

OCTOBRE 2021

Nature in the Southern United States

Up close with alligators, birds, bears, moose and other furry and feathered beasts

With 96 parks managed by the National Park Service, including national parks, preserves, historic sites and national sea coasts, boardwalks and trails, as well as more than 500 state parks, the southern states are a place fascinating to observe the fauna and flora throughout the year.



Photo credit: Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism



Photo credit: Louisiana Office of Tourism

Wherever you are, there is a trail or a forest road nearby to appreciate the beauty and diversity of nature.

Today we take you through the natural state of Arkansas, the wild side of Louisiana, the mountains of West Virginia, wildlife encounters in Tennessee, and the pastures of Kentucky.

ARKANSAS

Arkansas' natural diversity is reflected in its six ecoregions: geographic areas home to particular plants and animals. For example, the Ouachita and Ozark National Forests provide a unique environment for visitors. being one of only two mountain ranges in the United States whose ridges run east to west, its plant communities differ markedly from those of the rest of the country. Thanks to its mature pine forest, the Ouachita area is home to rare species such as the red-tailed woodpecker, as well as abundant white-tailed deer.

The Buffalo National River, designated as the first national river in the United States in 1972, is 215 km long. Conservation efforts have allowed the Buffalo National River to remain a pristine example of Arkansas' environmental heritage, with clear waters, dramatic cliffs, and dense forest.



Photo credit: Casey Crocker

KENTUCKY

In western Kentucky, the elk and bison prairie is a native grassland habitat where the animals roam freely. Visitors travel in their own vehicle along a 5.5 km paved loop road. Many other wildlife species thrive on the prairie, including wild turkeys, a variety of birds, small game, prairie mammals, butterflies and many more. The enclosure is open from dawn to dusk, seven days a week.

For best wildlife viewing, plan to bring your binoculars. In early fall, prairie wildflowers like purple shooting stars, pigeon peas and milkweed bloom and elk begin to make their mating call.

This is also when the elk strip the velvet from their antlers to prepare for the mating season - look for trees that have had their bark removed. as winter approaches, elk and bison develop their full coats, and the bare landscape increases opportunities for wildlife viewing. in late spring, bison calves appear, and summer is the perfect growing season for anything that lives on the prairie.

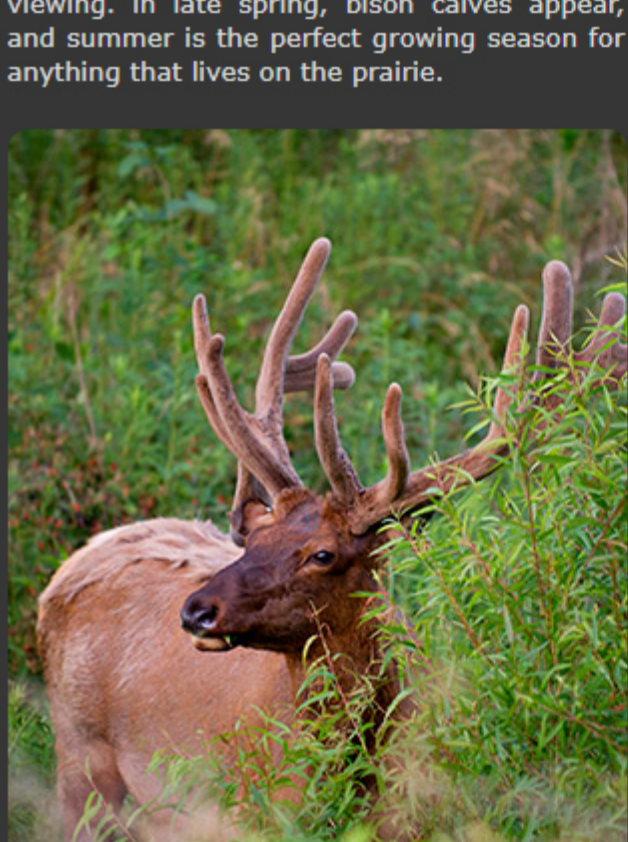


Photo credit: Kentucky Tourism

LOUISIANA

Discover the "wild side" of Louisiana's swamps, home to one of the richest and most diverse ecosystems on the planet. The ancient swamps, both beautiful and menacing, consist of untouched nature, groves of cypress trees with their lush Spanish moss hanging down, and abundant wildlife. Travelers encounter native creatures such as alligators that roam just above the waters and hundreds of species of birds, and hear colorful stories of pirates and other inhabitants of the vast, winding waterways.

