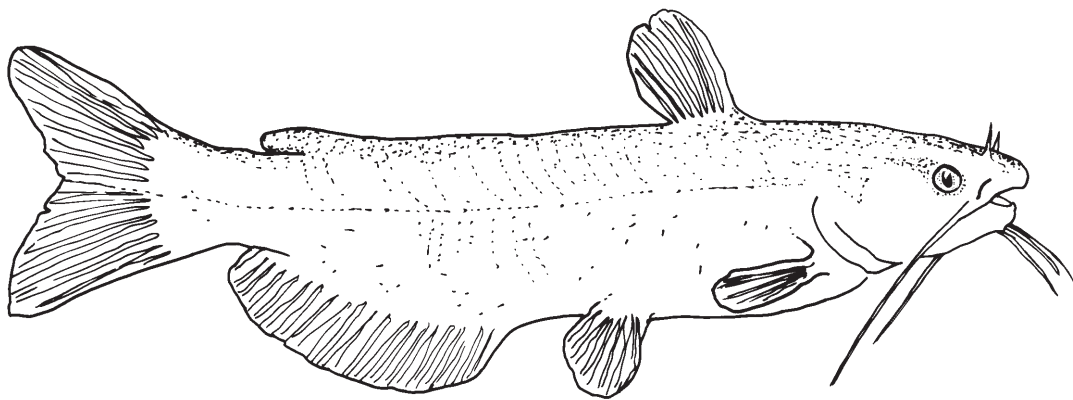


The 20- to 30-inch-long venomous **Texas Coral Snake** is not a pit viper but belongs to the same group as the Old World cobras and mambas. Although it has a small mouth and short fangs, the coral snake can still inflict a very dangerous bite by pinching the skin, chewing down and injecting its powerful venom. It is colorfully banded in the following order: a broad black ring, a much narrower yellow ring, a broad red ring, a narrow yellow ring, a broad black ring and so on. Some harmless snakes have similar banding, but the colors are arranged differently. Whenever you see a snake with **red and yellow rings that touch**, be very careful. It is probably a coral snake.

# FISH IN WATERS OF TEXAS STATE PARKS



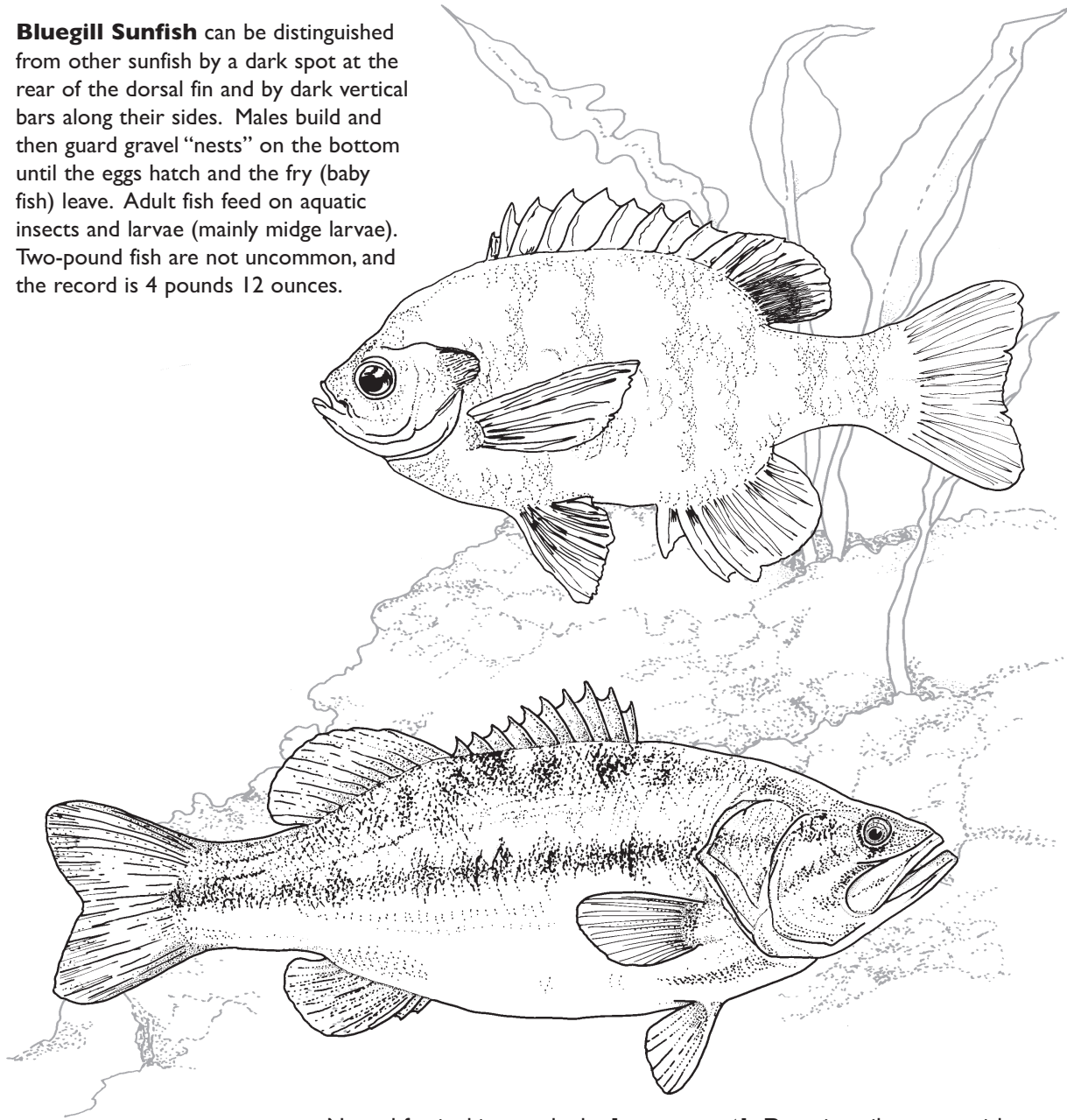
The **Blue Catfish** is native to the larger rivers across the state and is also found in smaller rivers along the coast. It is slate-blue above, shading to white on the belly. It has a deeply forked tail and the upper jaw sticks out slightly beyond the lower one. Usually the fish reaches 20 to 40 pounds, although at one time 100-pound specimens were caught.



