



# Discovering Alabama

Teacher's Guide

## Wildlife History

### Suggested Curriculum Areas

History  
Social Studies  
Environmental Studies

### Suggested Grade Levels

4–12

### Key Concepts

Conservation  
Habitat  
Natural Heritage

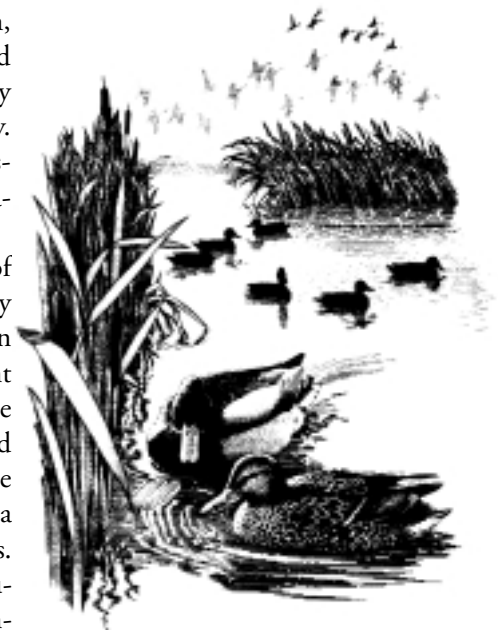
### Key Skills

Research  
Analysis  
Critical Thinking

### Synopsis

Our nation is rooted in a rich, natural heritage that helped give rise to American democracy and define our national identity. Central to this heritage is the history of our society's changing relationship with wildlife.

This video gives an overview of that history, with emphasis on early periods of wildlife decline in America and Alabama's significant role in wildlife restoration. The state's diverse natural habitats and committed conservationists have brought Alabama recognition as a national leader in wildlife resources. The video also traces the contributions of hunters in creating the concept of conservation, establishing laws for wildlife protection, and funding programs for wildlife restoration. The video is especially suitable for use with other *Discovering Alabama* programs, such as "Alabama Forests," "Sipsey Wilderness," "Locust Fork River," "Black Warrior River," and "Cahaba River Watershed," in teaching the Alabama Course of Study for history and social studies.



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
ALABAMA



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This program was produced with support from the following organizations:



BOOKS-A-MILLION



## Before Viewing

1. In today's increasingly urban society, many children rarely encounter native wildlife outside zoos or other commercial exhibits. Conduct a survey to find out what native animals your students have seen in the wild. How many students have seen such game species as white-tailed deer, wild turkey, raccoon, quail, or mallard duck? How many students have seen such non-game species as the red-tailed hawk, pileated woodpecker, king snake, grey fox, or Alabama's state bird, the yellow-shafted flicker? You might also learn how many in your class have seen such rare animals as the black bear, gopher tortoise, red fox, red-cockaded woodpecker, or the nation's symbol, the bald eagle. Discuss the locations and settings—forests, rivers, farms, etc.—where students have seen different species.

2. Have students work in small groups to: a) develop a list of animals they believe lived in Alabama at the time of European exploration, and b) describe what they think wild animals need for suitable habitat, i.e., habitat that will sustain healthy reproducing populations and long-term species survival. Ask each group to decide whether wildlife habitat in America has declined or improved since the emergence of twentieth-century industrial society.

3. Introduce the video by explaining that it presents a history of America's changing relationship with wildlife and the special role that Alabama has played in wildlife conservation.

## While Viewing

Have students listen for information on the changing status of wildlife habitat since the turn of the century. Were their initial assessments correct?

**Video Mystery Question:** Since the European settlement of America, how

have hunters been both a major threat and a major benefit for wildlife? (Answer: In nineteenth-century America, prior to laws for wildlife protection, uncontrolled hunting was a significant factor in the decimation of many wildlife populations. By the twentieth century, concerned hunters were helping to lead efforts for a new awareness and for new laws to protect wildlife.)

## After Viewing

1. Briefly review the list of native animals your students have seen in the wild. Have the class work in small groups to cite new information presented in the video that pertains to any of these animals, to wildlife habitat, or to the changing status of wildlife in America. Share and discuss.

2. Remind students that the video describes how hunters, sportsmen, and conservationists have been central to the protection and restoration of native wildlife. Inquire whether your students were aware of this fact and if they think that the general public might know this information. Ask the students for their thoughts on whether present-day hunters might be aware of the important role of such groups as the Sierra Club and the Audubon Society.

## Extensions

1. View the *Discovering Alabama* programs "Geological History," "Alabama's Natural Diversity," and "Alabama Forests," which present additional information about the native habitats of the state. Discuss connections to this video.

2. Invite members from local hunting, fishing, and environmental organizations to visit the class and discuss their concerns about wildlife. If possible, have them view this video prior to their visit to become familiar with what the class is studying.

