

Here are some of the animals that share the park with you in winter:



Squirrels are often responsible for the holes you see in the ski trails – they’re digging for nuts buried in autumn, and whatever they don’t find is potentially a tree they’ve planted. If you see small tracks leading to or from a tree, or a pinecone that’s been taken to pieces, a squirrel has been here. You’ll usually see gray squirrels, but you might see red ones in the hemlocks. Flying ones can be seen at night since they’re nocturnal.

Deer are also culprits in making potholes in the trails; they dig for food and also scrape snow aside to make sleeping areas called deer yards. You might also find deer droppings, which look like a pile of smallish oval pellets. A deer footprint looks like a split heart, with the point showing where the animal is going.



Fishers used to be abundant here, but were trapped for their fur and disappeared from the park. They’re now making a comeback, and we have seen footprints and animals in previous years. Fishers are large members of the weasel family; they’re dark brown with a long furry tail, and since they spend a lot of time in trees, if you want to see them at all, you’ll have to look up.

Beavers have recently made Canopus Lake their home. When you ski along the lake trail, there are places where you might see a dam made out of sticks, or trees that have been gnawed or even cut down by them. They spend most of the winter inside their lodge eating bark and twigs stockpiled under the water, but have been known to come out on warmer days to look for fresh veggies.



Chickadees are one of our Park’s friendliest birds, this small, black-capped, gray and white bird has a very distinctive call (“chick-a-dee-dee-dee”) from which it gets its name. They usually travel in flocks, often mixed with other small birds such as juncos and tufted titmice. If you have a bird feeder at home, you can train them to eat from your hand – you have to be patient and be willing to stay very still.

Pileated Woodpeckers are responsible for some of the wood debris found on the trails. If you see chunks of wood or large pieces of bark, they could be from the big, deep, rectangular holes these Woody Woodpecker look-alikes make in dead trees. The largest of our woodpeckers, this crown-sized black-and-white bird has a bright red head; the male has a red “mustache” pattern, while the female has a black one, and you can sometimes hear their loud “kik-kikkik—kik-kik” call.



Ravens hang out near the Lodge. Keep an ear and eye out for a huge black bird. It can be over 2 feet long from beak to tail tip! Instead of cawing like a crow, they make harsh croaking sounds. Ravens are very smart (for birds), and are among the few that purposely play while flying.