

Claytor Lake State Park

Junior Ranger 2025 Program



What Do Rangers Do?



Maintenance

Maintenance rangers keep the park clean and operating properly. If you enjoy how the park looks today, thank a maintenance ranger. If you see something that needs some attention, let us know!

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement rangers keep our guests safe by enforcing the rules and responding to emergencies. These rangers are here to help!



Contact

Contact rangers welcome our guests at entrance points, visitor centers and the gift shop. They are typically the first person guests will encounter and interact with.



Interpreter

Interpretive rangers educate park guests and lead activities that help people understand the natural, historical and cultural resources that make Claytor Lake so special.



Junior Ranger, you are on your way!

To become a Claytor Lake State Park Junior Ranger, simply complete a total of 10 items found in this packet. This can include any combination of items found in the following sections:

- Self-guided Programs
- Ranger Guided Programs
- Activities
- Fun and Games



When you have completed this part of your journey, bring your packet to the Park Office, Water's Edge Meeting Facility or Contact Station to receive your Junior Ranger patch and certificate.

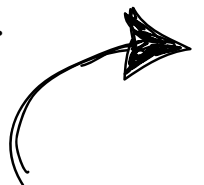
To begin your journey, sign the Junior Ranger Pledge below:

I, _____, pledge to

- Conserve and protect Claytor Lake State Park
- Care for my natural and historical resources
- Share what I learn with others
- Obey all safety rules
- Continue to explore and discover



Continue your Junior Ranger journey by turning to the next page.





Self-Guided Activities



Howe House History Tour – Who was Haven Howe? Participate in person or virtually as we examine the fine craftsmanship of the Howe House and learn about its builder, inhabitants and history. To take the tour, visit: <https://arcg.is/0H089v1>.



Then and Now History Tour – Take a hike back in time by visiting the location of our collection of photos and videos from past years at Claytor Lake State Park. Enjoy your tour in person or from the comfort of your own cabin, tent or yurt by visiting <https://arcg.is/0yTyaT0>.



Virtual Tree Identification Tour – Join us on a real or virtual hike through Claytor Lake State Park as we take a closer look at some of our beautiful native trees. You can start the tour at the Howe House or do it in reverse and start at the beach. The hike is about one mile long from start to finish. <https://arcg.is/15q08P1>



5K Cross Country Trail – Within Claytor Lake State Park’s trail system, lies the Troop 244 5K Cross Country Trail. This designated 5K trail is perfect for both new and seasoned runners to enjoy. The 5K trail begins on the Lakeview Trail in front of the Water’ Edge Meeting Facility and ends on Lakeview Trail in front of the lodges. 5K trail maps are available at the trail entrance.



TRACK Trail Adventures – These adventures are designed to help kids explore nature through the use of self-guided brochures. The brochures are located at the Shady Ridge Trailhead. Claytor Lake State Park’s trail adventures include: Decomposers of the Dead, Tracks and Traces, Creek Life and Nature’s Relationships. You can also view or print brochures in advance or complete an e-Adventure online. Remember to TRACK your adventure online at kidsinparks.com to win free prizes!



Little Free Library – Feel free to grab a book or leave one behind for someone else. There is a Little Free Library located in the Water’s Edge Meeting Facility lobby and one near the bathhouse in Campground D.



The Ruins Chronolog - Contribute to citizen science by helping us create a time lapse of this mysterious site. With your help, we can track the plant growth and environmental changes overtime. Simply visit the site located at the beach picnic area to the right of the beach, take a photo and follow the instructions to submit it!



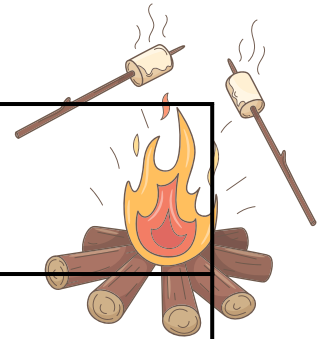
Claytor Lake Underwater Webcam - Observe what’s under the lake with the 24/7 live feed from our underwater webcam. Watch the camera for a few minutes and see if you can identify any fish (or other animals) that swim by. To watch the feed visit claytorlakespa.org and click on the webcam tab at the top of the screen.



