

ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOVERY CENTER NEWS



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IS IT A BIRD? IS IT A PLANE? NO, IT'S A MAMMAL!

In the Far East, bats are signs of good luck, long life, happiness and fertility. But in much of the Western World, particularly in North America, the mere mention of bats may inspire mystical visions of spooky castles and vampires as well as many other common misconceptions.

In truth, bats are intelligent animals, important to an ecosystem and are of considerable benefit to people. Bats are also valuable to commerce, science and agriculture.

In North America, bats are the principal predators of night-flying insects—they can consume thousands of tons annually! Bat guano is an important fertilizer in many parts of the world. Even our food supply would not be the same without bats, which pollinate flowers and disperse seeds of many popular tropical fruits.

With their front limbs modified into wings, bats are the only true

flying mammals. Unlike "flying" squirrels and "flying" lemurs, which merely glide, bats are capable of powered flight. And they are remarkably adept at it, surpassing in many ways even the considerable skills of birds. A bat flying at 40 miles per hour can make a right-angle turn in little more than the length of its body. In addition, bats can also crawl, hop and even swim.

However, the ability to echolocate is probably the bat's most amazing characteristic. Similar to how dolphins echolocate, bats use complex sonar to emit ultrasonic pulses that bounce off objects in the environment and return as echoes to the bat's ears, where they are interpreted by its rapidly computing brain, allowing it to maneuver appropriately. An echo from a target one meter away returns back at the bat's ears within six thousandths of a second after making the sound.

Common myths and

misconceptions about bats include:

- **Myth 1:** *Bats are blind.* In fact, bats can see extremely well.
- **Myth 2:** *Bats get tangled in your hair.* Even when researchers tried to make this happen, bats just wouldn't get tangled. Their sophisticated sonar system allows them to dodge wires as fine as human hairs—in the dark.
- **Myth 3:** *Bats are rabid attackers of humans.* Bats are actually clean, meticulous groomers. They can contract rabies like most mammals, but you rarely have to worry about a sick bat if you just leave them alone.
- **Myth 4:** *Bats are bloodsuckers.* Most bats eat insects. Only three of the one thousand or so known bat species ingest blood and they live only in Latin America.



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Oct 2: "Reptile Rap" at the EDC!
- Oct 16: Annual Fall Frenzy event at Lynch's River County Park
- Oct 31: Happy Halloween!



- Nov 11: Veteran's Day
- Nov 15: America Recycles Day
- Nov 24 & 25: EDC will be closed for Thanksgiving Holiday
- Dec 21: First day of Winter
- Dec 24 & 25: LRCP and EDC will be closed for Christmas holiday



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**Operating Hours
Closed on
Mondays
Tuesday -
Saturday
9 AM - 5 PM
Sunday
1 PM - 5 PM**

**Our Mission
Statement**

To develop and reveal the natural resources of the park for the purpose of education, stewardship, and recreation for the residents and visitors of Florence County

**ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOVERY CENTER PARTNERS WITH
FLORENCE DARLINGTON STORMWATER CONSORTIUM**

The Environmental Discovery Center joined forces with the Florence Darlington Stormwater Consortium to help bring water quality and stormwater education to residents of Florence and Darlington Counties.

The consortium is a partnership between communities and educators from universities, state agencies and nonprofits and is the sixth regional collaboration involving the Carolina Clear Program.

Carolina Clear is a stormwater education and awareness program of the Clemson University Restoration Institute and the Center for Watershed Excellence. The program's goal is to minimize polluted stormwater runoff by educating the public, builders, developers, homeowners and government officials about how they can keep water in the state's water bodies as clean as possible.

Because stormwater pollution is peo-

ple pollution, higher density areas and communities with a certain number of people have become permitted under these new regulations. This includes areas of Darlington and Florence Counties as well as the City of Florence. These three communities, along with approximately 70 others in SC, now conduct several stormwater management efforts to comply with the new regulations. Two of the mandatory efforts focus on working with the public conducting stormwater education and involving the public in taking actions to prevent stormwater pollution.

