

For Immediate Release:
Contact: Jon Copsey
Chattahoochee Nature Center
9135 Willeo Road, Roswell, GA 30075
www.chattnaturecenter.org
770-992-2055 x 263



It's COLD! How do animals survive frigid temperatures?

For Immediate Release: Jan. 8, 2018

Roswell, GA -- It's COLD outside! We have all bundled up in our coats these past few days, but what about the wildlife out there? What do they do?

Thankfully, the [Chattahoochee Nature Center's](http://www.chattnaturecenter.org) resident wildlife expert, Kathryn Dudeck, has the answers.



How do raptors stay warm in cold weather?

"Because the vast majority of our permanent residents would naturally reside in Georgia this time of year, few additional actions are required.

"Raptor feathers weigh more than the entire bird skeleton, so you will often see the birds fluffy in cold weather. They can control each feather individually so they raise their feathers to trap the warm body heat, creating an insulated 'parka' for them. This is why down jackets are so popular with people! We also ensure they have access to fresh water at all times, so this means we break the ice in their water pans every morning or provide fresh water."

CNC has [dozens of species of animals](#) on-site. As a wildlife rehabilitation center, CNC accepts and treats injured raptors and reptiles. Those who can be treated and released back into the wild are. Those that cannot are kept on-site for educational purposes or are found permanent homes.



How is CNC caring for its wildlife?

"We are feeding the raptors on the high end of their required food ranges and monitoring their weights regularly to ensure they are at or above each individual's average winter weight. We have data on many of our birds dating back more than 15 years so we are able to look at their historical weights and corresponding weather that occurred then. Our resident birds typically fast on Sundays, but we are providing half-rations to them to ensure they are receiving enough calories.

"The only birds that need a more help are our Merlin and Broad-winged Hawk. Merlins are a small falcon that winter in south Georgia and Florida, and Broad-winged Hawks winter in Central and South America. We already have radiant heat panels in both of these birds' enclosures that we turn on when the temperature is below 40 degrees, and the Broad-winged Hawk's enclosure is sheeted every fall to act as a windbreak. Because these recent temperatures are a bit too low for them, we have been bringing them inside at night and take them back outside during the day."

That's the raptors. What about mammals?

"The education opossums have lots of blankets in their outside enclosures, but we bring them inside whenever the low is below is 40 degrees. When we go out to get them, they are snuggled in their blankets and toasty warm, but we want to make sure they stay that way. Opossums are frequent victims of frostbite on their ears, tails, and feet, the areas of their bodies with no fur.

"The beavers are absolutely loving the cold weather and are even been playing with the ice on the surface of their exhibit pond! Because these two came from Virginia, they are a bit more weathered to the cold, and they have dense layers of fat. In fact, beavers store fat in their tails to use as reserve in cold weather. However, CNC's resident beavers do have a heater in their inside enclosure, and they can move towards it or away from it as they wish."



What can people do to help wildlife in winter?

Fresh Water – It's just as important in cold weather as hot weather; purchase a heated bird bath or use an extension cord and submersible aquarium heater; place a shallow pan, like a potted plant saucer on the ground for the rabbits, squirrels, and chipmunks

Bird Feeders – Be sure to clean out before every filling and offer a variety of feed

Native Plants & Trees – These provide food and shelter from winter winds, so hold off on pruning unless necessary for safety; However, trim out non-native berries and fruits such as from Nandina (heavenly bamboo) that are toxic and sometimes fatal to our songbirds

Small Brush Piles – Provide hiding places and homes for small animals

Nest Boxes –In winter, they are used for roosting to stay warm

About the Chattahoochee Nature Center

CNC is a private non-profit environmental science that is one of North Atlanta's major attractions. CNC's 127 acres along the river in Roswell includes a Discovery Center with the only Nature Exchange in the SE that serves as the interpretive center for the river; plus garden, woodland and river boardwalk trails featuring rehabilitated native wildlife. We serve over 140,000 visitors annually and provide education programs for over 40,000 students. Our mission is to 'connect people with nature' which we do daily through our summer camps, canoe trips, evening concerts, and community programs for all ages. Our Unity Garden provides over 10,000 pounds of fresh produce to North Fulton Community Charities Food Pantry each year.

See Updates on our [FACEBOOK page](#).

For more information or questions, please contact Jon Copsey, marketing manager, at j.copsey@chattnaturecenter.org.

Monday - Saturday from 10-5 pm & noon to 5pm Sunday. Find our programs on our website at www.chattnaturecenter.org.
General admission: \$6 for Child/\$10 Adult/\$7 Seniors 65+/\$7 Students 13-18/Free CNC Members & Kids 2 and under.
FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/ChattahoocheeNatureCenter>