

RAY ROBERTS LAKE STATE PARK

Wildlife and their Tracks



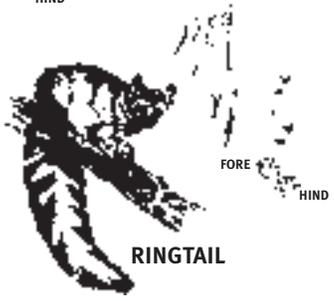
BOBCAT



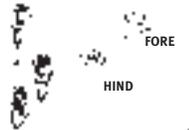
FOX SQUIRREL



RACCOON



RINGTAIL



RACCOON



COYOTE



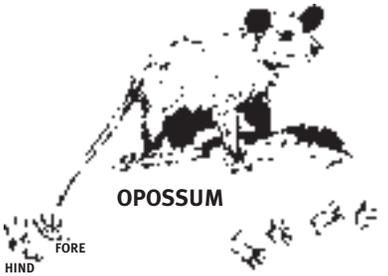
SKUNK



WHITE-TAILED DEER



BEAVER



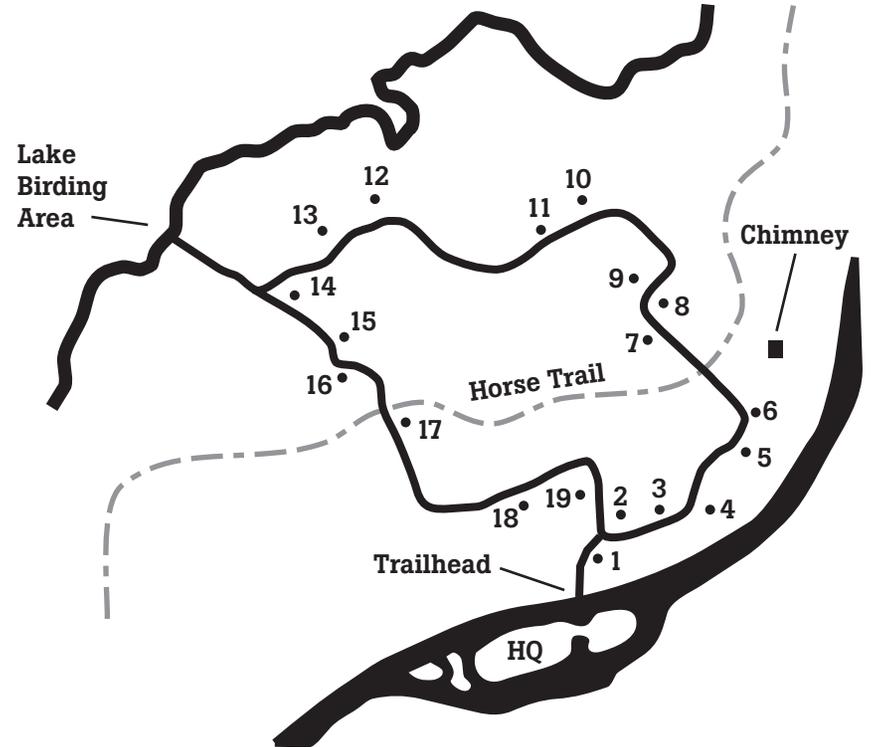
OPOSSUM



BEAVER

RAY ROBERTS LAKE STATE PARK

Lost Pines Nature Trail



As you follow the 1/2-mile loop trail, you will see numbered marker posts that correspond to this trail guide.

- PLEASE:**
- Pack out what you pack in.
 - Remain on the trail at all times.
 - Do not remove or damage any specimens.
 - Take your time, listen and look for nature's wonders, be safe and enjoy your walk!

Ray Roberts Lake State Park is located in the Eastern Cross Timbers vegetation region, a narrow strip of dense woodlands bisecting a broad area of the Blackland and Grand Prairie in north-central Texas. To learn more about the flora, fauna and natural regions of Texas, visit our Web site at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/kids/

1. The Forest Floor

Under the canopy of oaks and elms lies the seasonal layering of each autumn's leaves. With one inch of topsoil formed about every 500 years, the decomposition of organic matter is a slow, steady process. A mixture of rock, clay, silt, and sand, as well as living and dead organisms, moisture and air spaces, makes up the sandy loam soil, the foundation of life on Earth.