The EDC incorporates stormwater and water quality education for the many school and public programs offered throughout the year.

For more information, visit: http://www.clemson.edu/public/carolinaclear/consortiums/flodar_home/

BLUEBIRD BOX UPDATE BY SHELBY MCCORMICK

The 2010 bluebird nesting season has come to an end and I wanted to give you an update on our bluebird season here at Lynches River County Park. I have decided from this year forward I will count all the hatched eggs and use that as an indicator for how well our program is doing. The benchmark will be this year's total with 53 eggs hatched.

It's best to prepare for the 2011 nesting season as soon as you can. Bluebirds start looking for suitable nesting sites beginning in early February, depending on the

weather, and start building nests around mid-March. Wash out your box(es) and make any necessary repairs.

If your box was not successful this past year, look at the location and see if you can move it to a better spot. Bluebirds like open spaces and, because they are territorial, you should place only one box per every two acres to allow plenty of space between nesting sites. It is good to get your boxes out early, but if you can't get them out before nesting season begins, get them out as soon as you can. I installed a box in our

Carolina Fence Garden here at the Park the beginning of May and the bluebirds that selected that box still had two nests and nine hatched eggs overall.

We plan to have our annual "Bluebird Box Building Workshop" on February 5, 2011. As we get closer to that date, we'll post more information on our website at www.lynchesriverpark.com and on Facebook.

HAPPY BLUEBIRDING!



THANKSGIVING TRIVIA

How much do you know about the turkey and Thanksgiving? Take this quiz to find out!

1. When was the first Thanksgiving celebrated?
 - a. 1492
 - b. 1567
 - c. 1621
 - d. 1777
2. Where was the turkey first domesticated?
 - a. Canada
 - b. Mexico and Central America
 - c. New Zealand
 - d. India
 - e. A rooster
3. What is a female turkey called?
 - a. rooster
 - b. cuckoo
 - c. chick
 - d. hen
4. What is a male turkey called?
 - a. larry
 - b. clark
 - c. harry
 - d. tom
5. What American statesman lobbied to make the turkey the national symbol?
 - a. Benjamin Franklin
 - b. Thomas Jefferson
 - c. John Adams
 - d. Andrew Jackson
6. What sound does a female turkey make?
 - a. gobble
 - b. cluck
 - c. chirp
 - d. peep
7. What sound does a male turkey make?
 - a. gobble
 - b. cluck
 - c. chirp
 - d. peep
8. About how many feathers does a mature turkey have?
 - a. 1,500
 - b. 2,000
 - c. 3,500
 - d. 5,000
9. Which state produces the most turkeys annually?
 - a. Kansas
 - b. Ohio
 - c. Arkansas
 - d. Minnesota
10. How fast can wild turkeys run?
 - a. 5 mph
 - b. 15 mph
 - c. 25 mph
 - d. 45 mph
11. What Native American tribe celebrated the first Thanksgiving with the colonists?
 - a. Wampanoag tribe
 - b. Sioux tribe
 - c. Choctaw tribe
 - d. Arapaho tribe
12. Can wild turkeys fly? If so, how fast?
 - a. No.
 - b. Yes, up to 25 mph
 - c. Yes, up to 40 mph
 - d. Yes, up to 55 mph
13. Approximately what percentage of American homes eats turkey on Thanksgiving?
 - a. 49%
 - b. 67%
 - c. 82%
 - d. 90%
14. What is the name of the skin that hangs from a turkey's neck?
 - a. snark
 - b. wattle
 - c. garble
 - d. swag
15. Which U.S. president specified that Thanksgiving would fall on the last Thursday of November?
 - a. Martin Van Buren
 - b. Andrew Jackson
 - c. William H. Taft
 - d. Abraham Lincoln
16. Which president attempted to move the Thanksgiving holiday to the fourth Thursday in November to create a longer Christmas shopping season?
 - a. Franklin D. Roosevelt
 - b. Dwight D. Eisenhower
 - c. Harry S. Truman
 - d. Gerald R. Ford
17. Which country consumes the most turkey per year per capita?
 - a. United States
 - b. Israel
 - c. Spain
 - d. United Kingdom

