



Florida Bobcat

POINT OF INTEREST



THE FLORIDA BOBCAT CAN BE FOUND ALL OVER THE STATE, FROM SWAMPS AND FORESTS TO SUBURBAN BACKYARDS. THE FLORIDA WILD BOBCAT IS ABOUT TWICE THE SIZE OF A DOMESTIC CAT AND HAS LONG LEGS, LARGE PAWS, AND A SHORT TAIL. THEY NORMALLY BREED FROM AUGUST TO MARCH, WHEN FOOD IS MOST PLENTIFUL, WITH A PEAK IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH.



BOBCATS ARE EFFICIENT HUNTERS

A BOBCAT KITTEN WEIGHS 9.75 TO 12 OUNCES AT BIRTH, OPENS ITS EYES AFTER ABOUT SIX DAYS, AND IS WEANED BETWEEN THREE TO FOUR MONTHS OF AGE. WHEN THE YOUNG BOBCATS ARE ABOUT FIVE MONTHS OLD, THEIR MOTHER WILL TEACH THEM HOW TO HUNT FOR FOOD. WHEN THEY REACH EIGHT TO 11 MONTHS OLD, THEY WILL BE COMPLETELY ABANDONED BY THEIR MOTHER AND LEFT TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES.





Florida Wild Turkeys

POINT OF INTEREST

THE FLORIDA WILD TURKEY IS BEST DISTINGUISHED FROM THE EASTERN SUBSPECIES, WHICH IT CLOSELY RESEMBLES, BY THE WHITE BARRING ON ITS WING FEATHERS. FLORIDA WILD TURKEYS' WINGS TEND TO HAVE AN OVERALL DARKER APPEARANCE COMPARED TO EASTERN WILD TURKEYS. THEY ARE POWERFUL FLIERS, ESPECIALLY FOR SHORT DISTANCES, AND CAN RUN AT SPEEDS OF UP TO 55 MPH! BUT TO CONSERVE ENERGY, WILD TURKEYS PRIMARILY WALK.



ACORNS



THEY SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME ON THE GROUND, WHERE THEY SEARCH FOR ACORNS, SEEDS, FRUITS, INSECTS, LEAVES, AND SMALL VERTEBRATES.

THEY ARE EXTREMELY WARY AND WILL RUN AWAY OR FLY TO A TREE TO ESCAPE DANGER. FOR SAFETY FROM GROUND PREDATORS, WILD TURKEYS ROOST AT NIGHT IN TREES WITHIN THICKER FOREST STANDS.





Barred owl

POINT OF INTEREST

THE BARRED OWL IS A RESIDENT SPECIES OF FLORIDA, MEANING THEY DO NOT MIGRATE. THEY ARE CONSIDERED VERY TERRITORIAL YEAR-ROUND AND EVEN MORE SO DURING NESTING SEASON. THEY ARE THOUGHT TO MATE FOR LIFE AND USUALLY RAISE ONE BROOD OF UP TO FIVE YOUNG PER YEAR. THESE OWLS TEND TO FAVOR DENSE FORESTS WITH LARGE TREES FOR NESTING.



JUVENILE



TYPICALLY, BARRED OWLS ARE FOUND IN MATURE FOREST WITH A RELATIVELY OPEN UNDERSTORY. AN OPEN UNDERSTORY IN THE FOREST IS NECESSARY SO THAT THEY CAN PERCH ON BRANCHES AND BE ABLE TO SEE, AS WELL AS FLY, TO CATCH THEIR PREY. FROM A DISTANCE, OBSERVERS WILL NOTICE THE LARGE SIZE OF THE BARRED OWL, THE BROWNISH COLORATION, AND THE ABSENCE OF EAR TUFTS. ADDITIONALLY, BARRED OWLS HAVE LARGE DARK EYES.





Beautyberry

POINT OF INTEREST

BEAUTYBERRY, ALSO KNOWN AS FRENCH MULBERRY IS A WOODY SHRUB FOUND IN PINELANDS AND HAMMOCKS THROUGHOUT FLORIDA. THE PLANT'S FOLIAGE OFFERS COVER FOR SMALL WILDLIFE. ITS FLOWERS ARE A NECTAR SOURCE FOR BUTTERFLIES AND BEES, WHILE ITS DENSE CLUSTERS OF BERRIES PROVIDE FOOD FOR BIRDS AND DEER IN LATE SUMMER AND FALL.



DESPITE BEING NON-TOXIC, ANIMALS LIKE BIRDS WILL ONLY EAT THE BERRIES AND SEEDS WHEN NO OTHER FOOD SOURCES ARE AVAILABLE, DUE TO THEIR BITTER TASTE. FOR THAT SAME REASON, HUMANS DON'T EAT THEM FRESH OR RAW, THOUGH SOME PEOPLE MAKE BEAUTYBERRY JELLY, TEA, AND WINE USING THEM.

