

Animal Fact Sheet - Some Popular Animals of Pennsylvania

Monarch Butterfly: Sometimes called the milkweed butterfly because its life cycle centers on the milkweed plant, the Monarch lays its eggs on the underside of milkweed leaves, and feeds on the leaves after hatching as a caterpillar. The caterpillar will also hang from the plant to create a chrysalis and transform into a butterfly.

White-Tailed Deer: Generally preferring open woodlands, White-Tailed Deer are also found on the fringes of urban areas and in farming country. In the spring and summer deer eat green plants, and in the fall and winter their diet changes to acorns and other nuts, twigs and buds. (State game animal)

Red Fox: Red foxes seem to prefer somewhat open habitats and are not creatures of dense forests; their favorite habitat is rolling farmland interspersed with woods. They may dig their own den or use old woodchuck burrows. Red foxes eat small mammals and birds; also eggs, fruit, and insects.

American Robin: Perhaps the first bird most people learn to recognize, "robin redbreast" is a brown bird with a darker head and tail and a rusty-red breast. Their nests are usually made of mud and grass in a tree or on a ledge. They live on earthworms and insects.

Black Bear: The black bear is the only species of bear found in Pennsylvania. They prefer to live in forests or dense swamps, although they sometimes visit farmlands. Bears will eat almost anything, including garbage, and will freeload if given a chance. They do not truly hibernate, but head for a den in October and sleep soundly much of the winter in nests or dens in hollow stumps, caves and under trees.

Snowshoe Hare: The snowshoe gets his name from his big feet, made bigger in winter by thick, coarse fur. He also changes from brown in summer to white in winter. They eat mostly green plants in summer, and woody browse (twigs, buds and bark) in winter. Hares like high elevation swamps, brushy areas, and forests of mixed hardwoods and conifers. Mature forests don't suit them well.

Beaver: Beavers build dams to create ponds in which they build lodges, or may build streambank burrows. Since they prefer to dam streams in shallow valleys, much of the flooded area becomes wetlands. They eat the inner bark of trees.

Ruffed Grouse: Pennsylvania's state Bird. In other parts of the country, the grouse may be called a "partridge." Their feathers are predominantly gray or reddish-brown. They nest on the ground, often at the base of a tree. Buds, fruits and the leaves of aspen birch, beech and maple, grapes, and other fruits and nuts are their primary sources of food.

Opossum: Opossums live in open woods, swamps and wastelands. They climb well. Although they do not hibernate, during very cold weather they may hole up for several days at a time, risking frostbite on their naked ears and tail to seek food when hunger strikes. Their bed is a nest of leaves in a hollow log, tree cavity, or burrow. They eat almost anything: fruits, nuts, corn, worms, insects, frogs, snakes, birds, small mammals, eggs.

Woodchuck (Groundhog): They are usually found near farmland but may also dig burrows in the woods. These later become homes for other animals, but cause problems for farmers. Woodchucks are also able to manipulate objects with their paws because they have thumb stumps with claws. They hibernate from October through February, so they eat heavily during the fall. They eat grasses, clover, alfalfa, plantain, apples, beans, corn and other plants.

Resources:

In the Woods: Who's Been Here? Written and Illustrated by Lindsay Barrett George. Greenwillow, 1995.

Monarch Butterfly

http://www.kidzone.ws/animals/monarch_butterfly.htm

Ruffed Grouse

http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/PGC/bird_Mam/birdMam01.htm

White-Tailed Deer

<http://www.desertusa.com/mag99/june/papr/wtdeer.html>

Red Fox

<http://www.wildwnc.org/af/redfox.html>

Beaver

<http://www.beaversww.org/beaver.html>

Woodchuck

<http://www.hsus.org/ace/14573>