Answers: 1) C 2) B 3) D 4) D 5) A 6) B 7) A 8) C 9) D 10) C 11) A 12) D 13) D 14) B 15) D 16) A 17) B

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY SEASON REUSE, REDUCE, RECYCLE TIPS

People traditionally produce a lot more trash during the holiday season. If everyone wrapped just three gifts in reused paper, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields. If every household reused just two feet of ribbon each year, the resulting 38,000 miles of ribbon could tie a bow around the Earth. 28 billion pounds of edible food is thrown away each year. The 2.65 billion Christmas cards sold each year in the U.S. could fill a football field 10 stories high or circle the planet 10 times. Annual trash from gift wrap and shopping bags total 4 million tons. Here are a few suggestions for ways you can reduce, reuse and recycle to help our environment.

Zero to Less Waste Gift Ideas

- Everyone loves food! How about baking cookies for all the neighbors or presenting a certificate for a home cooked meal that you make for them?
- Give tickets to movies, concerts or plays. Bring someone to a special event (excellent for older people with limited mobility and too much stuff).
- Make a charitable donation in someone's name.
- Buy items made from reused, recycled, or waste-reducing materials.

Creative Wrapping

- Wrap gifts in a fabric, drawstring bag. Buy and reuse gift bags that don't create wrapping waste.
- For boxes with removable lids (like shoe and shirt boxes), wrap both the box and the lid so that the paper is not torn when opened and the box can

be reused by the recipient. Use ribbon to close the box instead of tape.

- Save used gift wrap and reuse it next year.
- Decorate an unwrapped gift with dried grasses and flowers.
- Use old calendar photos to wrap smaller gifts or an old map. Use blueprints, grocery bags that you've decorated or the comics page.
- Shipping a fragile gift? Instead of Styrofoam packing peanuts, use unbuttered popcorn. The recipient can then feed it to the birds. If you receive Styrofoam peanuts or bubble wrap, drop them off for reuse at packaging and mailing stores.

Can wrapping paper be recycled?

Wrapping paper is pretty, but it is generally produced with chemical dyes that can contribute to water pollution and make it difficult to recycle. Use these guidelines to choose paper that is recyclable:

- Light colored and with white backgrounds. Less ink and non-shiny surfaces make it easier to recycle.
- Look for post-consumer recycled content paper.
- Paper only; no metallic or plastic elements. Before recycling, remove all tape and tags.

Types of wrapping that are definitely not recyclable:

- Foil and metallic papers or paper with metallic pieces.
- Plastic wrapping or wrap with plastic pieces.
- Paper with non-paper ingredients.

Recycling Packaging

Almost all packing material can be recycled, but you must separate it before recycling. These items can be recycled or reused:

Cardboard and paperboard boxes: All boxes are recyclable, even if they have tape on them. Pull all non-cardboard items out of the box.

Plastic Bags: All those little parts bags can be recycled with your plastic grocery bags.

Plastic Pillows: These air filled pockets are increasingly popular for mail order. Either reuse them to mail a package or pop the pillows and recycle with your plastic grocery bags.

Styrofoam peanuts and bubble wrap: Put clean peanuts in a plastic bag and remove tape from large, intact pieces of bubble wrap. Drop them off at mailing or packaging stores where they can be reused.

Fiber Blocks (molded pulp): These look like egg-carton fiber and are used instead of Styrofoam. They are recyclable.

Styrofoam Blocks: These are not recyclable. Please put them in the trash.

Christmas Tree Recycling

Artificial trees can be used year after year. Or, if you like live trees, consider buying a tree that can be planted outside after the season or kept indoors in a large pot and used again. For live tree care instructions and the best trees for our area, check out Clemson Extension's website at <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/other/seasonal/hgic1751.html>.

Happy Holidays!