The **Channel Catfish** is pale blue to olive along the back and sides, and white below. Like all catfish, it has “whiskers” or barbels around the mouth. It can grow up to four feet in length. Unlike the blue catfish, the channel catfish has scattered dark spots along the back and sides.



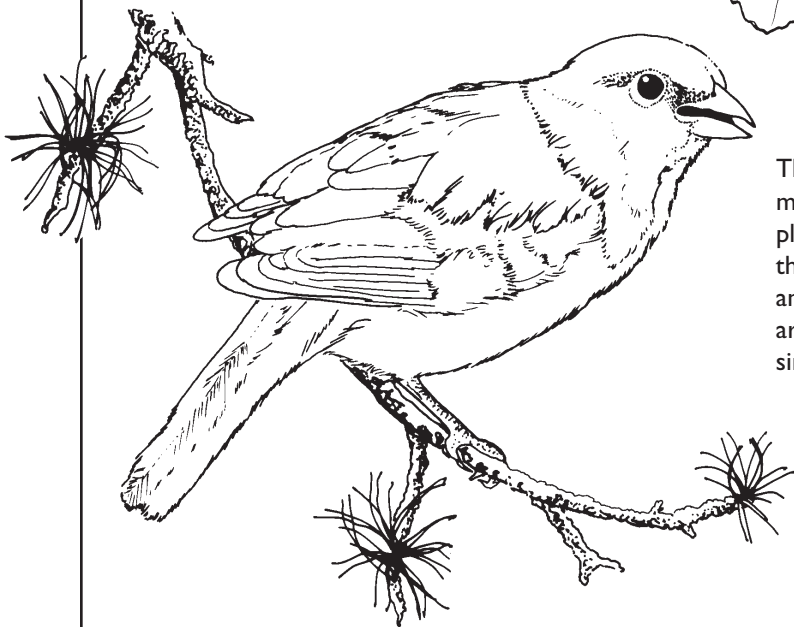
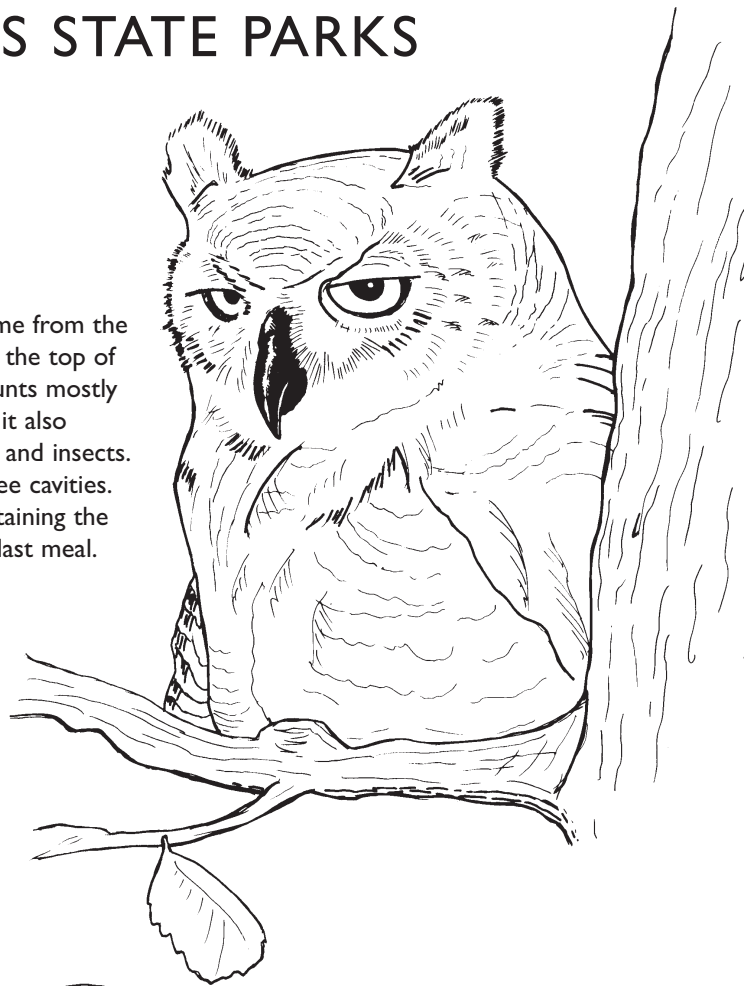
**Bluegill Sunfish** can be distinguished from other sunfish by a dark spot at the rear of the dorsal fin and by dark vertical bars along their sides. Males build and then guard gravel "nests" on the bottom until the eggs hatch and the fry (baby fish) leave. Adult fish feed on aquatic insects and larvae (mainly midge larvae). Two-pound fish are not uncommon, and the record is 4 pounds 12 ounces.



Named for its big mouth, the **Largemouth Bass** is a silvery, greenish fish, with a broad black side stripe. If you look at the jaws, you can see that the mouth opening reaches back beyond the eye. It can grow up to three feet in length. As in all basses, the male makes a circular clearing on the bottom by fanning its fins. After the female lays her eggs in this nest, the male remains to guard the developing young.

