

The animals of *Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve* can sometimes be challenging to find. Here are some tricks for spotting wildlife...



Cautious White-tailed deer

1. **Be as quiet as possible.** Animals are afraid of people and will hide or run away if they hear you approach.

2. Walk slowly.

Slowing your pace automatically quiets your walk. Also, many more things will be visible to you because you won't be rushing by.



Sleeping Screech owl



River otter creating ripples as it glides through the water.

3. Watch for movement and listen.

Pay attention to *movement* – especially what you catch out of the corner of your eye. Stand still and keep watching and listening patiently. Be aware of all of your senses.

Hint: Cup your hands to your ears to hear better and to determine the direction of the sound.



Singing Carolina wren

4. Keep your eyes and head moving in all directions.

Most people are in the habit of looking at the ground as they walk. Consciously look up in the sky and trees, and into the bushes and grasses while on the trail. Pause occasionally to view your surroundings from a new angle.



Young alligator fishing

6. Stand or sit still for a few minutes.

The animals in the area will stop hiding and go back to what they were doing before you arrived...once they think you've left. Almost magically you will discover all kinds of things that you didn't at first see.

Hint: Close your eyes for a minute or two so you can relax and be absorbed into the background.



Carolina anole getting a drink of dew.



Barred owl watching from above

5. Look into the water.

We get focused on gazing across the surfaces of water, but forget to look beneath them. Peer below and discover what resides there.



Bobcat hoping to go unnoticed

7. Take time to look at ordinary things.

Focusing on simple items sharpens your observation skills...and may lead to new discoveries.



Tree frog and bromeliad