



photo: John F. Blair, Publisher



"Animal Adventures in North Carolina" showcases 70 locations throughout the state where visitors can view and interact with wildlife, including English Mountain Llama Treks in western North Carolina's Panthertown Valley.

photo: Bert Henry/English Mountain Llama Treks

Animal tales

Book takes readers on statewide adventures to see various species

by Jennifer Bean Bower

The ultimate animal adventure is waiting just around the corner. In fact, you need not venture beyond North Carolina to experience lions, tigers, wildebeests, wolfdogs and woolly worms.

In the book "Animal Adventures in North Carolina," readers are directed to 70 locations throughout the state where they can view, interact with and be educated about wildlife. It's no wonder Zoo and Aquarium Visitors ranked North Carolina among its 2008 top 10 animal attraction states.

Hitting the road

From the mountains to the coast, each destination offers a unique experience. In the mountains of Madison County, for example, English Mountain Llama Treks, led by proprietor Lucy Lowe, treats guests to overnight hiking excursions with llama companions and steak dinners around a campfire.

At Noah's Landing in Harnett County, visitors can experience hands-on encounters with a variety of kid-friendly critters such as an armadillo, fennec fox, miniature Sicilian donkeys, an opossum and a rose-haired tarantula. Dora Turner founded the facility with a goal of educating children about animals in an environment that's dedicated to hands-on learning. In showcasing a variety of animals and allowing



At Noah's Landing in Harnett County, visitors can see the state's only African Springhare or pet Rosie, a rose-haired tarantula.

photos: Larry T. Bower Jr.



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Fancy, a 20-year-old thoroughbred mare, currently is being rehabilitated at the Horse Protection Society of North Carolina in Rowan County, while the venomous eyelash viper, named for the horny projections of scales over its eyes, is on view at Cape Fear Serpentarium in New Hanover County.



Cherokee White Rose, a rescued Arctic wolf, can be seen at the Wolf Sanctum in Mitchell County.

photo: James Fisher



Bandit, a spider monkey, is one of 30 of his kind who were rescued and now live at the Little Man's Zoo in Columbus County.

visitors to connect with them through touch, Turner fulfills her goal by creating irreplaceable memories.

Familiar animal-related destinations along the Crystal Coast in the eastern part of the state fill several pages of the travel guide, as do places like the Cape Fear Serpentarium in New Hanover County. Founded by herpetologist Dean Ripa in 2001, the serpentarium features some of the world's rarest and most dangerous snakes, crocodiles, and dragons. The serpentarium, which has been featured on both the Discovery Channel and Animal Planet, is one of most unique facilities in the state.

Saving species

In addition to popular tourist spots, "Animal Adventures in North Carolina" also highlights lesser-known farms, hatcheries and rehabilitation centers. In fact, several

destinations in the book rescue and rehabilitate injured or maltreated animals.

The Horse Protection Society of North Carolina in Rowan County is a place where abused and neglected equines find refuge, while mistreated wolves receive necessary care and attention at the Wolf Sanctum in Mitchell County. Visitors to the Wolf Sanctum might meet and pet Cherokee White Rose, a docile Arctic wolf once abused by her caretaker.

At Little Man's Zoo in Columbus County, guests can observe almost 30 spider monkeys. After hearing stories of abuse and neglect, Pat and Herlar Faircloth traveled the U.S. to retrieve and rescue these particular primates. Monkeys in their care can be seen swinging from ropes and playing with a variety of objects in their enclosure.

Igniting the senses

Many people will never get the chance

to visit the lands where lions roam, bar-headed geese fly or polar bears swim, nor will they get to dive the depths of the ocean to view its abundant sea life. However, by visiting the facilities included in the book, readers can explore species that dwell in faraway and inaccessible places. They also will have opportunities to examine domestic animals and experience the lifestyles of those who care for them.

Within the pages of "Animal Adventures in North Carolina," readers will find places to see animals they never knew existed, where they can hear eerie vocalizations from peculiar-looking birds, inhale the distinct smell of a binturong, touch the furry leg of a tarantula, and taste fresh goat's milk or a giant Malaysian freshwater prawn. 🐾

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