## BIRDS AT TEXAS STATE PARKS

The **Great Horned Owl** gets its name from the two tufts of feathers that stick up from the top of its head, looking like horns. This owl hunts mostly at night, preying mainly on rodents, but it also captures rabbits, crayfish, lizards, snakes and insects. It lives in abandoned hawk nests and tree cavities. Like other owls, it spits up pellets containing the undigested parts (bones and fur) of its last meal.



The male **Painted Bunting** is one of the most colorful birds in Texas. The bright plumage is not attained by young males until they are two years old. This is unusual among songbirds. The one-year-old males are solid green like the females, but they do sing and defend territories.

**Did You Know That...**

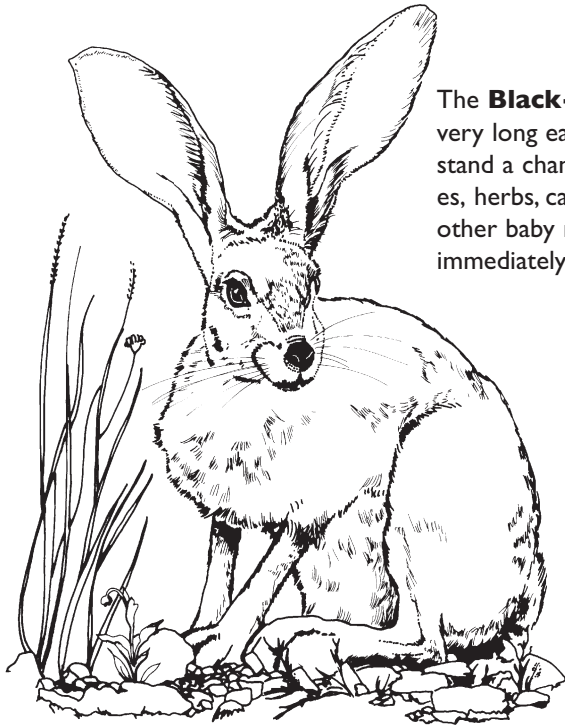
Male and female birds of the same species often look different. The male uses his more colorful appearance to “show off” for the female and to “warm off” other males. The female’s dull colors help camouflage her on the nest.