2. Yucca

A member of the lily family, yuccas have been used by native people and early settlers for baskets, mats, sandals and rope. The flowers attract hummingbirds and may be eaten raw. Soap can be made from the roots. Every part of the yucca can be utilized.

3. Blackjack Oak

Blackjack oaks are the co-dominant species in the Cross Timbers region. The wood is used for railroad cross-ties, firewood and charcoal. Drooping limbs are characteristic of this oak.

4. Bull Nettle

Look but don't touch! This plant has tiny needles that can irritate your skin. Underground is a tuber root, much like a potato, that the Native Americans and early settlers cooked much like our modern day French fries.

5. Mexican Plum

This species is a common wild plum in North Texas. The sweet purplish-red fruit is eaten fresh or made into preserves; it is enjoyed by a variety of wildlife as well. Chickasaw plum thickets may also be encountered along the trail.

6. Post Oak

Post oaks are the dominant tree species in this region. The wood is marketed as white oak and is used for railroad ties, posts and in construction. The tree is sometimes referred to as "ironwood." This particular tree is very old and may have been enjoyed by the settlers that once lived in the pre-Civil War log cabin.

7. Live Oak

Named for its evergreen foliage, live oak timber was once important for building ships. The nation's first publicly owned timber lands were purchased as early as 1799 to preserve live oaks for this purpose.

8. Hercules-Club

This plant is also called toothache tree or tingle-tongue. Chewing the bitter, aromatic bark or foliage is a home remedy for numbing the pain of a toothache. This tree is a host plant for the giant swallowtail butterfly.

9. Gum Bumelia (or Chittamwood)

Early settler children once chewed sap from cuts in the trunk like gum.

The fruit is edible but can cause nausea. The wood can be used for making tool handles and cabinets.

10. Poison Ivy

Beware of this plant! Some plants, though beneficial to the entire ecosystem, can be harmful to humans. Birds and wildlife forage this plant without adverse effects. Remember: *leaves of three, let them be.*

11. Coralberry

Coralberry is a short, deciduous shrub which grows thickets. The long-persisting fruit clusters are eaten by numerous songbirds, bobwhite quail and wild turkey.

12. Eastern Redcedar

The aromatic wood from this evergreen is used for fence posts, cedar chests and furniture. This invasive species replaces better wildlife habitat when fire is prevented.

13. American Elm

This large handsome tree was once very abundant, but Dutch elm disease, caused by a fungus and spread by bark beetles, has hurt the population. The wood is used for containers, furniture and paneling. Notice the American beautyberry growing next to the elm.

14. Cedar Elm

This tree is a native elm and has wings on the limbs like winged elm. It also has rough-surfaced, very small leaves and sometimes grows next to cedars.

15. Winged Elm

This is a dominant species in the park. The tree has distinctive corky wings on the limbs. The early settlers used the fibrous inner bark for rope to tie cotton bales. Creek Indians called this tree "wahoo."

16. Slash Pine and Greenbrier

Known at Ray Roberts as the Lost Pines, these pines were first planted about 1950 and they have done very well. The greenbrier thicket may be painfully prickly, but it provides good cover for wildlife. The small berries provide an important secondary food source for white-tailed deer.

17. Texas Prickly Pear Cactus

This cactus and the pecan are the only two native Texas plants sold commercially for food. This species produces a bright yellow flower that turns to a red fruit, called the tuna, in late summer.

18. Common Persimmon

This tree produces an orange fruit that is delicious when ripe and very bitter when not ripe. The wood is used to make golf club heads and veneer.

19. Little Bluestem

This warm-season, perennial bunchgrass is one of Texas' most important native grasses, and one of the "big four" tall grass species along with big bluestem, switch grass and Indian grass. The broom-like bunches provides nesting cover for birds, including the bobwhite quail, and are a larval food source for butterflies.