

# Regional Wildlife Assessment & Informational Fact Sheet For Greater Gulf-Houston Region (1<sup>st</sup> Edition – 2022)

The 8-County Greater Houston Region is rapidly growing with both people and wildlife! The Greater Houston Region’s diverse ecoregions – from prairie wetlands and wooded oak and cypress bottomlands to pine forests and coastal marshes – are flanked by 40 major waterways, allowing for over 700 miles of riparian corridors running through the highly-populated region. Diverse wildlife species – from coyotes and bobcats to alligators and otters – traverse these corridors every day. With the impact of a growing number of large rain/flood events over the last few years and increasing pressures from sea level rise and warming temperatures, a collaborative of interested stakeholders spent three years using wildlife cameras to identify and access these diverse wildlife species. This Wildlife Fact Sheet is a compilation of this collaborative effort, providing information and tools for human coexistence with the region’s wildlife and their natural habitats.

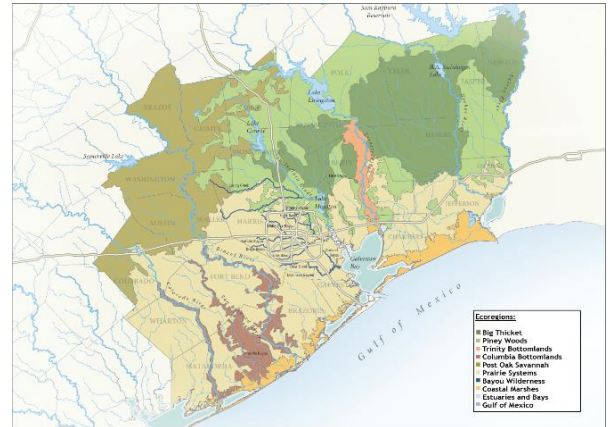
## What regional wildlife do we have:

Wildlife Viewed along riparian corridors in Gulf-Houston Region (2020-2022)			
Armadillos	Bats	Black Bear <sup>1</sup>	Beavers
Alligator Gar	Gray Fox	Nutria	Alligator Snapping Turtle
Coyotes	Feral Hogs (non-native)	White-tailed Deer	Turtles
Squirrels, Snakes	Bobcats	Raccoons & Opossums	Resident & Migratory Birds
River Otters	Swamp Rabbits	Eastern Cottontails	Alligators

## Where they are found:

- Riparian corridors – widespread use of “riparian zones” on all the waterways in the region (mainly at night)
- Detention basins, reservoirs and parks that as part of waterways (daytime and nighttime use)
- Wooded areas – urban and suburban forests

## What regional wildlife do: Hunt, Eat, Seek and Nest



All Wildlife Eating Habitats – Herbivore, Carnivore or Omnivorous diet			
Armadillos	Bats	Black Bears <sup>2</sup>	Beavers
Alligator Gars	Gray Foxes	Nutria	Alligator Snapping Turtles
Coyotes	Feral Hogs (non-native)	Opossums	Turtles
Squirrels & Snakes	Bobcats	Raccoons	White-tailed Deer
River Otters	Swamp Rabbits	Eastern Cottontails	Alligators

## Impacts to Habitat of regional wildlife:

- Floods and varying water levels along the waterways<sup>3</sup>
- Drought
- Interactions with humans & domestic pets

<sup>1</sup> Only a few regional sightings, to date; See educational resources at [Texas Black Bear Alliance](#)

<sup>2</sup> Roughly 90% of the LA Black Bear’s diet is vegetative, with the remaining 10% composed of protein from insects and grubs.

<sup>3</sup> Residential and commercial areas can become the “Riparian Zone” during flood events and hurricanes

## Improving riparian habitats as part of sustainability planning in Gulf-Houston Region:

- For humans
  - Save mature trees and Replace sections of lawn with more native trees, shrubs, grasses and perennials
  - Enhance all soils with leaves, mulch & compost
  - Avoid rat and other poisons – they harm all wildlife
- For wildlife
  - Protect slopes of riparian corridors and tributaries with native trees and grasses
  - Plant more habitat – for herbivores and carnivores



Coyotes

### Special Feature: Coyotes

- Formerly called the “Prairie Wolf”
- A part of the Greater Gulf-Houston Region for hundreds of years
- Use culverts as dens – usually along waterways
- Alpha Male & Female pair have up to 10-mile radius territory for themselves and their cubs
- Coyote population stays balanced because of territorial behavior within 10-mile radius
- During extreme events, coyotes will move within existing 10-foot territory to seek shelter
- Coyotes may wander neighborhoods during extreme events for food but instinctively will avoid humans
- Killing of domestic cats is unusual, more interested in rabbits, raccoons, rodents and various plants

## Human interactions with regional wildlife

- If wildlife found in your yard, leave them be if possible
- If wildlife found other than your yard, leave them be (even if they looked injured)
- In public spaces, more signage planned to aid visitors on regional wildlife in the area (Look out for it!)

## Federal, state & local policies for regional wildlife

Feral Hogs    Protected Wildlife Species    Migratory Birds



Feral Hog



River Otters



Alligator



Bobcat

### Wildlife Cameras & Fact Sheet Contributors

- Asakura Robinson
- Bayou Land Conservancy
- Buffalo Bayou Partnership
- Harris County
- Harris County Flood Control District
- Houston Audubon
- Houston Arboretum & Nature Center
- Houston Botanic Garden
- Houston Parks Board
- Houston Wilderness
- Mercer Arboretum
- Montgomery County
- Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept
- University of Houston
- U.S. Corps of Engineers – Galveston

For questions, contact [info@houstonwilderness.org](mailto:info@houstonwilderness.org)