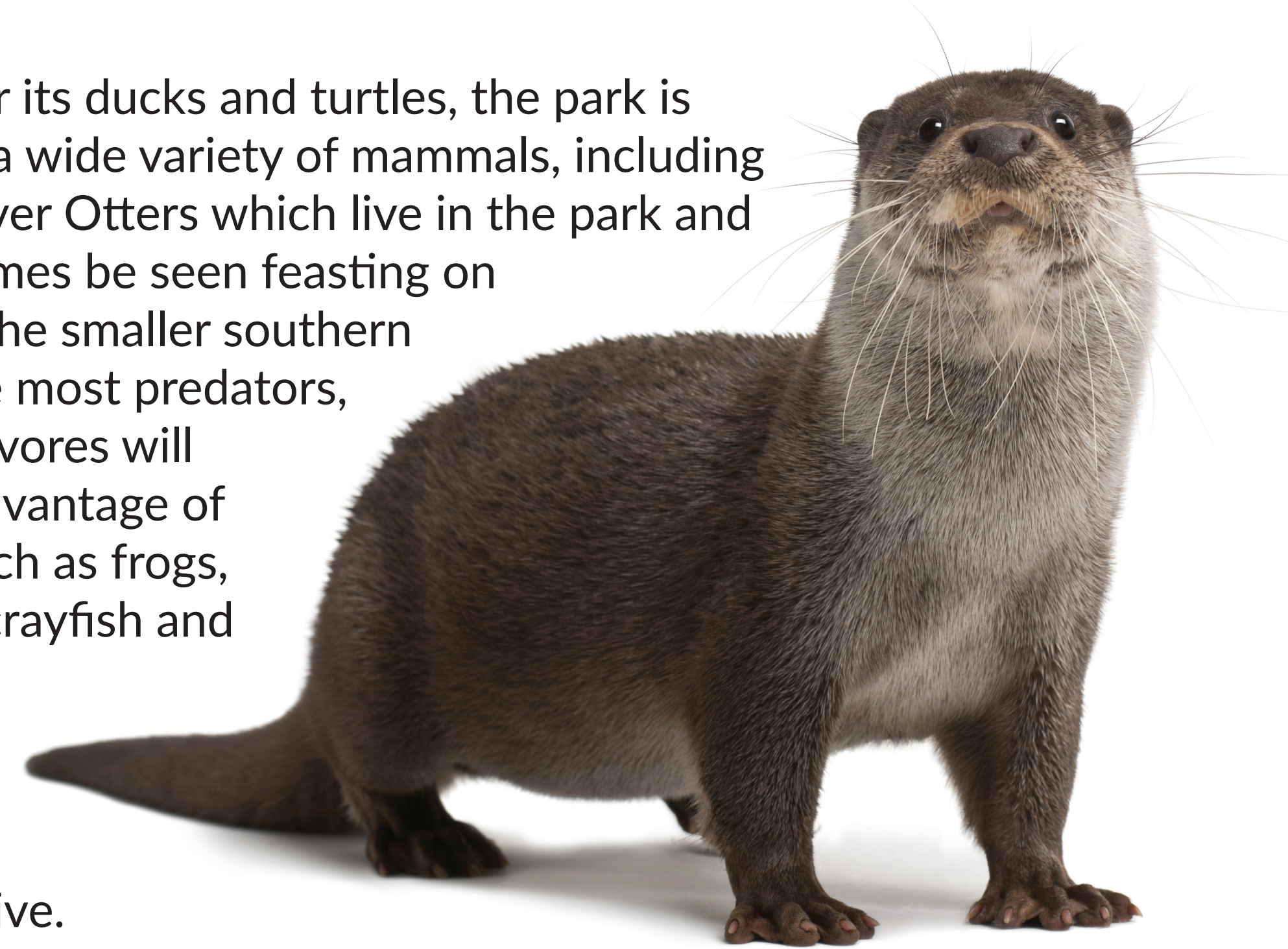


# OTTERS & FRIENDS MAMMALS OF THE PARK

## Northern River Otter, *Lutra canadensis*

While known for its ducks and turtles, the park is also home to a wide variety of mammals, including Northern River Otters which live in the park and can sometimes be seen feasting on sunfish in the smaller southern ponds. Like most predators, these carnivores will also take advantage of easy prey such as frogs, small turtles, crayfish and a wide variety of shellfish. Northern

River Otters are renowned for their sense of play and are easiest to see at dusk, nighttime, or dawn when they are most active.



