



Great Horned Owl

POINT OF INTEREST

THE GREAT HORNED OWL, ALSO KNOWN AS THE TIGER OWL, IS THE MOST WIDELY DISTRIBUTED SPECIES OF OWL IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA. THESE "TIGERS OF THE AIR" FREELY HUNT ANY ANIMAL IT CAN OVERPOWER BUT PRIMARILY TARGETS SMALL GAME LIKE RABBITS, MICE, AND VOLES.

GREAT HORNED OWLS HAVE VERY POWERFUL TALONS WHICH CAN APPLY UP TO 300 LBS/IN² OF PRESSURE, WHICH IS MUCH GREATER THAN THE HUMAN HAND IS CAPABLE OF EXERTING. THESE BIRDS MAY BE FOUND IN SWAMPS, CONIFEROUS FORESTS, AND EVEN DESERTS.



PETER K. BURIAN IMAGE CREDIT



JUVENILE



WILD RABBITS





POINT OF INTEREST

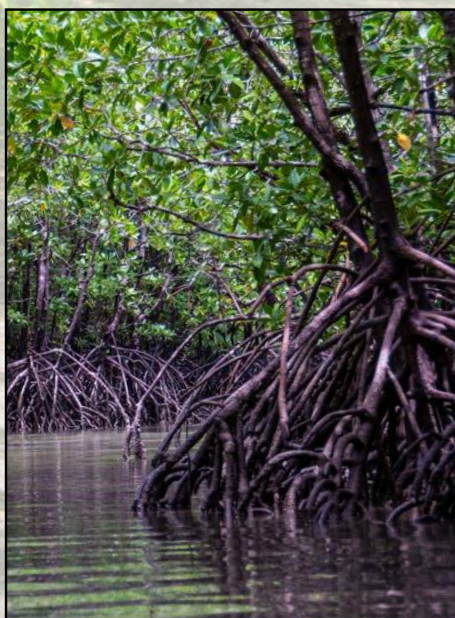
Mangrove Swamp



MANGROVE SWAMPS ARE DENSE FORESTS OCCURRING ALONG FLAT, LOW WAVE ENERGY ESTUARINE SHORELINES, AND ARE AMONG THE MOST PRODUCTIVE FORESTS IN THE WORLD. RED, BLACK, AND WHITE MANGROVES ARE THE DOMINANT PLANTS FOUND IN THESE COMMUNITIES. THE ROOT STRUCTURES FROM THESE MANGROVES PROVIDE SHELTER FOR NUMEROUS MARINE ORGANISMS, AND ALSO FILTER NITRATES AND PHOSPHATES IN THE WATER.



MANGROVE SWAMP



ROOT STRUCTURE

LEAVES FROM THESE MANGROVES PRODUCE AS MUCH AS 80 PERCENT OF THE ORGANIC MATTER FOUND IN THE AQUATIC FOOD WEB. MANGROVE SWAMPS ALSO HELP STABILIZE LAND IN COASTAL ENVIRONMENTS. THIS ESTUARINE SYSTEM SERVES AS A NURSERY TO MANY THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES, SUCH AS THE GOLIATH GROUPER AND SMALL TOOTHED SAWFISH.





Coontie

POINT OF INTEREST

COONTIE IS IN THE FAMILY OF CYCADACEAE, WHICH HAS FOSSIL RECORDS DATING BACK 280 MILLION YEARS. THE WHOLE PLANT CONTAINS A TOXIN, CYCASIN, WHICH CAN CAUSE LIVER FAILURE AND EVEN DEATH. THE SEEDS CONTAIN GLYCOSIDES, WHICH IF CONSUMED CAN INDUCE VOMITING, HEADACHES, AND DIARRHEA. HOWEVER, INDIGENOUS TRIBES FOUND A WAY TO SAFELY EXTRACT STARCHES IN THE ROOTS TO MAKE BREAD.



ZAMIA INTEGRIFOLIA - COONTIE



FEMALE PLANT CONE

THIS PLANT IS DIOECIOUS, WHICH MEANS THERE ARE BOTH MALE AND FEMALE VERSIONS OF THIS PLANT. MALE PLANTS HAVE CONES THAT ARE CYLINDRICAL 2-6 INCHES LONG (OFTEN CLUSTERED), WHEREAS FEMALE PLANTS HAVE CONES THAT ARE ELONGATE-OVOID IN SHAPE BETWEEN 2-7.5 INCHES LONG.





POINT OF INTEREST

Prickly Pear Cactus

ALSO KNOWN AS DEVIL'S TONGUE, THIS THORNY CACTUS GROWS IN SUNNY, WELL-DRAINED SOILS THROUGHOUT FLORIDA. IT CAN GROW TO UP TO 2FT TALL, AND DURING THE SPRING AND SUMMER MONTHS IT PRODUCES A LARGE YELLOW FLOWER. THIS SPECIES PRODUCES A REDDISH COLORED FRUIT, WHICH CAN BE EATEN ONCE THE SPINES HAVE BEEN REMOVED. THE PADS ARE ALSO EDIBLE AND THE FLAVOR HAS BEEN COMPARED TO THAT OF A HONEYDEW MELON, FIG, CITRUS, OR BANANA.



OPUNTIA - PRICKLY PEAR

FUZZY WHITE FUNGUS-LIKE PATCHES CAN OFTEN BE SEEN GROWING ON THE PADS. THESE ARE NOT FUNGI, BUT ACTUALLY A SPECIES OF INSECT. WHEN CRUSHED THE INSECT RELEASES A RED FLUID, WHICH CAN BE USE TO MAKE RED DYE.



DACTYLOPIUS COCCUS - COCHINEAL