Both male and female **Northern Cardinals** sing a variety of songs year-round. Unlike the crimson-colored male, the female bird has brownish feathers, tinged with red. The nest, found in bushes, is bowl-shaped and made of twigs and grass.



The **Great Blue Heron** is a large, long-legged, wading bird. This four-foot bird lives near water and nests in colonies on rock ledges or in trees. Sometimes it can be seen hunting for mice and gophers in a field. Usually, it catches fish and other water creatures for food by “spearing” them with its beak. Imagine fishing with your nose instead of a pole!

## MAMMALS AT TEXAS STATE PARKS



The **Black-tailed Jackrabbit** is known for its very long ears. It runs so fast, most dogs do not stand a chance of catching it. These rabbits eat grasses, herbs, cactus, sagebrush and mesquite. Unlike other baby rabbits, jackrabbits are active almost immediately after birth.



The **Eastern Fox Squirrel** is the largest North American tree squirrel, measuring almost 20 inches. The upper parts are usually yellowish gray mixed with black while the underparts are orange-buff, but there is a great deal of variation among individuals. Acorns are the main food, but insects, shoots and fruits are also eaten.

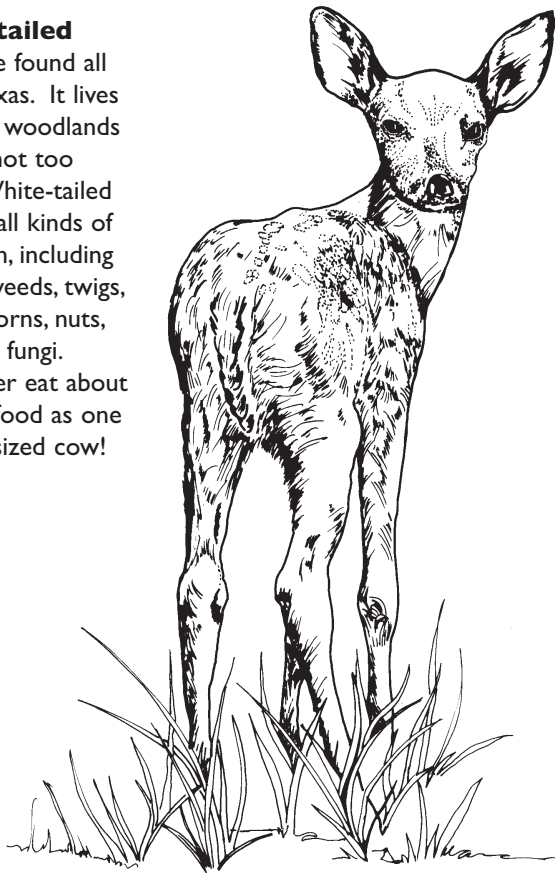


**Virginia Opossums** – usually called opossums – are marsupials or pouched mammals. Their babies are very small and undeveloped when first born. They spend a long time in a pouch on the mother's belly before moving around on their own. The face is white with a gray and black body.



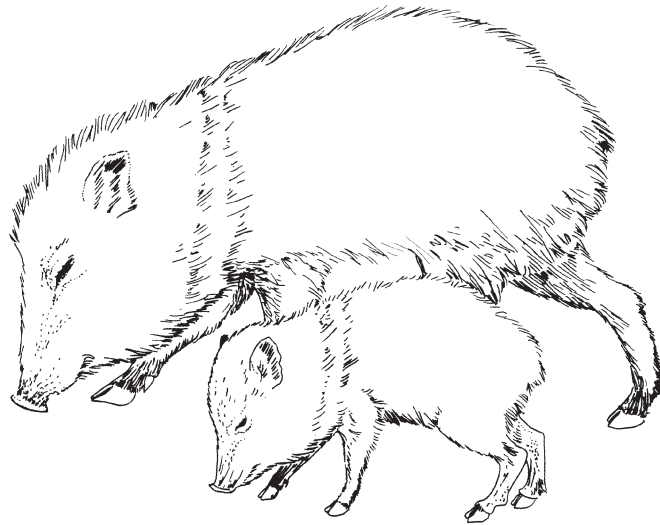
The **Common Raccoon** runs and climbs well, and swims if necessary. It lives mainly in wooded areas and is never found too far from water. It is most active at night and eats large quantities of fruits, nuts, acorns and insects, as well as catching prey such as frogs, fish, mice and birds. Raccoons often raid garbage cans and campsites. So be sure to lock up your food and trash tight.