## Philosophical Reflections

To hunt or not to hunt? That is the question. Popular arguments in support of hunting include that hunting is a compassionate practice because many species would suffer a worse fate from harsh weather, starvation, and disease unless their numbers are periodically thinned; that hunting is an honored American tradition with numerous economic, recreational, and social benefits to our society; and that hunting is both a rite and a right of human existence, historically integral to the proper order of humans and nature.

In opposition to hunting, common concerns are that hunting is a dangerous activity that is no longer necessary for obtaining food, clothing, or other material needs; that hunting often results in the wounding and suffering of many animals; and that modern modes of hunting, with sophisticated weapons and machinery, are indicative of a widening rift between humans and nature.

There are reasonable and caring advocates on both sides of this debate. But for some people, the issue is less a question of whether animals should be hunted or killed and more a question of whether it is appropriate to hunt for sport. To these people, the core concern is the phenomenon of enthusiastically killing wildlife for recreation, for fun. What beliefs or assumptions about humans and nature might justify killing wildlife for enjoyment? What beliefs or assumptions might argue that such a practice is inappropriate?



## Nature in Art

Artistic renderings of wildlife have long been a favorite pursuit of outdoor lovers from William Bartram, one of the first naturalists to document native species of the American South, to John James Audubon, for whom the Audubon Society is named. Earlier this century, the “Duck Stamp Act” (mentioned in the video) enabled nationwide sales of hunting stamps with renderings of ducks and waterfowl by many of America’s best wildlife artists. You might wish to invite local wildlife artists to bring examples of their work to your class.

## Community Connections

1. Consult local authorities to develop a description of the natural features and habitats of your county. Use nature field guides and other helpful sources to compile a listing of plant and animal species native to your county and to determine the status of each.
2. Obtain the National Wildlife Federation’s School Yard Habitat Information Kit (see **Complementary Aids and Activities**). With the knowledge gained about the native diversity of your local area, have students consult this guide in planning and establishing a school yard habitat program.
3. The video tells how environmental groups like the Sierra Club have joined with sportsmen groups like the Boone and Crockett Club to promote conservation. Explore whether such cooperation exists in your community. Have students develop a questionnaire and conduct a survey of whether such local groups are similar or dissimilar in their beliefs, attitudes, and concerns about wildlife and other environmental issues. Invite interested local groups to collaborate with your class in determining the status of local native habitats and species. Divide the class into teams, with each team assigned to develop part of a report (writings, photographs, etc.) of their findings for publication in the local media.

## Complementary Aids and Activities

*Project WILD*, Activity Guide, Grades 7–12, 2d ed., “Checks and Balances” and “The Hunter.” Available through Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, 64 N. Union St., Montgomery AL 36130; 334–242–3623.

*School Yard Habitat Information Kit*. Available from the Alabama Wildlife Federation, 3050 Lanark Rd., Millbrook AL 36054; 800–822–9453.

World Wide Web sites with information on conservation programs in Alabama:

**Alabama Game & Fish**

[www.dcnr.state.al.us/agfd](http://www.dcnr.state.al.us/agfd)

**Alabama Wildlife Federation**

[www.alabamawildlife.org/](http://www.alabamawildlife.org/)

**Audubon International**

[www.audubonintl.org/](http://www.audubonintl.org/)

**Sierra Club**

<http://sierraclub.org/>

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

[www.fws.gov/](http://www.fws.gov/)

## Additional References and Resources

*A History of American Wildlife* by Hal Borland (1975).

*The Hunter in Conservation*, Council for Wildlife Conservation and Education, Inc., 1 Mile Hill Road, New Town CT 06470.

“On the Morality of Hunting” by Ann S. Casey. *Environmental Ethics*, Vol. 11, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 327–343.

“Sport Hunting: Moral or Immoral” by Theodore Vitali. *Environmental Ethics* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 69–82.

*Beyond Prejudice: The Moral Significance of Human and Nonhuman Animals* by Evelyn B. Pluhar (1995).

*The Value of Life: Biological Diversity and Human Society* by Stephen R. Kellert (1996).

*Earth Keeping: Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources* by Loren Wilkinson (1980).

## Parting Thoughts

Across America today, hunting is a subject of increasing controversy that is compounded by the fact that humans are uniquely prone to contradiction. Some would say it is contradictory to oppose the hunting of wild animals while at the same time showing no concern for the unnatural conditions often associated with raising and processing commercial livestock. Likewise, it seems contradictory to support hunting as a compassionate means of helping wildlife while at the same time being unwilling to support wildlife habitat programs that do not offer hunting opportunities in return.