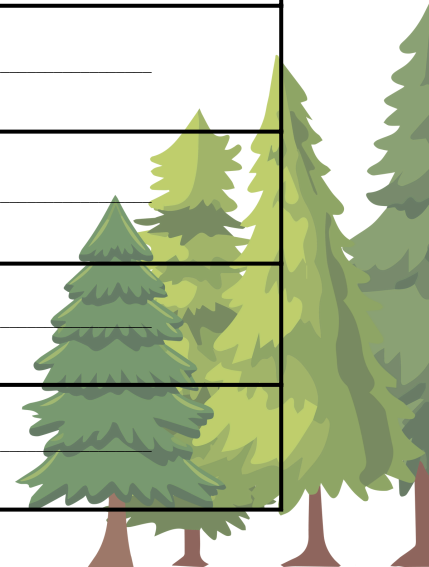
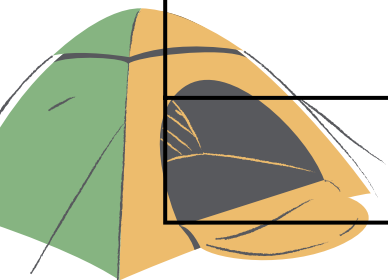
Claytor Lake Visitor Center - Learn about the park and some of its inhabitants with interactive displays at our park visitor center. Stop in the historic Howe House any time the park is open and take the door on the right. Have a great visit and don’t forget to sign the guestbook on your way out.



Ranger Guided Programs



Program Attended	Date Attended	Ranger Signature
Campfire Program	_____	_____
Claytor Crafts	_____	_____
Nature Hike	_____	_____
Owl Prowl	_____	_____
Friday Night Fishing	_____	_____
Roaming Ranger	_____	_____
Survival 101 Series	_____	_____
Predator vs. Prey	_____	_____
Light Up The Lake	_____	_____
Visit the Discovery Center	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____



Activity 1:

Do Your Part: Leave No Trace!

When visiting parks and nature, we need to help protect it so it stays beautiful and healthy for everyone. Leave No Trace means leaving it better than you found it!



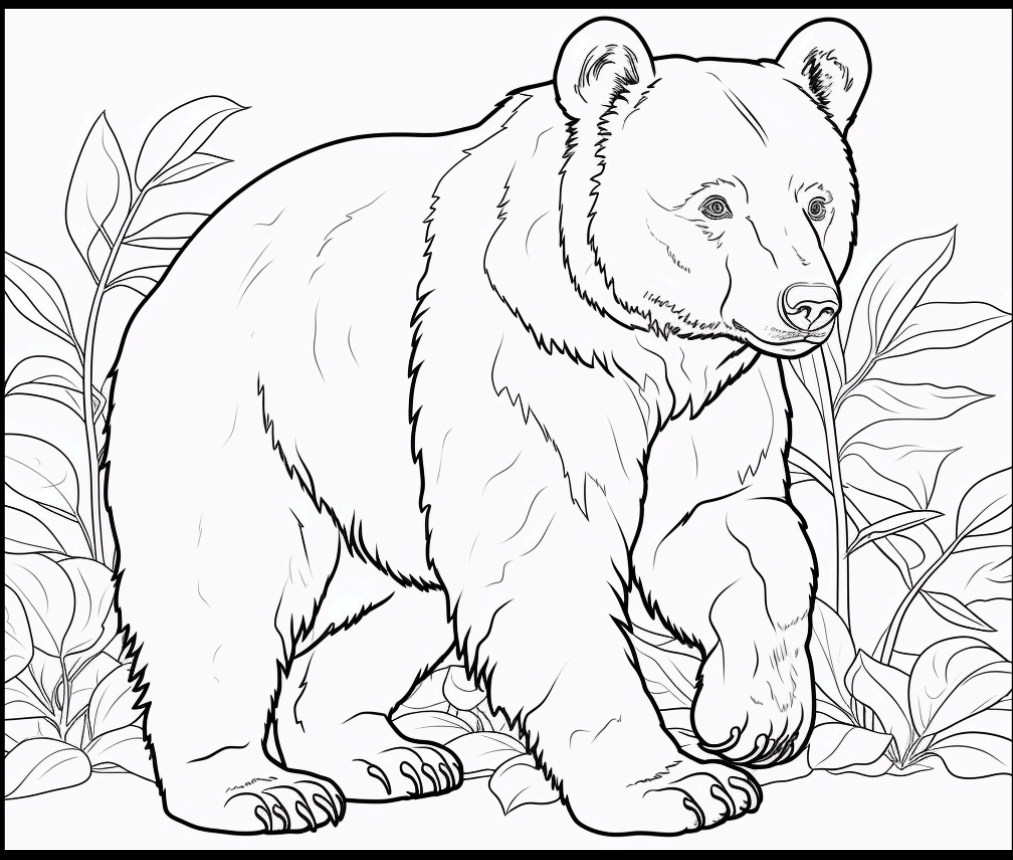
Leave No Trace Principles Matching Game:

Instructions: Match each principle with the right description.

- | | | |
|---|-------|--|
| A. Plan Ahead & Prepare | _____ | Always stay on marked trails and camp in designated areas. |
| B. Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces | _____ | Be quiet and respectful to others and their space. |
| C. Dispose of Waste Properly | _____ | Use a camp stove instead of starting a fire to cook your food. |
| D. Leave What You Find | _____ | Leave wildlife undisturbed and watch from a distance. |
| E. Minimize Campfire Impact | _____ | Don't take rocks, plants or animals from the park. |
| F. Be Considerate of Other Visitors | _____ | Prepare ahead of time to avoid damaging the environment. |
| G. Respect Wildlife | _____ | Make sure to pack out your trash. |

Answers: B, F, E, G, D, A, C

Activity 2: Be Bear Aware



What color is a black bear?

- Black
- Brown
- Cinnamon
- Blonde
- Blue Gray
- White
- All of the above

Answer: All of the above. Black bear is a species, not a color.

Black Bear True or False Quiz

1. If you see a black bear, you should run away as fast as you can.
 - *(Hint: Running can trigger a bear's chase instinct.)*
2. When hiking in bear country, it's a good idea to make noise to let bears know you're there.
 - *(Hint: Bears usually avoid humans if they hear them coming.)*
3. If a black bear approaches you, you should play dead.
 - *(Hint: Is there something else you could do instead?)*
4. Feeding black bears is okay as long as you're in a safe spot.
 - *(Hint: Does feeding wildlife ever end well?)*
5. You should store food and trash properly when camping.
 - *(Hint: Bears have excellent sense of smell!)*
6. Climbing a tree is a safe way to escape a black bear.
 - *(Hint: Remember, bears climb better than most humans.)*

Answers: 1. False. Never run; back away slowly while facing the bear. 2. True. Making noise helps avoid surprise encounters. 3. Stand your ground, wave your arms, and make yourself look big. 4. False. Feeding bears makes them associate humans with food, which is dangerous for both bears and people. 5. True. Always store food and trash in bear-proof containers. 6. False. Climbing won't help; instead, follow bear safety guidelines.

Activity 3: Sit, Look, and Listen



Nature is all around us! We are surrounded by plants and animals, even if we can't see them.

Take a few minutes to just sit, look and listen. Draw what you hear or see!

What did you draw?

Activity 4: Animal Tracks

Match the tracks to the correct animal! Using the letters below, match the animal track to the critter.



