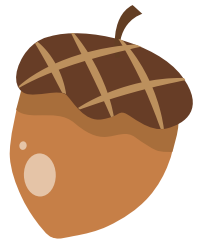


North Carolina State Parks

# JUNIOR RANGER

## GROUP ACTIVITY GUIDE





# HOW TO BECOME A JUNIOR RANGER

Protect, Explore, Learn

## COLLECT OR "CACHE" ACORNS

To be a **Junior Ranger**: cache **20** acorns  
*Earn an official Junior Ranger patch for the park*

## HOW TO CACHE ACORNS

Cache from 1-3 acorns by completing the activities in this guide. Record your cache in the space provided at the end of each activity.



= **1** acorn for  
this activity



= **2** acorns for  
this activity



= **3** acorns for  
this activity

## HOW TO RECEIVE YOUR PATCHES:

1. Your group must cache at least 20 acorns each.
2. Recite the Junior Ranger pledge together (see page 14).
3. Email Brittany Bartholomew ([brittany.bartholomew@ncparks.gov](mailto:brittany.bartholomew@ncparks.gov)) and include:
  - › your mailing address
  - › the park you visited
  - › the number of Junior Rangers in your group
  - › any photos you took of the Junior Rangers in action and/or any of the artwork they created in this book
4. You will receive your patches in the mail!

**Please note:** this process can take up to 2 months. Any photos sent will be added to the next Junior Ranger Newsletter.

Visit [ncparks.gov/education/junior-ranger-program](http://ncparks.gov/education/junior-ranger-program) to sign up for the quarterly newsletter.

# PARK SAFETY TIPS

- Always have an adult with you
- Bring water and snacks
- Stay on trails
- Dress in layers. Wear a hat and closed-toe shoes
- Apply bug spray and sunscreen
- Check for ticks when you get home
- Don't feed wildlife. Report sick or injured animals to park staff.
- Learn what poison ivy looks like - leaves of three, let it be!

# ABOUT

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of State Park or State Recreation Area*

Did you know that you would have to travel all the way from Canada down to Florida to experience all the ecosystems that you can find right here in North Carolina? There are over 40 NC State Parks where you can explore all of these beautiful ecosystems. Each park has features that make them special and unique. As you are exploring your park, find out what makes it special.



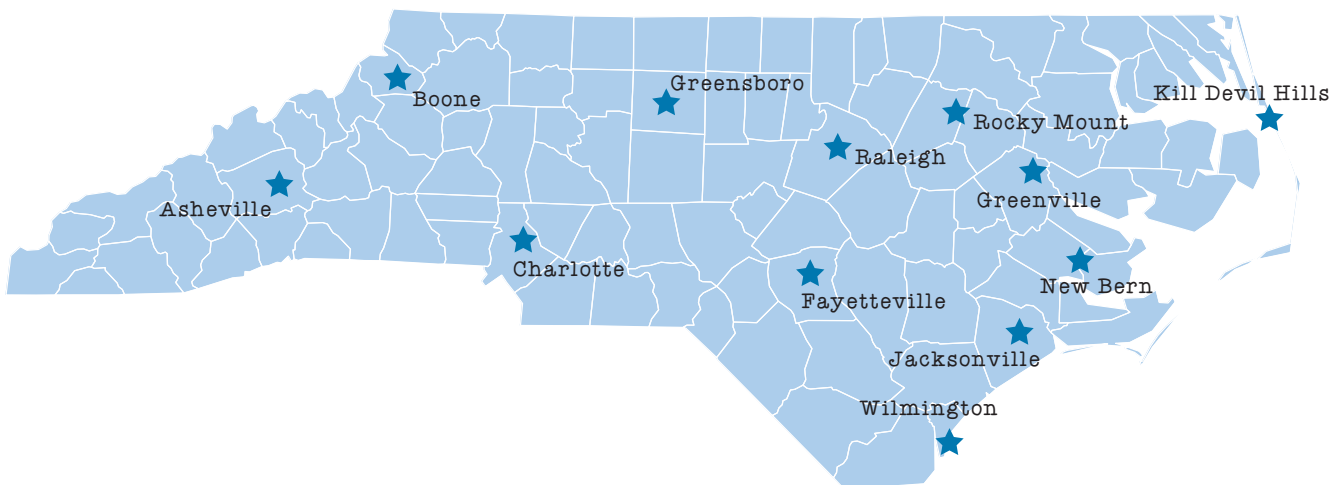
## ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR PARK BELOW TO CACHE 5 ACORNS!

What are three things that make this park special?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

How did the park get its name? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Draw a star on the map of NC to show the location of the park you're visiting:



Acorns cached on this activity: \_\_\_\_\_

# EXPLORE THE PARK

Get a copy of the park's map. Use the map's legend to help you locate the hiking trails, water, picnic areas, bathrooms and roads.

**Hike a trail! Cache 3 acorns for each mile you complete!**

\_\_\_\_\_ MILES X 3  = \_\_\_\_\_



As you explore, find one special spot. Draw a picture of your spot in the box below.



Answer the questions below about your spot:

1. Describe your spot. What makes it special? Is it sunny or shady? What do you see? What do you hear?

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2. How did you get to your special spot? What trails did you take? What was the color and shape of the trail blaze? How long was the hike?

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3. What are your first impressions of your spot? How does being in your special spot make you feel?

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Acorns cached on this activity: \_\_\_\_\_

# ABOUT PARK RANGERS



North Carolina Park rangers do a variety of jobs in the park and use many tools to help them complete their daily tasks. Draw a line from the picture of the tools to the name of the tool and then to the job they help complete.

CHAINSAW



FORESTER

BADGE



TEACHER

BINOCULARS



BIRD WATCHER

HIKING BOOT



PARK CLEANER

TRASH GRABBER



POLICE OFFICER

FIRST AID KIT



PARK DOCTOR  
(first Responder)

CHALKBOARD



PATROLLER

Continue this activity on the next page

# ANIMAL SIGNS

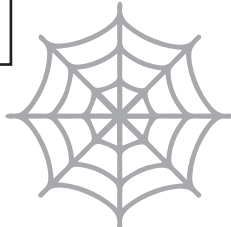
Often it's difficult to find animals in the park, so how do we know they are there? By the things that they leave behind, called "animal signs."



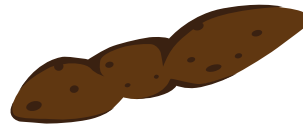
Be a wildlife detective! See how many animal signs you can find from the list below.



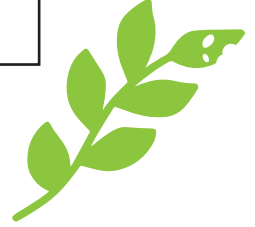
**ANIMAL TUNNEL**



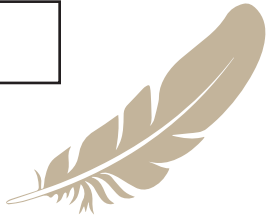
**SPIDER WEB**



**SCAT/DROPPINGS**



**INSECT CHEWED LEAF**



**FEATHER**



**BIRD'S NEST**



**ANIMAL CHEWED  
PINCECONE**



**ANIMAL TRACKS**



Draw two of the signs you found in the space below and make an educated guess what animal or insect left them behind.

**1**

**2**

*Animal that you think left the sign*

*Animal that you think left the sign*

Acorns cached on this activity: \_\_\_\_\_

# PLANTS

Sometimes the names we give plants have to do with how they look. Scientists sometimes name plants after their interesting characteristics. These are called the plant's common name.

In addition to the common name, all living things also have a universal name called the "scientific name," and no matter what language you speak, it's the same. These names are often based off of Latin and the first part of the name refers to the species' genus which is similar to your last name. The second part is the specific species' name, like your first name.



Find two interesting plants or mushrooms and examine them closely. Take a photo or sketch them below. Write a description of it and come up with your own creative name for it.

**1**

\_\_\_\_\_ *Your creative name*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**2**

\_\_\_\_\_ *Your creative name*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Ask park staff or look up the plant in a field guide or online using your description, make an educated guess on the two plants from your sketches.

## PLANT #1

Common Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Scientific Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

## PLANT #2

Common Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Scientific Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Acorns cached on this activity: \_\_\_\_\_



# BIRDWATCHING

Birds are one of the easiest animals to find in parks because parks help to protect their habitats. There are more than 400 different kinds of birds in North Carolina! There are many ways we can tell different species of birds apart. We can look at the colors of their feathers, the shape of their bill, or listen to their call.



Use the chart below to take notes on two different bird species.

	BIRD #1	BIRD #2
LOCATION - Where is it - beach, forest, parking lot?		
BILL - Shape and color?		
COLOR - Head, back, chest?		
BEHAVIOR		
OTHER NOTES		
SKETCH		



Ask park staff or look up the bird in a field guide or online using your description, make an educated guess on the two birds from your chart.

## BIRD #1

Common Name:

---

Scientific Name:

---

## BIRD #2

Common Name:

---

Scientific Name:

---

Acorns cached on this activity: \_\_\_\_\_

# SENSES




While out in the park, use your senses to discover the natural world around you. Listed below are four of our five senses. We have left off taste because there are many plants in the park that are harmful if eaten.



Spot something beautiful and draw it here.



Sit in one spot and listen to the sounds around you for a few minutes. Afterwards create a sound map - the person in the middle is you. How many sounds were man-made versus natural?



Man-made: \_\_\_\_\_ Natural: \_\_\_\_\_



Find a unique smell and describe it. What do you think you are smelling? What does the smell remind you of?

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See if you can find 4 things with very different textures. Draw them or do a rubbing of each item below.


Acorns cached on this activity: \_\_\_\_\_

# YEAR OF THE BEAR

**HABITAT HUNT:** A habitat is a place where an animal finds everything it needs to survive. For a Black Bear, finding their needs may require them to migrate across the state. Their range can be anywhere from 8 to 800 square miles. (North Carolina is only 503 miles wide by 100 miles tall). Food is a factor in how far they will migrate. Black Bears are omnivores, meaning they eat both plants and meat. But you may be surprised to know that 75% of their diet is plants. In fact they have a special gap in their teeth (called a diastema) that allows them to strip leaves off of plants.



Just like how a Black Bear has to hunt for their needs, use the word search below to find some of the habitat needs of a Black Bear.

W F J H G C F B Q M M E M N Y  
 Q F W I B O A O K X J I D H V  
 S M W Y S T H G Y H Q J K I R  
 K F B Z R I N S E C T S J J R  
 G I V E T H C F D J L C H D C  
 R S W T R W A T E R R E O N F  
 U H C S T R K M U M Y W N W N  
 B Y T V H Q I V M D R O E O M  
 S Z H X O E X E P C B I Y R Z  
 C V O G V B L N S B E C C M F  
 U R I Y Y L O T U B R G O S P  
 F U N G I V N U E T K S M H A  
 V L H W T R N M Y R S L B X V  
 J C A R R I O N G R A S S E S  
 K E J E G Q D R S E D G E S C

Honeycomb	Worms
Insects	Carrion
Sedges	Grasses
Grubs	Water
Berries	Nuts
Shelter	Fish
Fungi	



Now hike a trail and see how many Black Bear needs you can find. Put a check in the word bank below next to the ones you found.

- |                                    |                                  |                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> HONEYCOMB | <input type="checkbox"/> SHELTER | <input type="checkbox"/> GRASSES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> INSECTS   | <input type="checkbox"/> FUNGI   | <input type="checkbox"/> WATER   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SEDGES    | <input type="checkbox"/> WORMS   | <input type="checkbox"/> NUTS    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GRUBS     | <input type="checkbox"/> CARRION | <input type="checkbox"/> FISH    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BERRIES   |                                  |                                  |

Acorns cached on this activity: \_\_\_\_\_

# LITTER SCAVENGER HUNT



Cache 2 acorns by collecting and properly disposing of litter you find in the park. Record what you find for each category.

- Something blue: \_\_\_\_\_
- Something plastic: \_\_\_\_\_
- Something bigger than your nose: \_\_\_\_\_
- An aluminum can: \_\_\_\_\_
- A fast-food wrapper: \_\_\_\_\_
- Something a person lost: \_\_\_\_\_
- Something you can use again: \_\_\_\_\_
- Something recyclable: \_\_\_\_\_
- Something shiny: \_\_\_\_\_
- Something made from a tree: \_\_\_\_\_
- Something smaller than a penny: \_\_\_\_\_
- Something yucky: \_\_\_\_\_
- Something that could hurt an animal: \_\_\_\_\_
- Something you don't know what it is: \_\_\_\_\_

Acorns cached on this activity: \_\_\_\_\_



# YOUR PLEDGE

*Add up the acorns your group cached from each activity.*

**MY ACORN CACHE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Total the acorns each Junior Ranger in your group cached to earn your park patch! Have your group recite the pledge below and congratulations!

You're an official Junior Ranger!

See page 2 to find out how to receive your group's patches.

*Find a park staff member and recite the following pledge with them:*

I (your name),  
recognize that this park is MY park too.

I promise to help take care of my park.  
I will do what I can to help keep the park clean.

I will treat animals and plants with respect  
and leave them in their park home.

I will learn about the importance of nature  
and our duty to protect it,

and I will share what I learn  
with my friends and family.

**CONGRATULATIONS! YOU ARE NOW  
AN OFFICIAL JUNIOR RANGER!**