

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIELD GUIDE

### BIRDS

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#### **BELTED KINGFISHER** **(MEGACERYLE ALCYON)**

##### Habitat

- Near streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, and estuaries

##### Food

- Aquatic prey

##### Behavior

- Spend a lot of time perched alone along edges of water bodies
- Fly quickly up and down rivers and shorelines giving loud rattling calls
- Nest in burrows that they dig into soft earthen banks



#### **BLUE JAY (CYANOCITTA CRISTATA)**

##### Habitat

- Mostly near oak trees and forest edges
- Urban and suburban areas

##### Food

- Glean insects and take nuts and seeds in trees
- Dead or injured small vertebrates

##### Behavior

- Complex social systems and tight family bonds
- Communicate vocally and through body language
- High crest, high aggression



#### **CAROLINA WREN** **(THRYOTHORUS LUDOVICIANUS)**

##### Habitat

- Frequently vegetated habitats
- Gravitate toward shrubby, wooded residential areas

##### Food

- Insects and spiders, sometimes plant matter

##### Behavior

- Alone or in pairs and groups
- Use curved bills to turn over decaying vegetation and shake apart large bugs
- Stay on ground mostly



## GREAT BLUE HERON (*ARDEA HERODIAS*)

### Habitat

- Freshwater and saltwater habitats, sometimes grasslands and agricultural fields

### Food

- Nearly anything within striking distance (fish, reptiles, insects, birds)

### Behavior

- Wades slowly or stands still watching for prey
- In flight neck folds in "S" shape
- Elaborate courtship ritual



## PILEATED WOODPECKER (*DRYOCOPUS PILEATUS*)

### Habitat

- Mature deciduous woodlands or young forests with dead trees

### Food

- Carpenter ants and insects

### Behavior

- Forage in large, dead wood
- Use long barbed tongues to extract beetle larvae



## RED-TAILED HAWK (*BUTEO JAMAICENSIS*)

### Habitat

- Open country land

### Food

- Small animals

### Behavior

- Soar in wide circles over fields
- Have heavy wingbeats
- Tend to hover in the wind and stoop in a slow, controlled dive



## TURKEY VULTURE (*CATHARTES AURA*)

### Habitat

- Open areas, along roadsides and at landfills
- Roost on high secluded spots

### Food

- Carrion (mostly mammals but sometimes reptiles and fish)
- Preferably dead animals, never attack living prey

### Behavior

- Slow, teetering flight style
- On ground move with ungainly hops
- Feed one at a time



## MAMMALS

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### **COTTONTAIL RABBIT (*SYLVILAGUS FLORIDANUS*)**

#### Habitat

- Wooded areas with scattered trees and a relatively open understory.

#### Food

- Primarily nuts and seeds

#### Behavior

- Fast and focused
- Will approach humans if acclimated



### **EASTERN FOX SQUIRREL (*SCIURUS NIGER*)**

#### Habitat

- Wooded areas with scattered trees and a relatively open understory.

#### Food

- Primarily nuts and seeds

#### Behavior

- Fast and focused
- Will approach humans if acclimated



### **WHITE TAILED DEER (*ODOCOILEUS VIRGINIANUS*)**

#### Habitat

- Very adaptive, but prefers a mixture of hardwoods, croplands, brush lands, and pasturelands.

#### Food

- Grasses, legumes, weeds, fruits, agricultural crops, shrubs, and vines.

#### Behavior

- Has very few natural predators; primarily managed through hunting.
- Prone to overpopulation
- Tends to be shy around humans.



# SPIDERS & INSECTS

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## *SPIDERS*

### **JUMPING SPIDER (*SALTICIDAE*)**

#### Habitat

- Open, woodland habitats. Jumping spiders do not prefer hardwood forests.

#### Food

- Mainly insects sometimes small fish, frogs, tadpoles

#### Behavior

- Jump onto their prey
- Can jump a distance of more than 30 times their own length
- Very vocal during courtship

#### Size

- .04-.98 in



### **WOLF SPIDER (*RABIDOSA RABIDA*)**

#### Habitat

- Open grasslands, suburban lawns, deciduous forests, sandy soil and wet terrain

#### Food

- Mainly insects

#### Behavior

- Live on ground and hunt for prey at night
- Do not spin webs

#### Size

- 2.2 - 35.0 mm



## DRAGONFLIES

### GREEN DARNER (*ANAX JUNIUS*)

#### Habitat

- Riparian habitats, herbaceous vegetation, forests, grasslands, and deserts with ready source of water.

#### Food

- Tiny flying insects, mosquitoes

#### Size

- 3-4.5 in



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## BUTTERFLIES

### MONARCH BUTTERFLY (*DANAUS PLEXIPPUS*)

#### Habitat

- Warm weather; migrate to Mexico and warmer during winter months

#### Food

- Primarily milkweed as well as nectar in adult stage

#### Size

- 3.7-4.1 in





## AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

### AMPHIBIANS

#### NORTHERN CRICKET FROG (*ACRIS CREPITANS*)

##### Habitat

- Shallow ponds with vegetation and full sun or shallow gravel-lined creeks

##### Behavior

- Diurnal and active all year
- Will jump quickly away when threatened



#### SOUTHERN LEOPARD FROG (*RANA UTRICULARIA*)

##### Habitat

- Shallow, freshwater habitats

##### Behavior

- Nocturnal
- Avoids predators by entering the water and swimming away



### REPTILES

#### SOUTHERN COPPERHEAD (*AGKISTRODON CONTORTRIX CONTORTIX*)

##### Habitat

- Woodland habitats

##### Behavior

- Will bite and inject its venom when threatened

#### THREE-TOEAD BOX TURTLE (*TERRAPENE CAROLINA*)

##### Habitat

- Open woodlands, pastures, marshy meadows and streams and ponds

##### Behavior

- Will retract into shell when threatened
- Elaborate courtship rituals consisting of circling, biting, and shoving phases
- Smear saliva on heads when temperature rises



# FLORA

## REDBAY (*PERSEA BORBONIA*)

### Habitat

- Tropical, swampy areas

### Characteristics

- Grows either as a small tree or a large shrub
- Leaves are lance-shaped and 3-6 inches long
- Blue or black drupe fruits ripen in August-September



## LOBLOLLY PINE (*PINUS TAEDA*)

### Habitat

- Very adaptable, native to 14 states, typically humid warm-tempered states

### Characteristics

- Sensitive to soil fertility
- Shorter fir needles



## WATER OAK (*QUERCUS NIGRA*)

### Habitat

- Very adaptable, can thrive in heavy, compacted soil as well in as wet, swampy soil

### Characteristics

- Provides food and shelter to large variety of animals
- Features alternate, simple leaves varying in size and shape





### **AMERICAN BEAUTYBERRY (*CALLICARPA AMERICANA*)**

#### Habitat

- Southeastern United States

#### Characteristics

- Bright purple berries
- Great food source for most animals
- Natural mosquito repellent



### **YAUPON HOLLY (*ILEX VOMITORIA*)**

#### Habitat

- Adaptable to most soils, prefers sandy sites with both shade and sunlight

#### Characteristics

- Small, course, alternating leaves
- Bright red berries which can induce vomiting in humans



### **GIANT CANE (*ARUNDINAREA GIGANTEAN*)**

#### Habitat

- From sea level on the coastal plains to the upper Appalachians and beyond on the East Coast

#### Characteristics

- Tall, bamboo-like shoots
- Utilized by native Choctaw for basket weaving and other uses

