

RED RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



A Cautionary Note

Refuges are Wild Places

National Wildlife Refuges are wonderful wild places! Refuges provide a home for animals and plants. At wildlife refuges people are the visitors, sharing natural habitats with the animal residents.

Watch Your Step

A wildlife refuge is not a city park. Here at Red River National Wildlife Refuge we like to keep the area more natural, therefore, we provide mowed hiking trails. When walking our trails, watch your steps as the ground may be uneven; there may be sticks and tree branches on the trail; and you may find holes. Many animals like to dig in or burrow under our trails. Armadillos use their nose to bulldoze and feet to excavate the soil looking for grubs to eat. Moles and gophers are fossorial, spending their time tunneling underneath the soil.

Bee Aware

Singing birds, zipping dragonflies, sunning turtles and trailing ants are some animals you may see and hear on your refuge visit. Watch and photograph wild animals but don't chase them down or feed them. If you leave animals alone, they will leave you alone; although, there are a few animals and one plant that you need to be aware of and alert for when visiting our refuge.

Potential Trouble Makers

At Red River Refuge, we have one poisonous plant, two venomous snakes, several stinging insects, two sucking arthropods, and at least two reptiles that snap – although most mammals and birds will bite also when provoked. On the bottom and reverse side of this fact sheet, are photographs and facts about some potential trouble makers.

"Leaves of three? Let them be!"



Poison Ivy Leaflet



Poison Ivy Flower



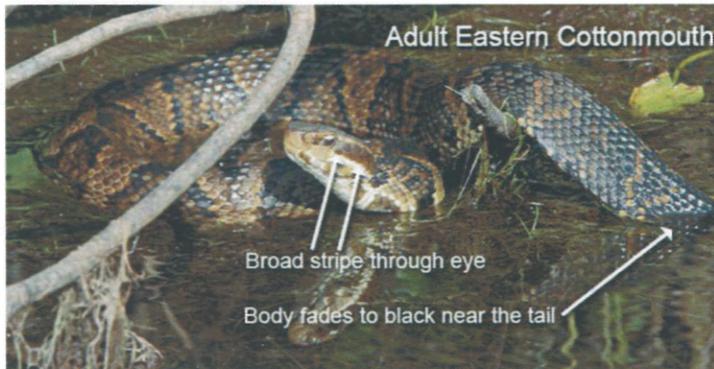
Poison Ivy Berries



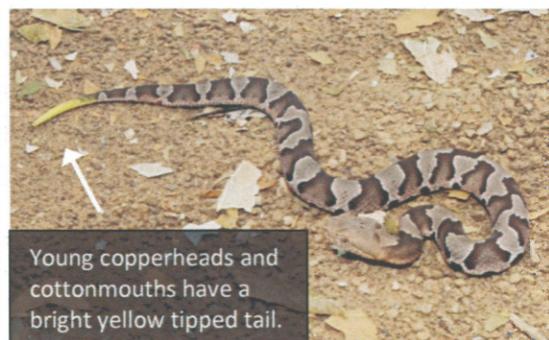
Poison Ivy Rootlets



Poison ivy is found on the refuge. This plant contains urushiol oil, which causes a rash and blisters if you are allergic to this oil. The oil can be transferred by contact so touching any part of the plant, including its hairy vine may cause an allergic reaction. In spring, the leaves are usually a bright green, while in fall, they turn red. Purchase *Technu* outdoor skin cleanser to wash away the oils and reduce itching.



Cottonmouth Snake is a dark, thick-bodied venomous snake. The white lining inside its mouth is used as a warning – telling you to leave the snake alone. Take three steps back and walk away.



Copperhead Snake has an hourglass design and its coloring is camouflaged to match dried leaves.

If bitten by a venomous snake, call 911. Other stinging animals to stay away from include bees, wasps, hornets, and fire ants. Ticks and mites or “red bugs” are arthropods and the females attach themselves to you for a drink of blood. Mites are nearly microscopic in size and are usually found in tall grass. After hiking, be sure to check yourself over for small ticks. Always leave alligators and snapping turtles alone; their jaws are strong and they will snap very quickly.