**White-tailed Deer** are found all across Texas. It lives mostly in woodlands that are not too dense. White-tailed deer eat all kinds of vegetation, including grasses, weeds, twigs, leaves, acorns, nuts, fruits and fungi. Seven deer eat about as much food as one medium-sized cow!



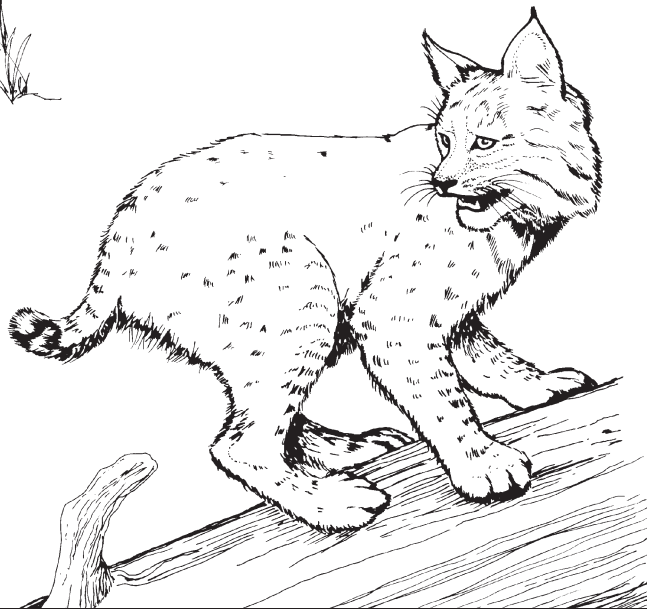
The **Striped Skunk** is the most widely distributed of the six species of skunks found in Texas. Like all skunks, it can spray a foul-smelling fluid from its rear end when it feels threatened. The striped skunk lives in wooded or brushy areas in dens under large boulders or in deserted burrows of other animals. The striped skunk diet is quite mixed: insects, spiders, lizards and snakes, small mammals, vegetation and small ground birds are all on the menu.

The **Collared Peccary or Javelina** is a piglike mammal common to most of South and West Texas. It feeds on plants such as prickly pear cactus, mesquite beans, lechuguilla and sotol. Javelinas travel in bands of up to several dozen and are often found in dense thickets. They only attack when they feel threatened; especially when there are young around.



**Coyotes** eat large numbers of small rodents and act as scavengers by consuming carrion (dead animals). They also feed on insects and the fruits of various plants. Curiously, coyotes actually eat more plant than animal food. Very little of their prey is larger than rats or rabbits. Coyotes commonly use park trails and roadways for travel, hunting and other activities. You can often see their tracks during the day. They can be heard howling at night. The coyote is brown and tan.

The streaked and spotted **Bobcat** is found throughout Texas. It is a medium-sized reddish brown or grayish cat. Bobcats hunt mainly at night for small mammals and birds. Two to seven young are usually born in April. This wild cat is very adaptable and can live close to human development.

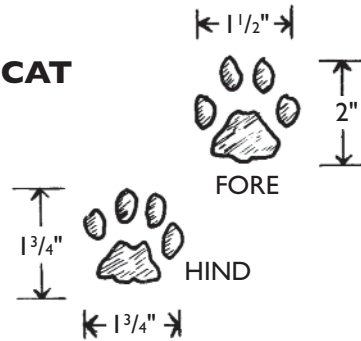


# TEXAS TRACKS

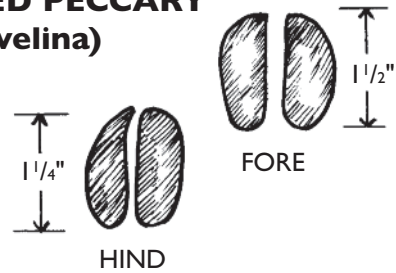
You may know Texas wildlife, but do you know their tracks? Some like the rabbit and opossum are easily recognized. Others such as the coyote, collared peccary and bobcat may be confused with their domesticated cousins the dog, pig and house cat. Tracks are easily followed in snow or loose sand. Prints made in soft mud are best for study.



