

Animal Inn Resident Interpretation

Woodpecker

Many birds use dead trees as rest stops, feeding areas and to nest. Pileated and red-headed woodpeckers excavate nest holes in standing dead trees and make cavities that many other birds and mammals use. The endangered red-cockaded woodpecker makes its home only in LIVE PINES infected with red heart disease.

Fungi

Fungi like these recycle the dead tree. Insects bore through the wood; mosses and lichens live on the bark.

Mouse

Just about any place on earth can be home to rats and mice including snags. They outnumber all other mammals put together. One female rat can give birth to 50 young each year. In the woods, rats eat seeds, nuts, fruit, buds and insects. Because they are small, they require little food and can easily hide from predators. Their teeth are so strong they can gnaw through cable and concrete.

Rabbit

Rabbits are cousins of rats and squirrels. They feed on bark, twigs, and leafy plants. They find shelter in fallen hollow logs and ground level tree cavities.

Carpenter Ant

Carpenter ants tunnel into dead trees, rotting logs and stumps to build their nests. They often weaken dying trees and cause them to break. They feed on other insects, fruit, sap and refuse. Carpenter ants often invade houses causing much damage.

Skunk

Skunks often burrow at the base of snag cavities. They eat beetles, larvae, wasps, lizards, rats and fungi. Skunks protect themselves by spraying a suffocating scent up to 9 feet that wards away predators. The spray can cause temporary blindness if it gets in the eyes.

Squirrel

Squirrels spend the winter in hollow tree trunks, which they line with leaves and twigs.

Snake

Black rat snakes lay their eggs and search for food in snags.

Raccoon

Raccoons den in hollow trees near water. They eat nuts, berries, crayfish, frogs and fish. They often play with their food in water, which makes some people think they are washing it.

Bear

Bears rip fallen logs apart in search of juicy grubs and insects. Black bears prefer large hollow trees as dens. They spend the winter in these dens where the females give birth to 1 to 4 cubs. During the denning period, adult black bears remain in an inactive sleep state that is sometimes incorrectly referred to as hibernation. It doesn't get cold enough in Georgia for bears to truly hibernate.

Owls

Owls see primarily in black and white and can turn their heads about 280 degrees. In many species, females are larger than males. Owls range in size from two ounces to eight pounds. Owl fossils date back 40-60 million years. Owls eat small mammals, insects, and help control rodent populations.

Honeybee

Honeybees often build their hives in snags or hollow trees. Honeybees are vital to our survival because they pollinate plants and make honey. Honeybees, unlike other bees and wasps, only sting once. Their stinger is dislodged into the victim and then the bee dies.

Fish

Nearly all fish use logs that have fallen into the water for food, nesting, shade or shelter. Bass and trout hide under these trees.

Bat

Bats are the only mammals with wings. A bat consumes over 3,000 insects nightly. Bats live in caves and old ruins. Big brown bats roost in hollow trees, cavities and in crevices under loose bark. Many bats fly south for the winter to find food. They use "sonar" to avoid obstacles and to locate food. They are very efficient BUG ZAPPERS.

Frog

Frogs live on land and near water. Toads are special kinds of frogs that make their homes in hollow logs and damp tree cavities.

Spiders

Spiders have 8 legs while insects have 6. Spiders eat mostly insects. They capture insects by spinning silk webs, which trap the insects. The silk threads spun in their webs are the strongest natural fibers known. Even steel drawn out the same diameter is not as strong. Spiders make their homes in many places including snags.