## Little Brown Bat, *Myotis lucifugus*

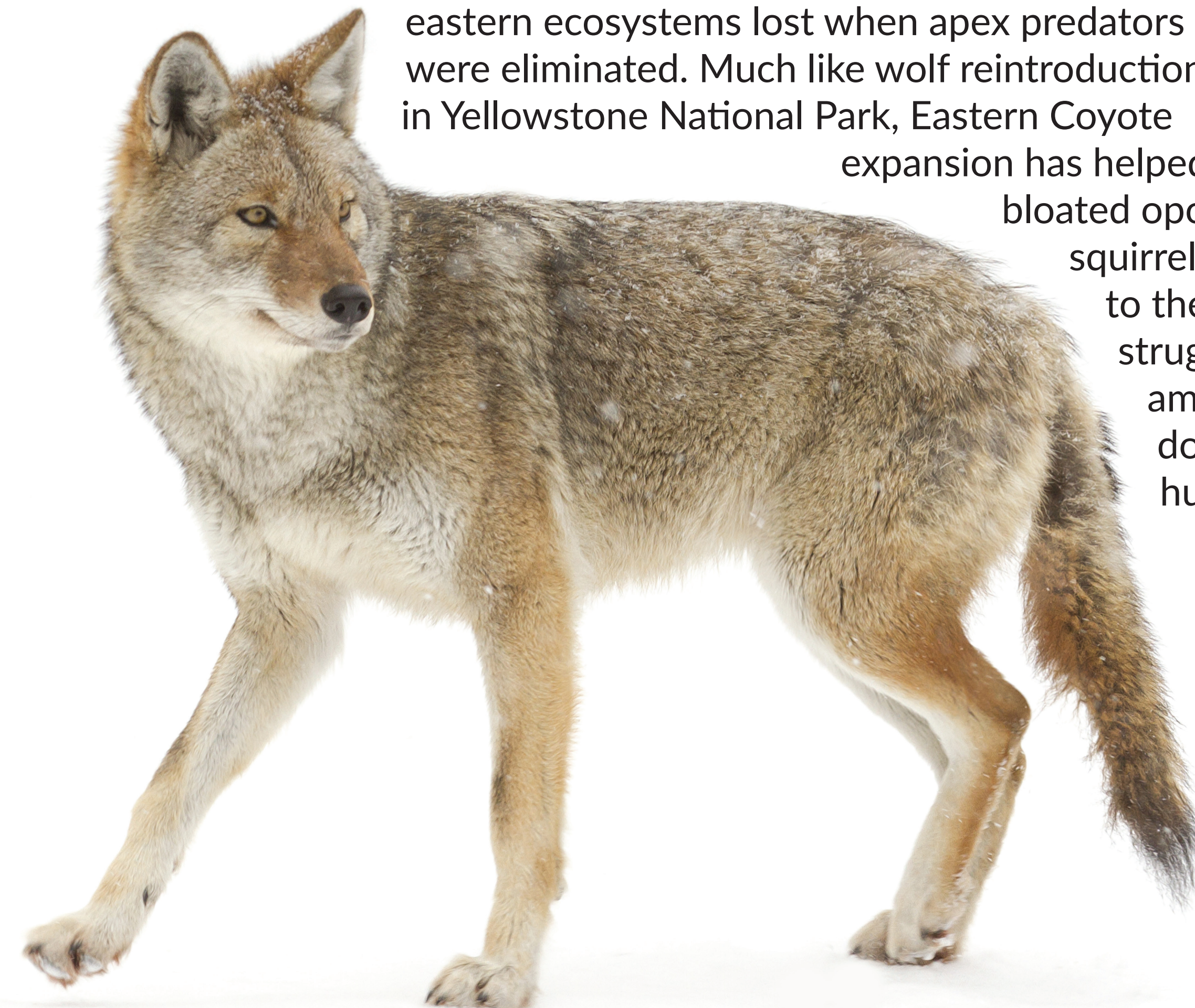
Bats provide essential ecosystem functions by devouring pounds of insects weekly. However, loss of habitat and a fungal infection, called white nose syndrome, has decimated North American bat populations. At the park, take a hike in spring, summer, or fall evenings to see Eastern Red Bats, Big Brown Bats or Little Brown Bats. Other bats possible to see at the park are Hoary Bat, Northern Long-eared Myotis, Evening Bat, and Tri-colored Bat. Check out [www.batcon.org](http://www.batcon.org) to help with identification.



## Eastern Coyote, *Canis latrans*

The Eastern Coyote ranges from eastern Canadian provinces, west to Ohio, and south to Virginia. Recently colonizing Worcester County, it's likely they occasionally traverse the park. The extermination of the gray wolf in the eastern US and Canada allowed coyotes to colonize the former wolf ranges. Weighing up to 50 lbs, Eastern Coyotes are smaller than the Eastern Wolf (65 lbs) but larger than the typical Western Coyote (40 lbs). Scientists increasingly view Eastern Coyotes as filling an essential niche in eastern ecosystems lost when apex predators were eliminated. Much like wolf reintroductions in Yellowstone National Park, Eastern Coyote

expansion has helped manage bloated opossum, raccoon, red fox, grey squirrel, deer, and mice populations to the benefit of a variety of struggling bird, plant, reptile, and amphibian populations. They do not present a danger to humans.



## Red Fox, *Vulpes vulpes*

Two native species of foxes call Delmarva home: Red Foxes and Gray Foxes. At the park, Red Foxes are the most likely to be seen due to their ability to adapt to a variety of open and urban landscapes. The tree-climbing Gray Fox also tends to be more nocturnal than the Red Fox. Both foxes are omnivorous, solitary hunters that frequently prey on rabbits in the eastern U.S., though they will readily feast on carrion, mice, birds and frogs.



## WHITE-TAILED DEER (*ODOCOILEUS VIRGINIANUS*)

White-tailed Deer are an essential part of the bucolic Eastern Shore landscape. Whether from hunting or wildlife watching they evoke strong feelings in sportsmen and nature lovers. However due to the extermination of apex predators like wolves and cougars, their population has exploded, causing serious damage to East Coast ecosystems. They have changed forest composition, helped spread invasive plants, eliminated ground cover, and subsequently had a negative impact on a variety of species from salamanders to quail. To best mimic the natural Eastern Shore landscape at the park, every effort should be made to limit browsing on the property to help keep nature's balance.



Other mammals you might see at the park include mice, shrews, voles, rabbits, skunks, muskrats, gray squirrels, raccoons, opossums and humans.



& Jane Thomas