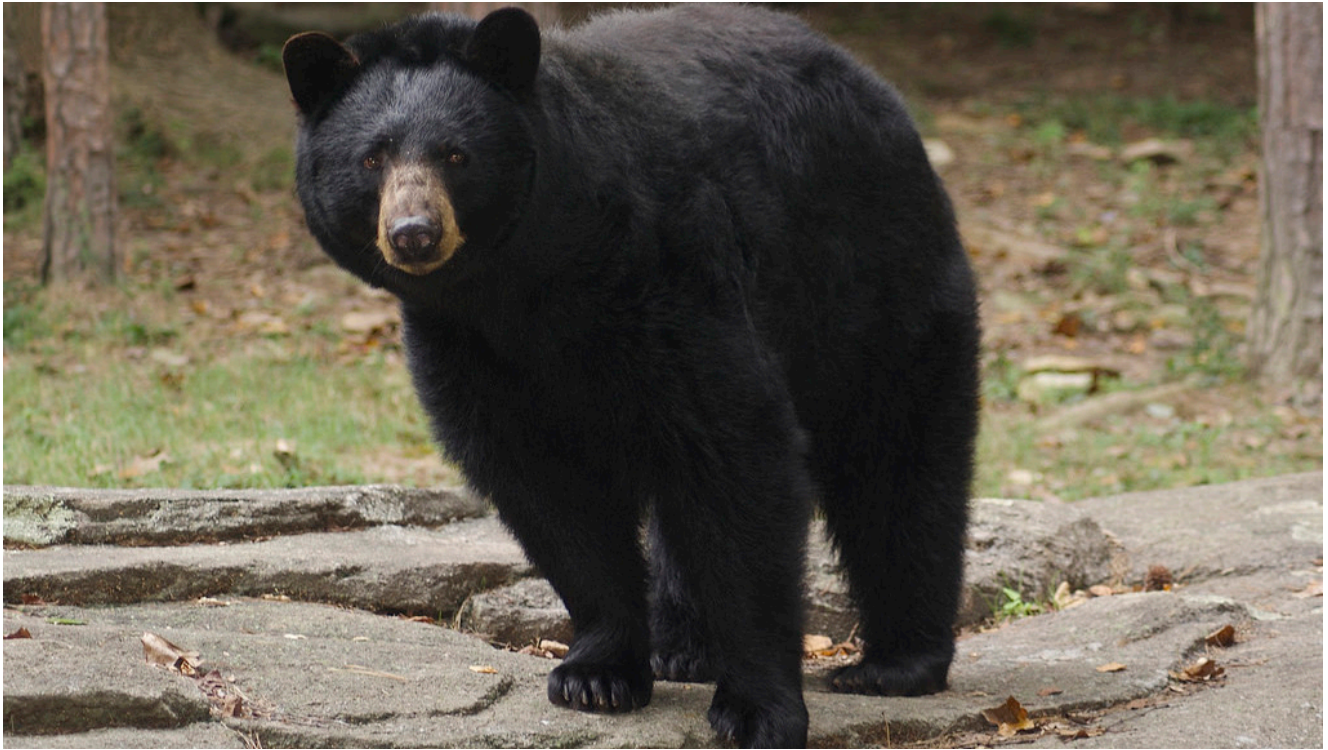




Beaver

Doya Vᵂ (doy-ah)

- Beavers have a number of adaptations for surviving in their habitat: waterproof and insulated coats, enameled teeth for chopping down trees, special eyelids for swimming underwater, flat tails and webbed feet for stability and navigating in water.
- Beavers eat trees and plants and as herbivores are primary consumers.
- Beaver skins were used for moccasins and clothing, often with hair still on and turned inside out.
- The pelts were also considered valuable in trading with colonizers and unfortunately resulted in a population decline. The tails could be used, sewn into shot bags.
- The beaver dance was a social dance depicting the actions of a hunting party.
- Olden time tooth fairy? There are historical stories of a tradition when children lost their baby teeth, they would run around the house, and repeat “Dayi, skinta” or “Beaver, put a new tooth in my jaw.”



Black Bear

Yo-na ᵿᵿ (yo-nuh)

- Black bears are opportunists, adapted to eat and survive in diverse ecosystems. Their teeth, claws, jaws and bodies are built for digging, climbing, running; this allows them to survive with a diet of nuts, fruit, meat, plants, and insects.
- As omnivores, they are considered tertiary consumers, at the top of the food chain.
- They are culturally important to Cherokee and other cultures, particularly as a source of wild meat and fur for clothing, blankets, and shelter.
- They are the subject of stories, dances and songs. The songs and dances in Cherokee culture can provide community building, representing universal topics like courtship, community, or the bear hunt.
- Black bear was one of the most popular wild game and hunting traditions continue today. While it is illegal to hunt in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, there are seasons outside the park through other state, federal, local, and tribal agencies.



