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# WAM! WILD ABOUT MISSISSIPPI

# CRITTER CORNER

## THE COYOTE *Canis latrans*

The coyote is a clever and adaptable wild canine found all across North America—including Mississippi! Coyotes look a lot like small wolves, with grayish-brown fur, pointy ears, and bushy tails. They are known for being smart, sneaky, and excellent at surviving in all kinds of environments, from deep forests to city neighborhoods. Coyotes are mostly active at night or early morning. Ever heard one? Their howls, yips, and barks are how they "talk" to each other!

**Try making a coyote call... can you howl like a wild dog?**



## FUN FACT!

### COYOTES ARE SUPER FAST RUNNERS!

They can sprint up to **40 miles per hour!** That's faster than a car in a neighborhood. Their long legs and lightweight bodies help them chase prey or dash away from danger.

## WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

Coyotes are omnivores, so they eat just about anything! Their diet includes small animals like rabbits, mice, and birds, but they'll also eat fruits, berries, and insects. Coyotes are hunters and scavengers – meaning they are really good at finding food.




## PLANT I.D.

**Beggar's Lice**

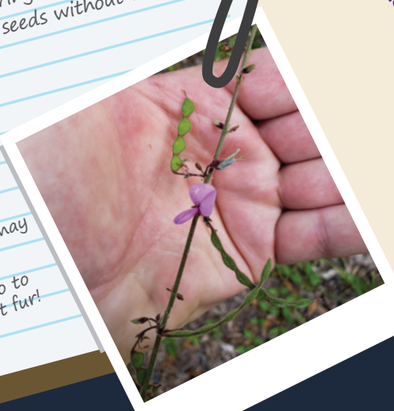
**Scientific name:** Hackelia virginiana



Have you ever come home from playing in the woods with little seeds stuck all over your clothes? It's likely Beggar's Lice! (It's not really lice—don't worry!) You may also hear it called sticktight, tick trefoil, or beggar tick. This plant grows low to the ground and is native to Mississippi. There are lots of different kinds of Beggar's Lice, but they all love to hide in open fields or shady woods. Quail and turkey eat the seeds in the fall, while white-tailed deer munch on the leafy parts during the growing season.This makes Beggar's Lice an important plant for wildlife, especially in fall when animals are stocking up for winter. If you're out in the woods this fall—maybe looking for deer tracks or exploring—you'll probably bring home a few sticky Beggar's Lice seeds without even trying!

### HOW TO SPOT IT

- Leaves grow in groups of three and look like clover
- Pink or purple flowers bloom in summer and early fall
- The plant has a soft stem that may feel smooth or a little hairy
- The seeds stick like velcro to your clothes and pet fur!



## EXPLORE MISSISSIPPI

SORRY! I'm a night howler!

Fall is in the air, and there's no better time for a family biking adventure at Mississippi State Parks! The crisp air and colorful leaves make the perfect setting for kids and parents to hit the trails together. While biking is welcome at all Mississippi State Parks, these parks have exciting mountain bike trails designed for even more outdoor fun:

- **Roosevelt State Park** Morton, MS
- **Clarkco State Park** Quitman, MS
- **Trace State Park** Belden, MS
- **Tombigbee State Park** Tupelo, MS



**GRAB YOUR BIKES AND CREATE UNFORGETTABLE FAMILY MEMORIES ON THE TRAILS!**

SCAN TO LEARN MORE!

## NATURE TRIVIA

**A:** What is the highest point in Mississippi?

**B:** What are the five common types of crops used for dove fields?

**C:** What Mississippi fish has armor-like scales and a long, skinny snout filled with teeth?

A: Woodall Mountain | B: Sunflower, corn, milo, millet, and sorghum | C: Gar

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## CAREER SPOTLIGHT

# CONSERVATION OFFICER K-9 UNIT

Did you know some Conservation Officers work with specially trained dogs to help protect wildlife in Mississippi? MDWFP's K-9 Unit has four amazing dogs that travel all over the state! These clever canines help officers find hidden wildlife like fish, ducks, and deer, track down missing people, and even sniff out important clues like shell casings or lost items during investigations.

Conservation Officers are in charge of protecting our natural resources and making sure people follow the rules when hunting, fishing, and enjoying the outdoors. With their K-9 partners, they can search faster and more safely. These friendly, non-aggressive dogs use their super sniffing powers to keep Mississippi's wildlife—and people—safe!





Can you guess which one this is?

## MEET OUR CURRENT MISSISSIPPI K-9 OFFICERS!






# MAKE A PUMPKIN BIRD FEEDER!

**Pumpkins, pumpkins everywhere, and this fall, why not share?**

Whether sitting on a front porch or baked into a delicious pie, pumpkins are used for so much during the fall months. But while you're sipping your pumpkin spice latte, have you ever thought of how wildlife could enjoy this Fall favorite too? One idea is to create a **Pumpkin Bird Feeder** for your own backyard. It's a great use for leftover pumpkins, and the birds (and probably a few squirrels) are sure to appreciate you sharing the pumpkin love!

## MATERIALS:

- Small to medium sized pumpkin, up to 10 pounds
- Small sticks
- Twine or rope
- Birdseed

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Cut the pumpkin in half.
2. Scoop out the seeds, leaving a hollow inside with 1/2-inch thick shell wall.
3. Insert two sticks across the open pumpkin to create perches for the birds.
4. Knot two lengths of rope together at the center and tack the knot to the bottom of the pumpkin feeder. Hang the other ends of the rope in your chosen feeder location.
5. Fill with birdseed.



## GIGGLE TIME!

What does a frog eat with its hamburger?
**FRENCH FLIES!**

Why is a fish easy to weigh?
**BECAUSE THEY HAVE THEIR OWN SCALES!**

What do you call an alligator in a vest?
**AN IN-VEST-IGATOR!**

# TRACK MATCH!

Draw lines to match these Mississippi animals to their tracks below!




1: Coyote 2: Black Bear 3:Rabbit 4:Wild Hog 5: Deer 6: Raccoon


MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE

