

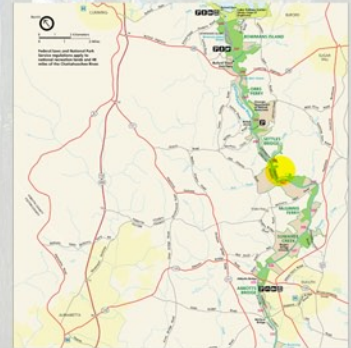


Chattahoochee River Trail at The River Club

Area History

Humans have been attracted to the rich and diverse resources of the Chattahoochee River for thousands of years. In more recent times, the river was a contested boundary between the Creek and Cherokee Nations. In the early decades of the nation, Cherokee families maintained homes on the west bank. Rich farmlands, abundant water power, and very high grade gold caused the government of Georgia to press for Cherokee removal. With the support of Federal troops, the Cherokee were forced to the west on the infamous Trail of Tears and the land was divided by lottery.

Mills along the river produced flour, corn meal, paper, and textiles. Farms flourished and gold was removed from hillsides and streambeds. The Civil War caused the loss of many men and the destruction of the mills and factories. Over time, much was rebuilt and some enterprises succeeded while others faded away. Today the farms have all but vanished and Atlanta has grown into a major metropolitan area. The Chattahoochee River corridor is now being protected and preserved for the use and enjoyment of future generations as a National Recreation Area.



"It's one of the most beautiful places in our country, extremely valuable to all those who know it, who live near it, and who appreciate the quiet and seclusion and the beauty and the value of this river. ... It's a rare occasion when within the city limits of one of our major cities, one can find pure water and trout and free canoeing and rapids and the seclusion of the Earth the way God made it. But the Chattahoochee River is this kind of place."

President Jimmy Carter
August 15, 1978



Chattahoochee River Trail

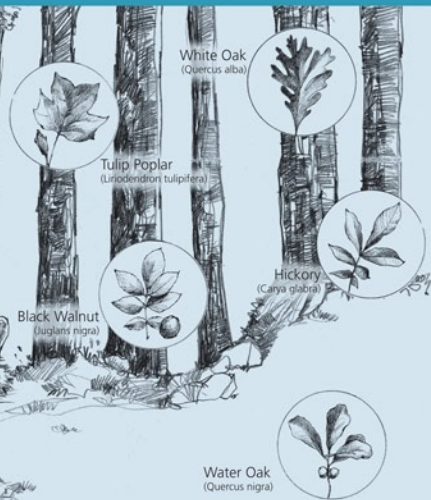
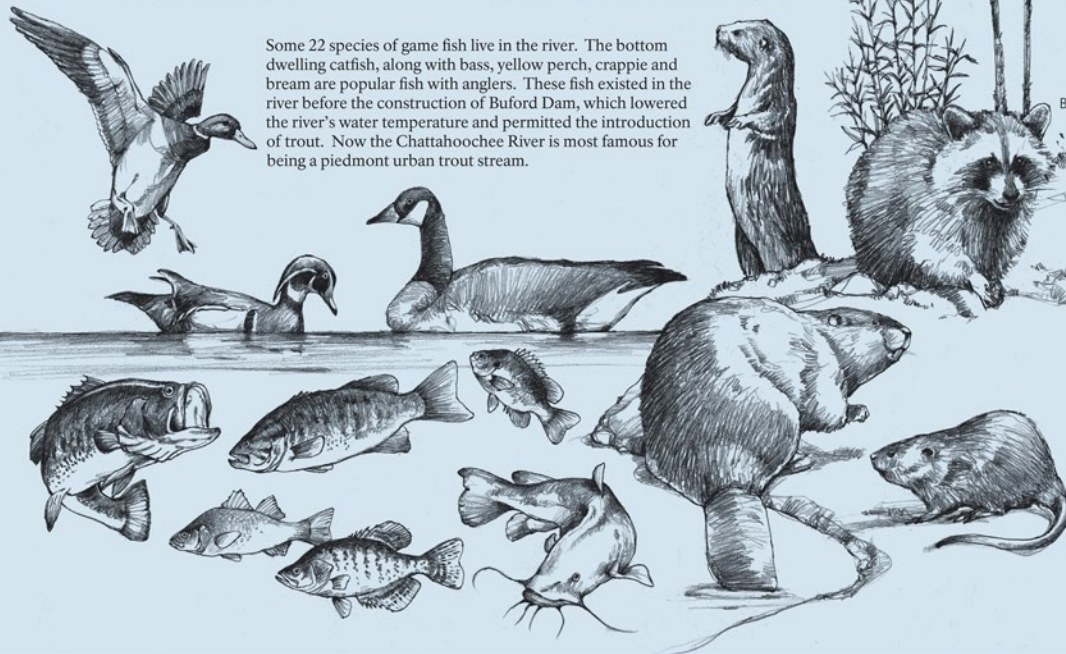
Diversity of Life

Life in and around the Chattahoochee

Over three hundred species of birds live or visit the corridor. The river is a migration route for some. Canada Geese, Mallard Ducks, and Wood Ducks are common year round residents and easily seen on the river.

Some 22 species of game fish live in the river. The bottom dwelling catfish, along with bass, yellow perch, crappie and bream are popular fish with anglers. These fish existed in the river before the construction of Buford Dam, which lowered the river's water temperature and permitted the introduction of trout. Now the Chattahoochee River is most famous for being a piedmont urban trout stream.

Many mammals are rarely seen. Signs, such as tracks, scat (droppings), gnawed or rubbed trees, and burrows can easily be seen along the trail and river bank. The Beaver, our largest rodent, and its smaller "cousin, the muskrat live in riverbank burrows. Raccoons have several dens often in hollow trees. The wandering otter often uses former burrows of others. Walks just after sunrise and before sunset are best to observe wildlife.



The Chattahoochee River Corridor is habitat to a rich diversity of native plants allowing for an abundance of wildlife. The papery, peeling bark of the River Birch makes this tree easy to recognize. Acorns, hickory nuts, and walnuts provide food to many species of wildlife. The tree flowers provide nectar, pollen, and petals as food. Tree branches provide shelter and nest sites. Dead "snags" are important to bats, owls, woodpeckers and many songbirds. Decomposing logs are used by a majority of forest wildlife. Decomposition recycles nutrients back into the forest habitat.

← Trail South
.8 Miles

Trail North →
.6 Miles



Wildlife Birds

There is an amazing diversity of species along the Chattahoochee River corridor. Even if you are not a “bird watcher” the river trails are greatly enhanced by the birds’ beauty and voices. The following species are commonly seen and heard along this trail:



Pileated Woodpecker

This crow sized woodpecker has a black back, a bright red crest, long grey bill, and a red mustache. Its loud calls and its drumming on hollow branches give the visitor to the forest a feeling of wildness. This forest dweller can sometimes be seen swooping between trees with the leading edge of its wing flashing white. It uses its sharp beak to dig into trees looking for insects while leaving piles of wood chips at the base.



Belted Kingfisher

This crested blue bird has a white underside with a blue grey breast band. Frequently seen perched on branches over the river, it dives head first after small fish and returns to its perch to feed. The Belted Kingfisher has a loud rattling call. Their nests are excavated into the river bank.



Barred Owl

This is a common brown and grey owl with streaks on its lower chest and stomach. The Barred Owl can be found around southern streams and wetlands, and can often be seen or heard during the day. Its call is normally “who-cooks-for-you; who-cooks-for-you”, but can sometimes sound like a dog barking. The Barred Owl feeds on small mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and crayfish.



Great Blue Heron

This tall grey heron can be found wading slowly in the river stalking fish or hunting along the bank for mice, frogs, and snakes. Herons use their long, sharp beaks to spear prey. When in flight, the neck is held in an “S” shape and its long legs are held straight behind. The Heron’s graceful flight is often marked by a loud croaking call.



Chattahoochee River Trail
at The River Club

← The River Club Entrance
.6 Miles South



Wildlife Animal Tracks

A rich diversity of wildlife is found in the habitats within the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. Most animals stay out of human sight. Wildlife tracks allow us to know the animals are here. Tracks commonly seen include the following.



Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)
Beavers are the largest rodent on the river. An average adult can be 4' long and weigh between 35 to 40 pounds. Their homes are burrows in the high river banks. Burrow tunnel openings can be seen on the opposite river bank. Sometimes seen at dusk, beavers are easily recognized by their large size and flat tail. If frightened, the tail is slapped on the river surface as a warning. Beavers use their large incisor teeth to gnaw trees and shrubs. These trees and the tracks of their large webbed hind feet are the most common signs of beavers.



Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)
Raccoons are nocturnal foragers and hunt from dusk until dawn. They eat a wide variety of plants, fruits, nuts, berries, and small animals. Their droppings, "scat", are left on logs, rocks, or the ground and may contain the remains of crayfish, rodent hair, bones, and other undigested food. Raccoons prefer hardwood forests near water as their habitat. The distinctive tracks of this "masked" night prowler are easy to see along muddy areas of the riverbank.



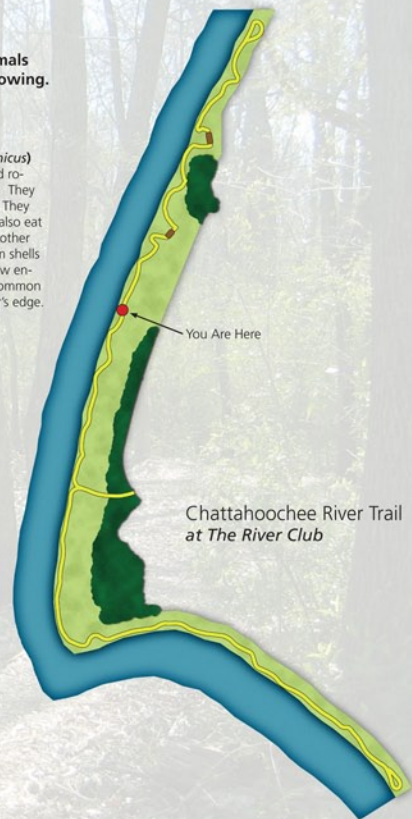
Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*)
Muskrats are medium sized rodents with dark brown fur. They live in river bank burrows. They eat mostly plants, but will also eat clams, crayfish, frogs, and other small animals. Piles of clam shells can often be seen at burrow entrances. Their tracks are common in the soft mud at the river's edge.



White-Tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)
White-tailed Deer have white undersides of their tail, which is raised as they bound away. Male deer begin antler growth in late spring. Bucks will rub their antlers against trees and shrubs. Antlers reach full size in August and are shed in late winter. Deer are grazing animals and eat twigs, leaves, fruits, nuts, wildflowers, and fungi. The two elongated, hoofed toes on each foot leave easily recognized prints along the trail.



Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)
The small, shy Wood Duck, the gregarious Mallard, and the large Canada Goose all leave similar prints in the soft mud and wet sand along the river. Their distinctive webbed feet are easy to identify. The Wood Duck nests in tree cavities and nest boxes. "Woodies" give out a loud squeal as they take flight. Mallards are often seen tipped forward with their tail ends up as they feed on river plants and insects. Canada Geese no longer migrate and are often seen in large flocks.



Chattahoochee River Trail
at The River Club

← The River Club Entrance
.2 Miles South

Trail End →
.4 Miles North

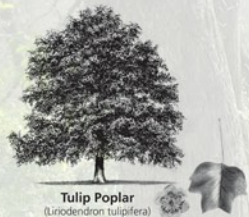


Plant Life

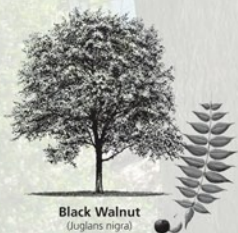
Trees & Vines



Water Oak
(*Quercus nigra*)



Tulip Poplar
(*Liriodendron tulipifera*)



Black Walnut
(*Juglans nigra*)

The Forest: A Diverse Habitat

The forest along the river provides habitat to a diversity of plants and animals. The Water Oak, Black Walnut, and Tulip Poplar are three of the more common large trees of this forest. The Water Oak provides acorns for many species of wildlife. The nuts of the Black Walnut were used by Native Americans for food and for dye. The Tulip Poplar is host to the caterpillars of the Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly, Georgia's state butterfly.