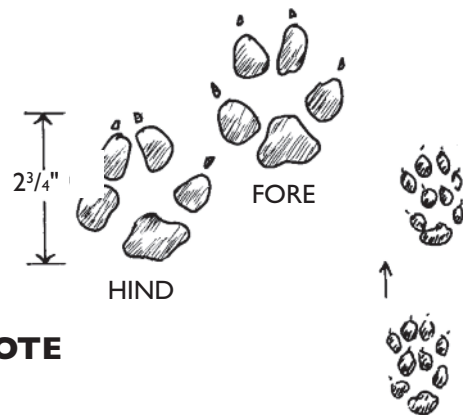
**BOBCAT**



**COLLARED PECCARY  
(Javelina)**

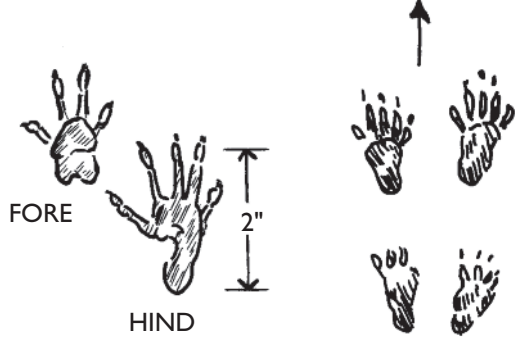


**COYOTE**

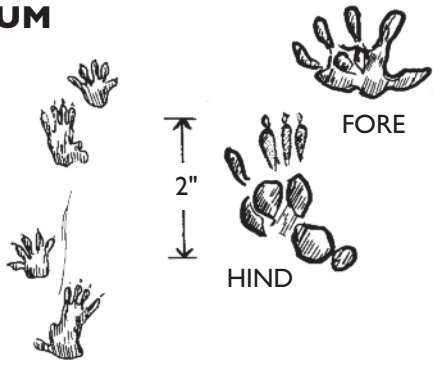




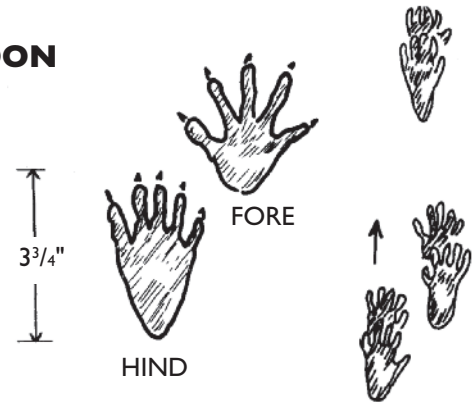
**FOX SQUIR-**



**OPOSSUM**



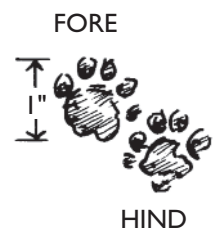
**RACCOON**



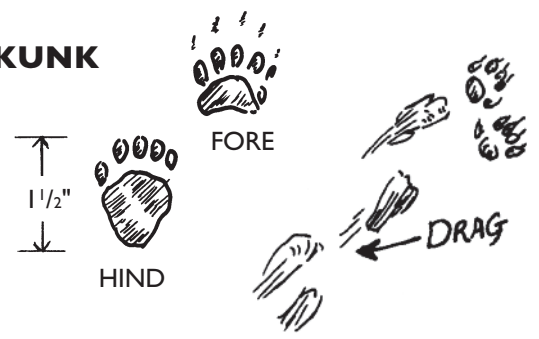




