

All year round, The Adirondack region as a whole is a haven to a diverse cross-section of wildlife. We are focusing on a few of the creatures you may see around The Gore Region during the winter months.

If you're out snowshoeing, ice fishing, sledding or just walking around the community, you may be lucky enough to spot one or more of these creatures. You never know when a furry friend may come out to say hi — and don't forget to keep an eye on the skies!

### **North American River Otters**



Throughout most of the year, otters are primarily nocturnal. However, during the winter months, they come to play during the daylight hours. This is mainly because their mating season is from December to May.

These cuties prefer to stick the shores of lakes and rivers so you may spot them sliding on the ice, down a hill or playing in the snow.

The North American River Otter has a delicate sense of touch in the paws in addition to great dexterity. They've even been known to roll snowballs! North American river otters only settle in areas that consist of vegetation, rock piles, and sufficient coverage. That's why they love The Gore Region, as well as spots further North, like Newcomb and Tupper Lake.

## Owls



Many species of owl migrate to warmer climates during the winter but some that stick around The Gore Region are Snowy Owls and Great Horned Owls.

That deep, solemn *hoo-hoo-hoo* you may hear on your early morning dog walk most likely belongs to a Great Horned Owl. Don't let their stoic beauty fool you — these are fierce birds of prey. Hunting activity tends to peak between 8:30 pm and midnight and then can pick back up from 4:30 am to sunrise and beyond during the winter due to prey being more scarce.

If you're lucky, you may be able to see a rare Snowy Owl. They prefer wide-open agricultural areas or airports so you're more likely to see them closer to town than out in the wilderness. Both of these species blend right into their environments so it will take a keen eye, patience, and luck to spot them.

## Red Foxes



While the owls rule the sky, they sometimes fall prey to creatures like the Red Fox. These agile hunters stay close to the edges of forests and open fields. Their dense red coats are brightest during the winter months so they are easy to spot on new-fallen snow. They also adapt well to human environments such as farms, suburban areas, and even large communities.

The red fox's resourcefulness has earned it a legendary reputation for intelligence and cunning. They are omnivores who like variation in their diet, tending to dine on smaller mammals, as well as berries, acorns, grasses and more.

## Opossums



Opossums are the Adirondack's only marsupials! Contrary to popular belief, these guys hardly ever contract rabies. This is due to their low body temperature which is not an ideal environment for the virus.

They are also a natural Lyme Disease deterrent as a single opossum ingests an average of 5,000 ticks per year. They are feisty little comedians and there's a chance you'll spot one hanging from your barn rafters because they have prehensile tails! They may not be the most photogenic of your furry friends, but they are a sign of a healthy ecosystem.

## Blue Jays



Blue Jays fly throughout the region year-round but easiest to spot in the winter because their bright blue feathers pop against the white snow. You're likely to spot Blue Jays all over the place. Though they spend most of their time in the trees and forest they will nest just about anywhere - barns, mailboxes, garages, and so on.

If want to see them up close, you can attract them to your bird feeder with sunflower seeds, peanuts, corn or acorns. The Blue Jay can be beneficial to other bird species, as it may chase predatory birds, such as hawks and the aforementioned owls. They are known to scream if they see a predator within its territory. These little guys are tougher than they look!

Of course, these are just a small batch of the wildlife you can expect to see when visiting the Gore Region. Remember to please keep a respectful distance if you see these creatures out in the wild — and don't forget your camera!