The best ways to approach wildlife are by airboat or kayak. You can also embark on a walk along tranquil swamps covered in cypresses, tupelos and oaks in the Maurepas Swamp area. The Atchafalaya Basin, America's largest riverine swamp, is perfect for photography, birdwatchers, or anyone who wants a memorable glimpse of swamp life.

TENNESSEE

Come get up close to the animals in scenic Tennessee for a memorable vacation with family or friends. Ober Gatlinburg's Wildlife Encounter in Gatlinburg: Board the cable car for breathtaking views of the Smoky Mountains. Visit the Wildlife Encounter (with black bears, lynx and otters). splash around in water parks, shop, eat and experience thrills aboard the Ski Mountain Coaster. During the winter months, try snow tubing, snowboarding and ice skating. At Shelby Farms Park in Memphis, get out of the hustle and bustle of the city to see bison (American bison). VS'

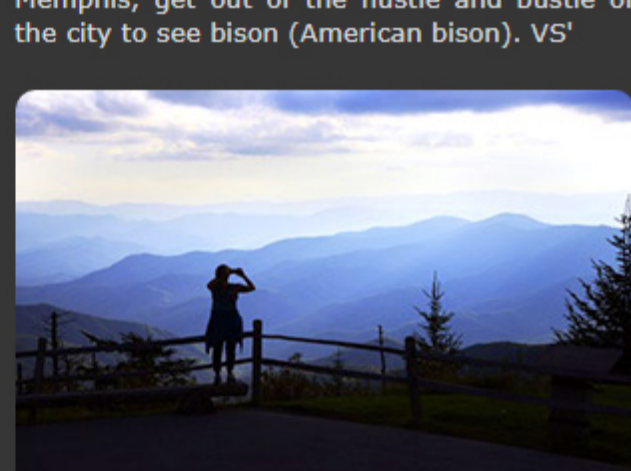


Photo credit: Tennessee Department of Tourist Development

WEST VIRGINIA

As the third most forested state in the United States, the mountains of West Virginia are home to many animals and lush wildlife. The Dolly Sods Wilderness Area, part of the Monongahela National Forest, has a diverse ecosystem filled with plants found in places like southern Canada. Due to its high elevation, the area is a habitat for animals like the snowshoe hare. Admire breathtaking views of southern West Virginia at the Hanging Rock Raptor Observatory.

The old fire tower is a perfect lookout point for spotting migrating eagles, hawks and ospreys. This is one of the best places in the state to observe birds of prey. Take a one-of-a-kind excursion aboard the Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad. Located in Romney, this scenic drive will take you through an extraordinary gorge called The Trough and allow you to spot bald eagles. After more than 100 years of absence from the state, elk were reintroduced in 2018 and have been thriving ever since.

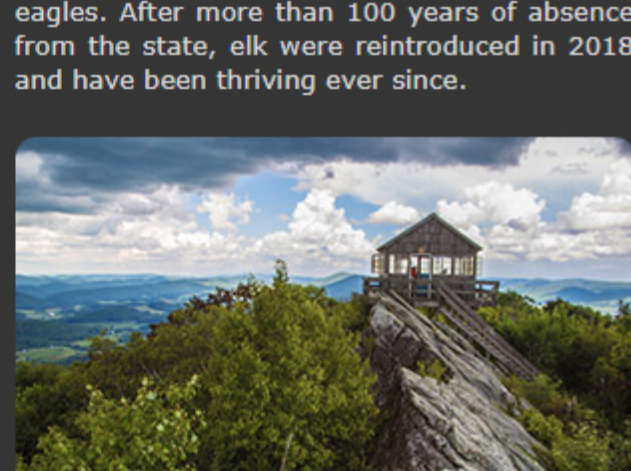


Photo credit: Will Miller

DID YOU KNOW ?