Throughout the forest, vines cling to trunks or twine about branches. The native vines do not harm trees. Some, like the red and yellow flowered Crossvine, red blossomed Trumpet Vine, and the yellow petals of Carolina Jessamine provide nectar for butterflies and humming birds.

The large brown hairy vines of poison ivy hold to the trunks of many trees. In addition to the old saying "leaves of three, let it be", also remember "if the vine is hairy, you better be wary". The beautiful Climbing Hydrangea also has hairy vines and clusters of white spring flowers.



Crossvine
(*Rhus radicans*)



Trumpet Vine
(*Rhus radicans*)



Carolina Jessamine
(*Rhus radicans*)



Poison Ivy
(*Rhus radicans*)



Chattahoochee River Trail
at *The River Club*

You Are Here

← **Trail End**
.6 Miles South

The River Club Entrance →
.2 Miles North

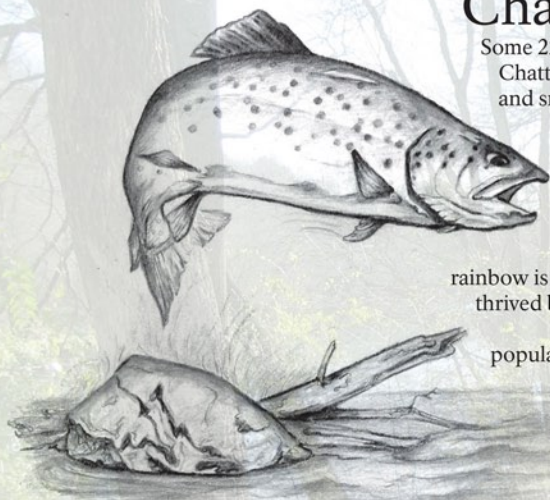


Wildlife Fish

Chattahoochee Fish

Some 22 species of game fish can be found in the Chattahoochee River. Native fish such as large and small mouth bass, catfish, sunfish, crappie, and perch attract anglers. After the construction of Buford Dam, the once warm waters of the river now run cold.

This allowed for the introduction of rainbow and brown trout. The brown trout is native to Europe and the rainbow is from western North America. Both have thrived because the quality of the Chattahoochee River's water supports large and diverse populations of the tiny insects and insect larvae that are food for trout. The Chattahoochee River has now become a designated Georgia Trout Stream requiring anglers to have both a fishing license and a trout stamp to fish.



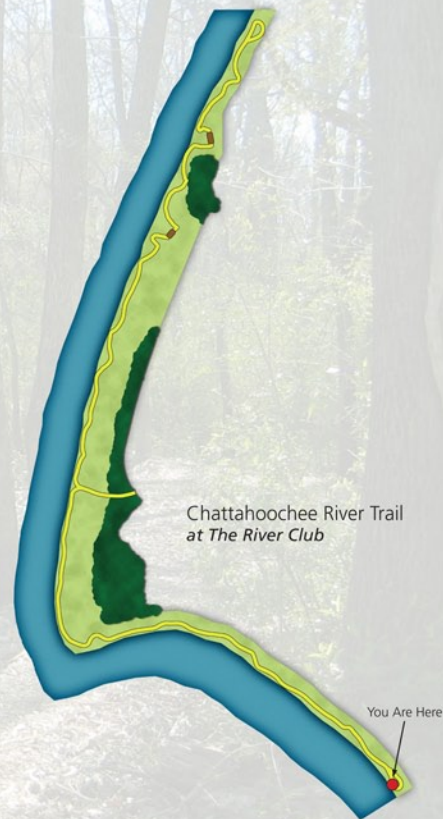
Catfish
(*Ictalurus punctatus*)



Largemouth Bass
(*Micropterus salmoides*)



Crappie
(*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*)



The River Club Entrance
.8 Miles North →



NATIONAL
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THE
RIVER CLUB



LEGEND

- WALKING TRAIL
- TRAIL ACCESS
- SCENIC OVERLOOK
- BENCH SEATING
- TRAIL INFORMATION

