

Finding Vertebrates

Lakeshore State Park may be in the heart of the city, but this doesn't deter wildlife from making a home here. Despite its small size, the park hosts a healthy and surprisingly diverse community of wildlife species. There are over 200 species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds and fish that reside here, some of which remain year-round. The foundation for the park's biodiversity is the abundant food made available by the short-grass prairie plants and the aquatic species in the surrounding waters of Lake Michigan.

While you are walking the paths, take time to observe your surroundings. From spring to fall, watch for scat (animal droppings) to help identify which vertebrates are present. Tracks can be observed in muddy areas and in the snow cover during winter months. Leftovers from feeding and paths made through the prairies also provide evidence of animal presence here at the park and can be seen year-round.



Additional Information

Insects are the most numerous animals on the planet and are important prey for many of the vertebrates here in the park. For more information please see the Invertebrates at Lakeshore State Park brochure.

The bird species of LSP are too numerous to be included in this pamphlet. Please look for the Bird Watching at Lakeshore State Park brochure.

Common fish found at LSP can be seen on the sign near the fishing dock and in the Fish of LSP brochure.

Contact Us

If you have any questions about your visit or if you would like to share your experience or photos with us, please feel free to contact us or visit our Facebook page.

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The Friends of Lakeshore State Park partners with the WDNR and the community to establish LSP as Milwaukee's premier urban oasis. The Friends is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the park and its partners by raising funds for educational programming, events and infrastructure, as well as providing volunteers to enhance park services. To donate to this organization, please see the Friends website at FriendsLSP.org



500 N. HARBOR DR. MILWAUKEE, WI 53233

Vertebrates of Lakeshore State Park



Lakeshore State Park's short-grass prairies and proximity to Lake Michigan provide ample food to host a variety of vertebrate species (animals with a true backbone). Strolling through the park you may encounter our resident foxes or hear the scuttling of one of their prey-the meadow voles. Keep your eyes open for scat and tracks of these animals year round!



Mammals

Over 20 species of mammals have been observed at Lakeshore State Park, including herbivores, omnivores, predators and scavengers. Herbivores eat plants, predators eat other animals, omnivores eat both plants and animals, while scavengers eat whatever they can find, including carrion (dead animals).

Muridae Family

Rodents like mice and voles are important seed distributors. These small mammals are the primary herbivores of Lakeshore State Park, feasting on the wide variety of prairie plants. They are also the primary prey for many of the park's predators.

Deer Mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*)

White-Footed Mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*)

Meadow Vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*)

Prairie Vole (*Microtus ochrogaster*)



Sciuridae Family

Woodchuck or Groundhog (*Marmota monax*)

Mustelidae Family

Mink (*Musyela vison*)

Leporidae Family

Eastern Cottontail Rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)

Ficervidae Family

Whitetail Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)



Crepuscular Mammals

Crepuscular animals are ones that are most active during the dawn and dusk hours.

Canidae Family

Coyote (*Canus latrans*)

Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

Grey Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*)

*The Red Fox looks similar to the Grey Fox, but there are some distinct differences. Red Foxes have rusty brown fur, with a bushy tail and white tip. The Grey Fox is most commonly grey with some red fur, but has a black stripe down its back, leading to a black-tipped tail. Grey Foxes are generally smaller and not as common in the park.



Nocturnal Mammals

Nocturnal animals are those that are most active at night, and spend the majority of the daylight hours sleeping or hiding in a den. They may do this in order to escape the heat brought on by sunlight, or to avoid predation and have adaptations to help them have better vision at night. Predators such as foxes and coyotes either are able to call Lakeshore State Park home or at least include the park in their hunting territory.

Mephitidae Family

Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)

Procyonidae Family

Northern Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)

Vespertilionidae Family

Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*)

Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)



Amphibians

Commonly observed, due to the aquatic environment of Lake Michigan, the presence or absence of amphibians is an indicator of water quality.

Ranidae Family (True Frogs)

Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*)

Green Frog (*Rana clamitans*)

Northern Leopard Frog (*Rana pipiens*)



Bufoidea Family (True Toads)

American Toad (*Bufo americanus*)

Reptiles

Few reptile species are known to inhabit Lakeshore State Park. Their scarcity is most likely due to difficulties presented by trying to get here through the city. Turtles are occasionally seen along the park's shoreline.

Chelydridae Family (Snapping Turtles)

Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*)

Emydidae Family (Box and Water Turtles)

Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta*)

Colubridae Family (Snakes)

Butler's Garter Snake (*Thamnophis butleri*)

Common Garter Snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*)

DeKay's Brown Snake

(*Storeria dekayi*)