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



Coyote

1. ____



Beaver

2. ____



Canada Goose

3. ____



Eastern Cottontail

4. ____



White-tailed Deer

5. ____



Black Bear

6. ____



Virginia Opossum

7. ____



Raccoon

8. ____

Answers: 1. H, 2. E, 3. G, 4. A, 5. B, 6. D, 7. C, 8. F

Activity 5: Poisonous or Venomous?

Identify whether each image is poisonous or venomous.

Hint: There are two of each!

A common misconception is whether something is poisonous or venomous. Poisonous means that if you ingest, touch, or inhale a toxin you get sick. Venomous means if you are injected with a toxin, such as a snake bite, you get sick.



Timber Rattlesnake

1. _____



Blister Beetle

2. _____



Poison Ivy

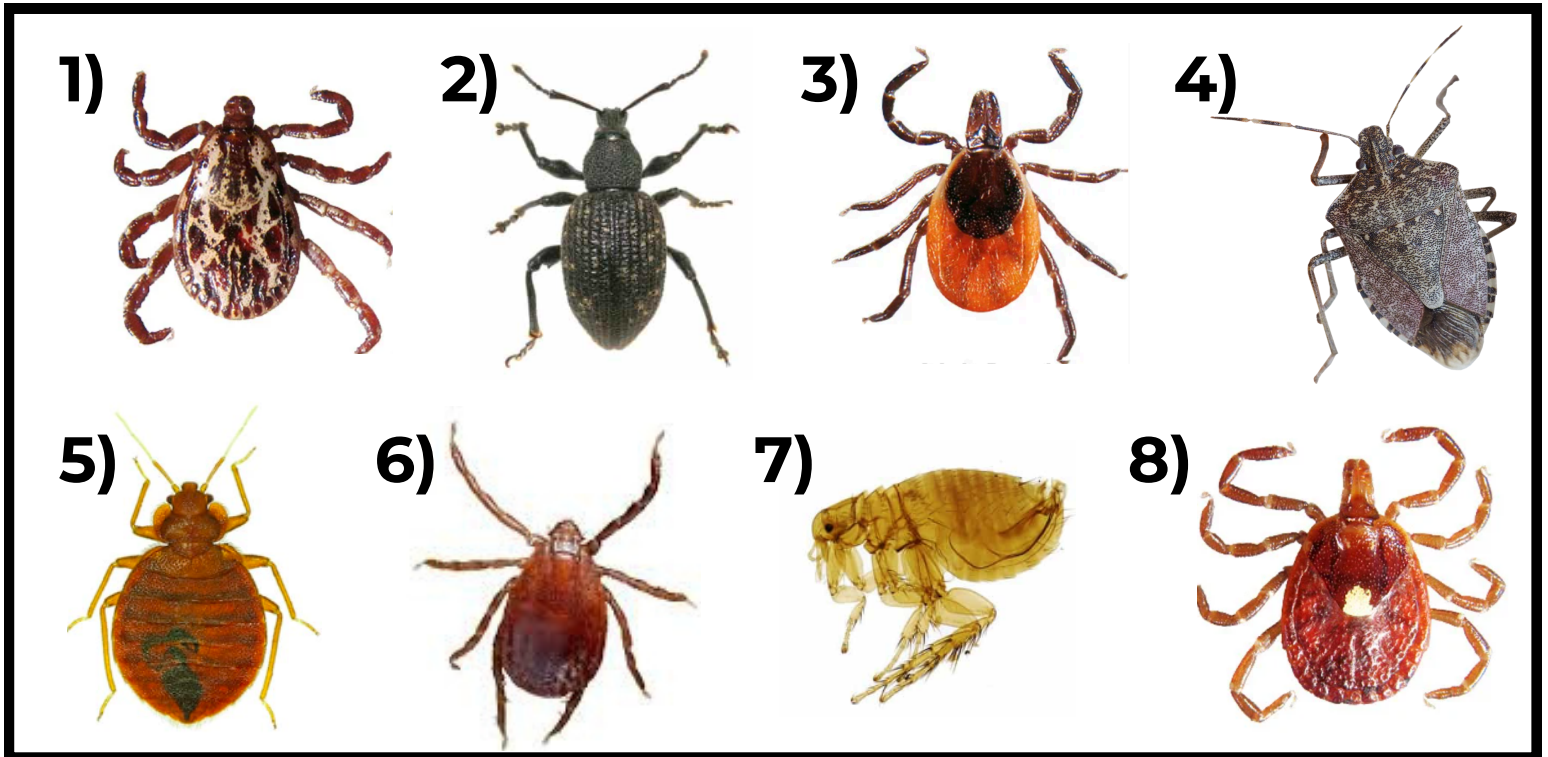
3. _____



Black Widow

4. _____

Activity 6: Pick the Tick

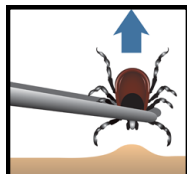


Helpful Hints:

1. Ticks do not have antennae.
2. Ticks are made up of one fused body segment.
3. Larvae have six legs, nymphs and adults have eight legs.
4. Ticks have mouthparts that stick out from the front of their body.

Proper Tick Removal

1. Use a tweezer to grasp the tick as close as possible to the skin.
2. Pull upward, with steady even pressure, until the tick releases.
3. Clean the bite area with rubbing alcohol or soap and warm water.
4. Save the tick in a bag for identification in case an illness develops.



Prevention

- Have an adult help conduct frequent tick checks on yourself, your gear and your pets.
- Upon returning home, dry clothing at high heat for 10 minutes to eliminate any remaining ticks.
- Use an EPA registered tick repellent containing deet or a natural alternative like lemon eucalyptus oil.
- Use tick control products for pets that your veterinarian recommends.
- Wear a hat with your hair tied back, long sleeves, long pants tucked into high socks and closed-toe shoes.

Answers: Images 1, 3, 6, and 8 are all different kinds of ticks. Remember, ticks can make you sick so it's important to know how to identify them, what you can do to prevent them, and how to properly remove them.

Activity 7: I Spy an Invasive Species



Try to find the following invasive species in the image above:



**Chinese
Mystery Snail**



**Emerald
Ash Borer**



**Spongy
Moth**

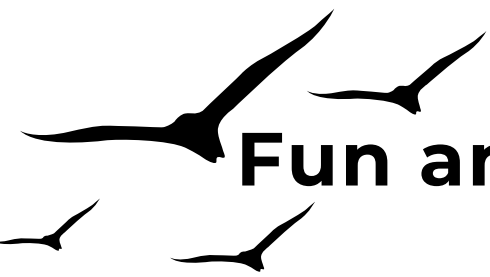


**Spotted
Lanternfly**



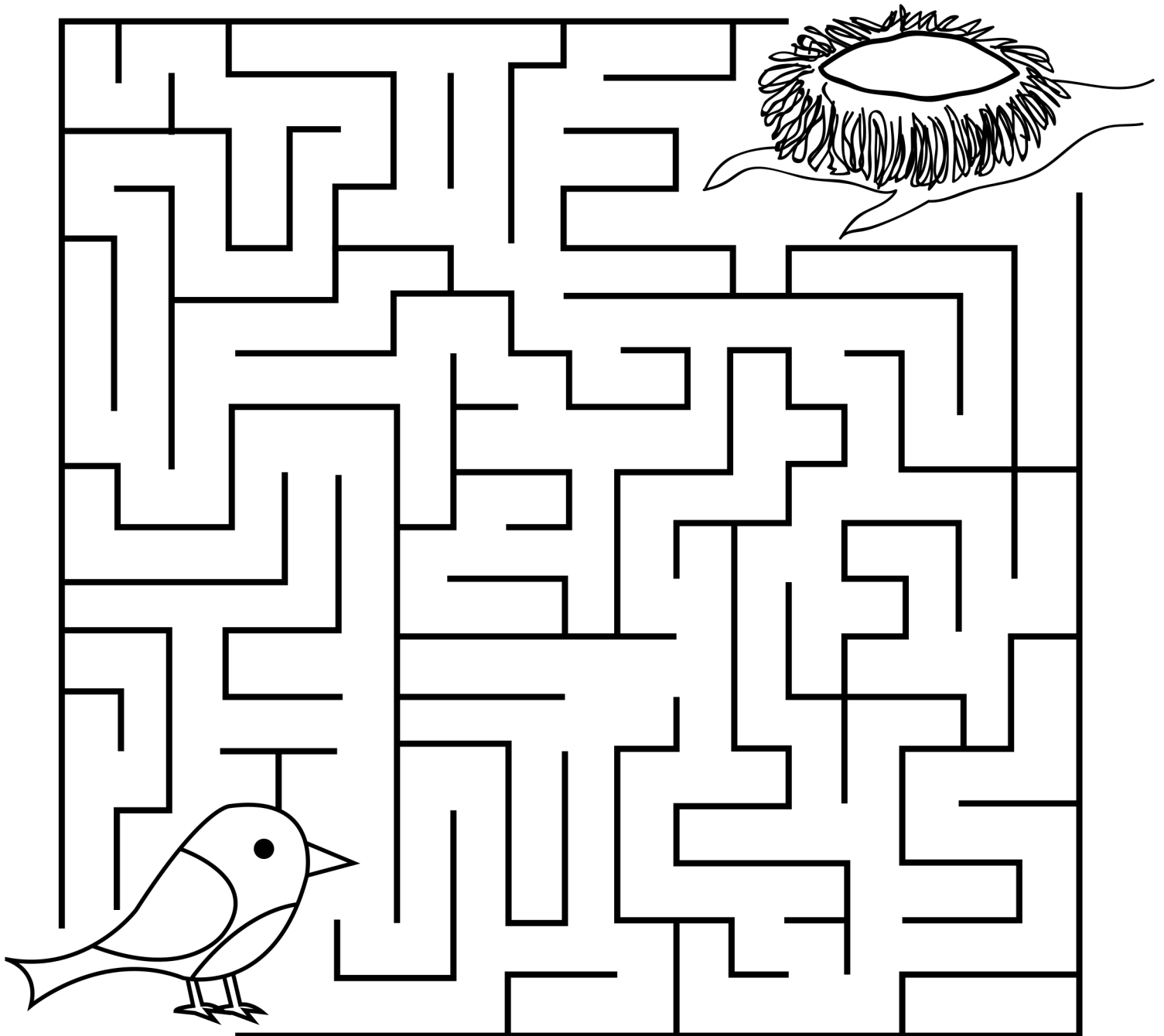
Stink Bug

All of these invasive species can be found in the park. But what makes them invasive? These species are all non-native, meaning they're from somewhere else, and they cause harm to the environment. If you spot any of these in the park, feel free to squash or discard them and let a ranger know if you can!



Fun and Games 1: Bird Maze

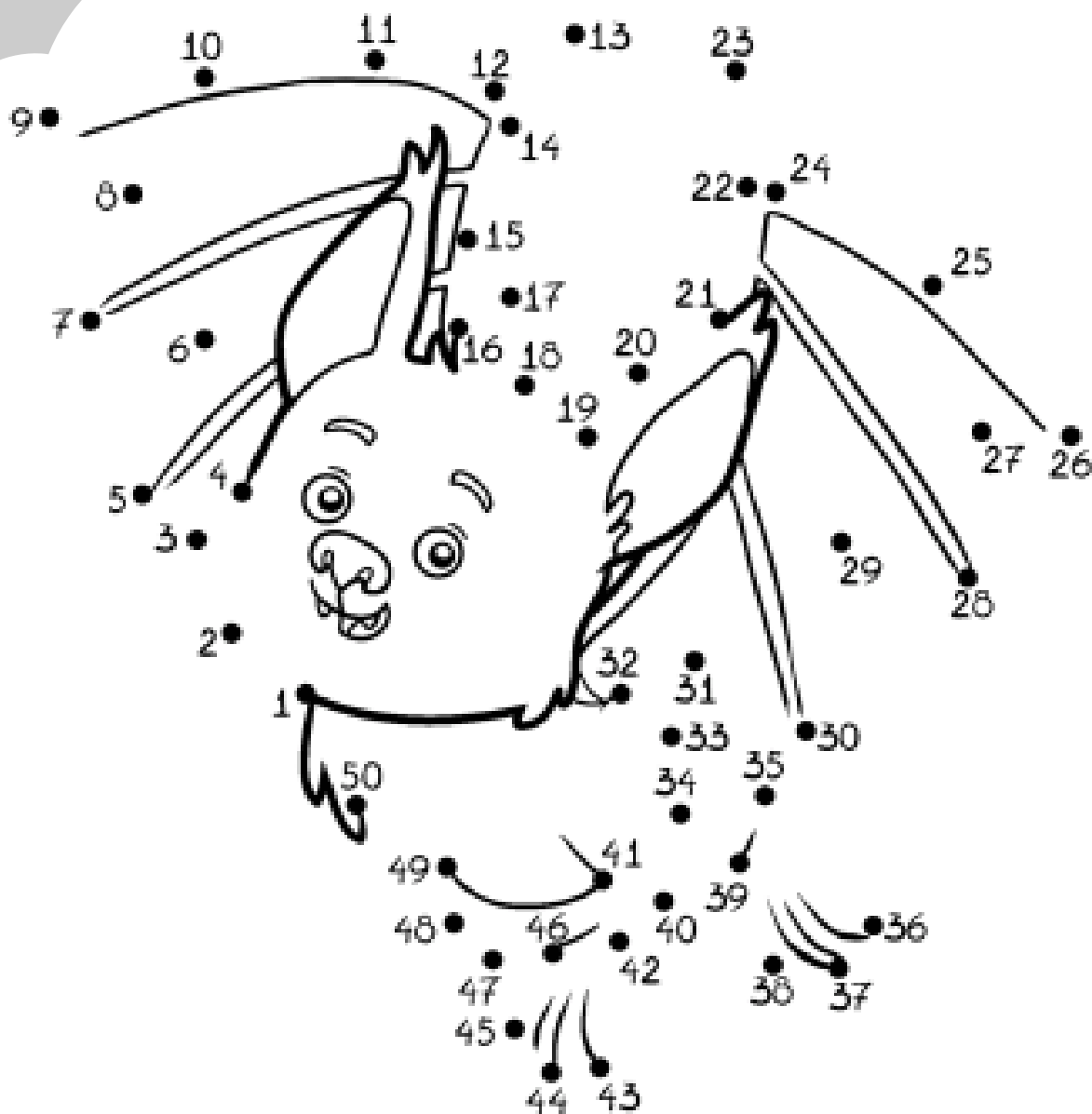
Birds spend all day looking for food and then make their way back to their nests at night. Help this bird find its way back home!



Fun and Games 2: Connect the Dots

Let's get batty! Read these cool bat facts and then connect the dots to reveal the picture.

- Bats are the only mammals that can fly
- Bats use echolocation to “see” the world around them
- Bats sleep upside down
- Bats eat up to 1,200 mosquitos per hour
- Just like bees, bats pollinate all kinds of fruits and plants
- Bats are found just about everywhere on Earth!



Fun and Games 3: Build-a-Bird

Claytor Lake State Park is home to many different species of birds, including owls! Draw and color some features an owl might have on the one provided below.