ARKANSAS

Once endangered, the bald eagle has made an encouraging comeback and now nests along rivers and lakeshores throughout the state. Other popular birds include the magnificent Painted Sparrow, the Funny Cuckoo, and the Prothonotary Warbler. Arkansas wetlands attract large flocks of wading birds in late summer, often including wood storks and roseate spoonbills.

KENTUCKY

Accessible by paved road, the new Breathitt County Elk Viewing Facility allows visitors to view Kentucky's largest elk herd. Surrounded by wetlands, ponds, and a variety of plants and animals, the facility offers beautiful panoramic views of the Kentucky mountains.

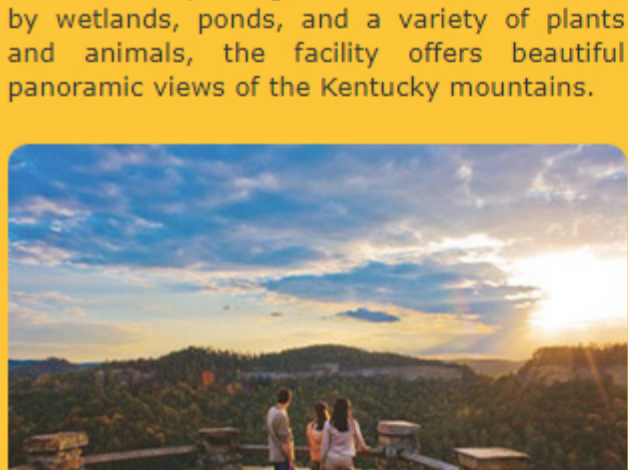


Photo credit: Kentucky Department of Tourism

LOUISIANA

Last Wilderness Swamp Tours, using a small six-passenger boat, offers an adventure deep into the "magical swamps" of the Atchafalaya Basin, where other swamps with their big boats can't go. The only limit to where they can go is the seasonal water level. The excursion lasts approximately two hours and the boat is powered by a new quiet and environmentally friendly 90 HP four-stroke outboard motor.

TENNESSEE

Buffalo or Bison? The scientific or Latin name for this animal is Bison, and the common term for it is Bison. However, the true bison species are native to Africa and Asia and are not the same as the animals found in the United States. The term "buffalo" recalls the central role of the bison in American history, and we prefer "buffalo". The bison was officially named the national mammal of the United States in 2016!



Photo credit: Tennessee Tourism

WEST VIRGINIA

Ready to answer some questions about the bald eagle? Adopted as the national symbol of America in 1782, it is protected by federal and state laws. They mate for life and the eagles which weigh between 4 and 6 kg leave the nest at the age of 10 to 13 weeks. An adult bald eagle is 75 cm long and has a wingspan of 2 meters. The first bald eagle nest in West Virginia was discovered along the South Fork of the Potomac River in 1981. Eagles tend to be more active on overcast and/or rainy days.

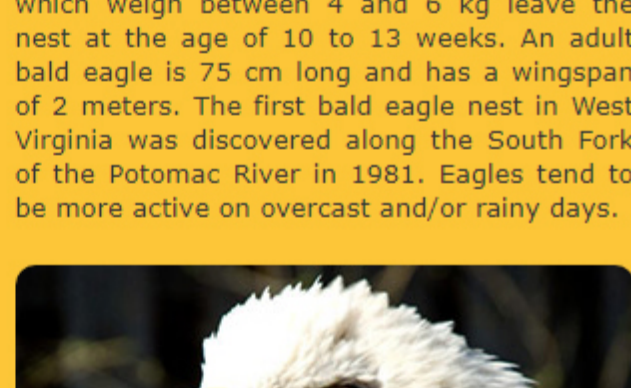


Photo Credit: Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad, West Virginia

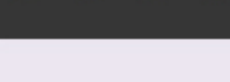
RESOURCES

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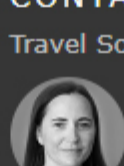
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