Deeper problems often exist at the very core of our beliefs. For example, “morally-based” beliefs against hunting sometimes ignore scientific facts about animals in the wild. On the other hand, “scientifically-based” arguments for hunting sometimes ignore legitimate moral and philosophical questions about why and how hunting is pursued. The point is that the issue of hunting is more complex than one might suspect from listening to popular arguments (see **Additional References and Resources** for articles on the hunting issue).

Meanwhile, as the hunting controversy is fueled by angry passions, let’s not lose sight of the genuine need for compassion, both for animals and for one another. Regardless of your personal decision of whether or not to hunt, an ethical choice is one that is grounded in thoughtful consideration of how best to be a good steward of the wonders of nature. As food for thought, many Alabamians might enjoy reading the thirty guidelines for stewardship provided in the book, **Earth Keeping: Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources** (see **Additional References and Resources**).

Oh yeah, I almost forgot. For families who choose to hunt, I relate a word of wisdom offered by wildlife officials with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources: Introduce your children to enjoying and understanding the outdoors first. Forced preoccupation with making a kill or bagging a trophy can rob a youngster of the full experience of knowing and appreciating the world of nature.

Happy outings,

*D. Long*







## Discovering Alabama

### Activity/Information Sheet

## Wildlife History

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE BIRD AND MAMMAL game species of Alabama:

beaver  
blackbird  
bobcat  
bobwhite quail  
common moorhens  
coots  
coyote  
crow  
ducks  
fox  
geese  
groundhog  
mallard ducks  
merganser  
mourning dove  
nutria  
opossum  
purple gallinule  
rabbit  
raccoon  
rail  
snipe  
squirrel  
starlings  
teal  
white-tailed deer  
wild hogs  
wild turkey  
woodcock

CERTAIN ANIMALS THAT ARE RARE TODAY were historically considered game animals. The following four species are now protected from hunting through the designation of a closed season. *Italics* indicate threatened or endangered animals.

alligator  
*Florida black bear*  
mountain lion  
*ruffed grouse*

FOR A COMPLETE LIST of Alabama's Rare Species Inventory, visit the Alabama Natural Heritage Program at [www.heritage.tnc.org/nhp/us/al](http://www.heritage.tnc.org/nhp/us/al).

*Alabama beach mouse*  
*Allegheny woodrat*  
*American oystercatcher*  
*American swallow-tailed kite*  
*American white pelican*  
*Appalachian Bewick's wren*  
*Appalachian cottontail*  
*Bachman's sparrow*  
*Bachman's warbler*  
*bald eagle*  
*bank swallow*  
*black rail*  
*black scoter*  
*black skimmer*  
*black tern*  
*black-necked stilt*  
*Brazilian free-tailed bat*  
*brown pelican*  
*cerulean warbler*  
*clapper rail*  
*common barn owl*  
*common ground dove*  
*common merganser*  
*common raven*  
*common tern*  
Cooper's hawk  
*dickcissel*  
*eastern spotted skunk*  
*Florida panther*  
*fulvous whistling duck*  
*glossy ibis*  
golden eagle  
*gray kingbird*  
*gray myotis bat*  
*greater sandhill crane*  
*greater white-fronted goose*  
grey fox  
*gull-billed tern*  
*Henslow's sparrow*  
*hooded merganser*  
*Indiana bat*  
*lark sparrow*  
*Le Conte's sparrow*

*least bittern*  
*least tern*  
*lesser golden plover*  
*little brown myotis*  
*loggerhead shrike*  
*long-billed curlew*  
*long-billed dowitcher*  
*long-tailed weasel*  
*manatee*  
*marsh rabbit*  
*meadow jumping mouse*  
merlin  
*Mississippi sandhill crane*  
*mottled duck*  
*northern myotis*  
*northern yellow bat*  
*oldsquaw*  
*osprey*  
*painted bunting*  
*Perdido Key beach mouse*  
*peregrine falcon*  
*piebilled grebe*  
*pileated woodpecker*  
*pipit plover*  
*prairie vole*  
*Rafinesque's big-eared bat*  
*red knot*  
*red-cockaded woodpecker*  
*reddish egret*  
*red-tailed hawk*  
*red-throated loon*  
*royal tern*  
*sandwich tern*  
*seaside sparrow*  
*Seminole bat*  
*snowy plover*  
*solitary vireo*  
*song sparrow*  
*southeastern American kestrel*  
*southeastern bat*  
*southeastern pocket gopher*  
*southeastern snowy plover*  
*Stoddard's yellow-throated warbler*  
*Swainson's warbler*  
*tundra swan*  
*white ibis*  
*white-eyed vireo*  
*white-faced ibis*  
*white-winged scoter*  
*willet*  
*Wilson's phalarope*  
*Wilson's plover*  
*wood stork*  
*yellow flicker*  
*yellow rail*  
*yellow-crowned night heron*  
*yellow-throated vireo*