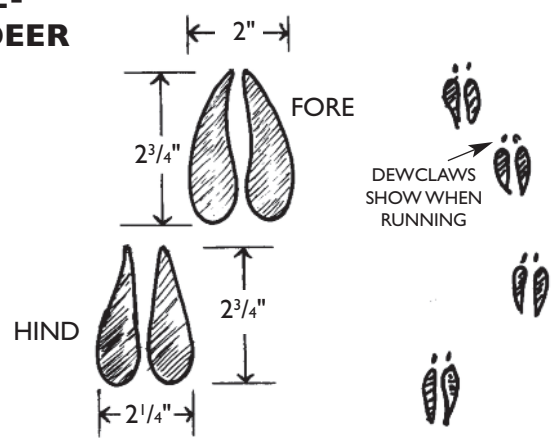
**RINGTAIL**



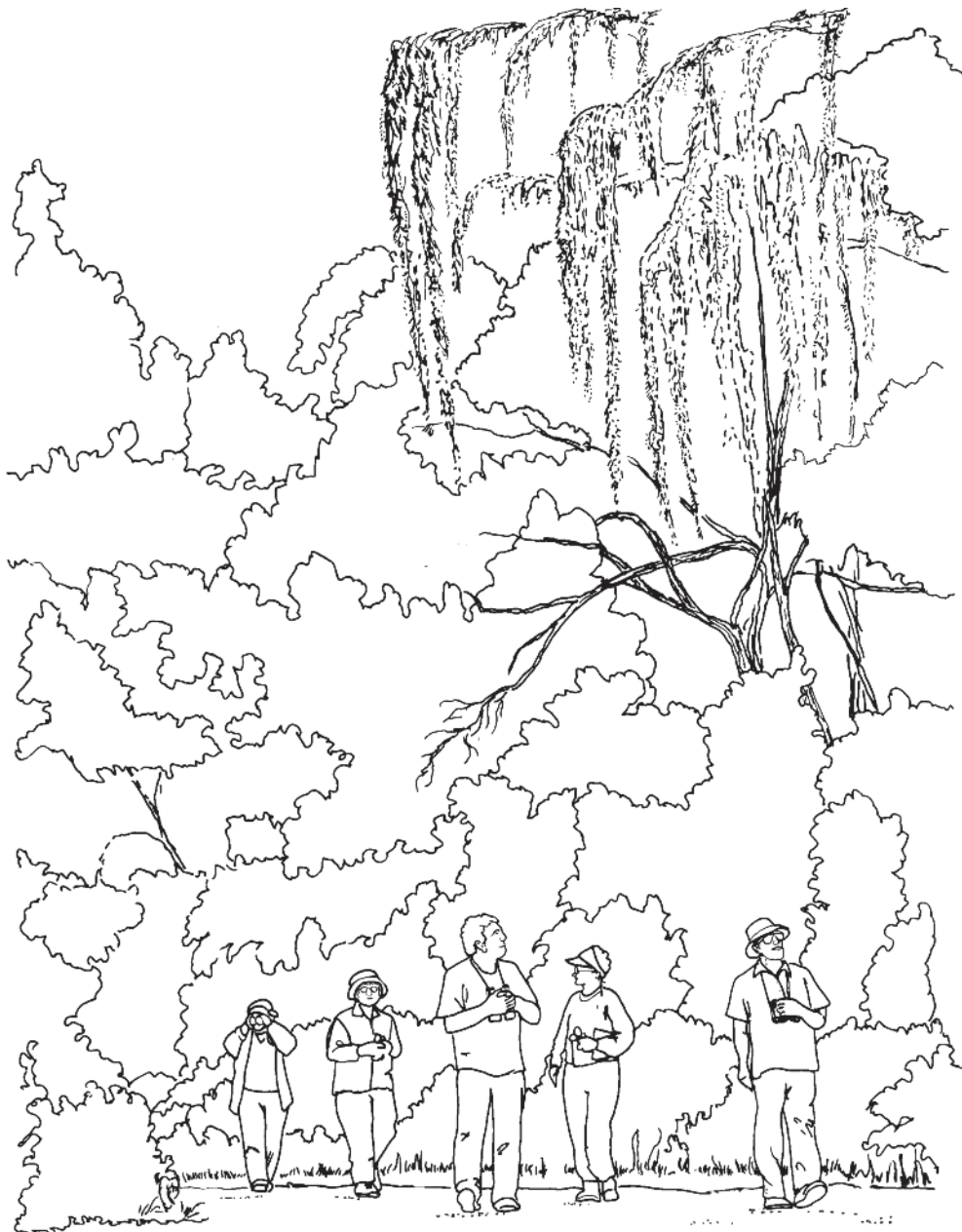
**SKUNK**



**WHITE-TAILED DEER**



For more information on  
Texas State Parks and  
how you can get involved,  
visit us on the Web at:  
[www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)





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