Bobcat

Gvhe Eꔪ (guh-hey)

- Bobcats are primarily carnivores and their adaptations reflect their skill at hunting. Their fur changes colors with the seasons, providing excellent camouflage. Forward facing large eyes allow them to hunt at night, and their teeth and claws are adapted to catching and eating prey.
- As carnivores, they are considered tertiary consumers, at the top of the food chain.
- They are culturally important to Cherokee and other cultures, particularly as a source of fur for clothing, decoration, blankets, and shelter.
- Bobcats can be found as the subject of stories, sometimes interacting with the trickster rabbit. They may have inspired the story of the half-human, half-cat creatures, sometimes told in Cherokee and other mountain culture stories.



Coyote

Tsu-na-da-du-di ᎠᎩᎠᎠ / Wahya (wah-ya)

- Coyotes are highly adaptive, were historically found west of the Mississippi, but have expanded their traditional range and made their way east.
- While considered carnivores, they are actually well adapted to eating and foraging on a variety of foods. They are tertiary consumers, as they can eat other primary or secondary consumers.
- Coyotes have an interesting story, as they were not traditionally in the Smoky Mountains region. They are relative newcomers, replacing the role that wolves once held.
- There are multiple words for coyote, perhaps because of their latecomer status, with some translations similar to the word for wolf.
- While coyotes are featured in stories of Western tribes, often playing a trickster role similar to the Cherokee's rabbit, they are not featured in traditional stories.



Squirrel

Saloli

ህገሶ

(Sha-lo-lee)

- Squirrels are adapted for finding food, with durable teeth for opening and eating nuts, hind legs that can rotate, allowing them to scoot face forward down trees, and acrobatic flexibility for evading predators. Flying squirrels can be found at higher elevations, adapted for different food sources.
- Squirrels are considered primary consumers, as they get their energy from eating plants, or producers. They would be found in the middle of the food chain, as they are a food source for secondary & tertiary consumers.
- Squirrel is featured in many traditional dishes, such as stews, fried, or in dumplings.
- Traditional stories feature squirrels, and Squirrel can be a popular name.
- Carolina northern flying squirrels are federally endangered and protected. Their largest threat is the loss of mature trees, due to logging practices and balsam wooly adelgid, an invasive insect that kills frazier fir trees. They feed on fungi, helping the forest ecosystems regenerate.
- The word for flying squirrel is De-wa / **SG.**



Opossum

Utsesdi ᏓᏐᏐᏐᏐᏐ (Uu jeh sdee)

- Opossums, a North American marsupial, have a variety of adaptations: they are nocturnal, with a keen sense of smell for finding insects, plants and small animals. They have opposable thumbs for climbing, and prehensile tails for stability.
- They have 50 teeth, and the Cherokee word for opossum refers to how “possums” show their teeth and look to be smiling, as a defense mechanism.
- As omnivores, they are considered primary, secondary, and tertiary consumers, as they are opportunistic in their eating habits.
- They are culturally important to Cherokee and other cultures, the subject of multiple stories, hunted for food, and their hair used to decorate masks.
- While they can appear threatening or are rumored to carry disease, they are actually quite docile and their body temperature makes it virtually impossible to carry rabies. On top of that, they eat thousands of ticks at a time and are beneficial to their environment.



Red Fox

Tsula dW (Zoo-la)

- Red fox are excellent hunters, with erect triangular ears that can pick up sound from afar, and eyes designed to work in low light. Their teeth include large canines for catching prey and eating meat. Their ability to launch into the air at a 45-degree angle allows them to pinpoint and capture prey by surprise.
- Foxes are considered secondary consumers, but can be tertiary consumers, as they eat primary consumers, like rabbits, but also other secondary consumers, like snakes.
- Foxes appear in some stories, and are included in cultural teachings as one of the earliest members of the deer clan, with sightings of foxes ascribed meanings if sighted.



Skunk

Dili ᏍᏏᏉ (Dee-lee)

- Skunks are famous for using their strong scent glands to detract predators. Slow movers, scavenging at night, skunks rely on their highly evolved musk glands.
- Skunks are secondary consumers but can also be tertiary, eating a variety of things like insects, snails, worms, nuts, plants, berries and carrion.
- They have a poor sense of sight, even though they are nocturnal, but their sense of hearing and smell are very good.
- Culturally, skunks appear in several Cherokee stories, and there are accounts that they may have been used as protection for fighting disease. During the era of smallpox, there were accounts of the skins and oils being used as safeguards.



White Tailed Deer

Ahawi / A-wi Dᵒ (Ah-wee)

- Deer adaptations include: teeth specialized for eating plants, with flat molars for crushing; large eyes and ears for sensing prey; and long agile bodies for reaching high branches.
- They are primary consumers, as they eat mostly plants.
- Deer are probably one of the most culturally significant animals to Cherokee, historically. One of the seven clans (A-ni-Ka-wi), members were known as fast runners and hunters, deliverers of messages.
- Very little of the deer was wasted by hunters, meat was shared, pelts were used for blankets and clothing, sinew was used for string, bones were used for sewing needles, tools, weapons and hooks.
- Deer skins were a major source of trade with colonizers, resulting in near extinction in the Southeast. They are still relatively scarce in EBCI lands and are protected to try to increase their population.
- Deer also appear in stories, including a story of rabbit filing down the deer's teeth in a fit of revenge. (So that's why they're so flat!)