

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Date: December 12, 2012  
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## Winter in Western NC Offers Unique Wildlife to Travelers

*With Over 300 Species of Birds, Precious Elk, and a Wide Range of Wildlife –  
You'll Want to Have Your Camera Ready.*

**Haywood County, NC** – Western North Carolina is home to some incredible animals year round, especially during the winter seasons. There are hundreds of species of birds, flying squirrels, coyotes, bats, deer, bobcats, elk, bears, minks, otters, skunks and over 40 species of fish that are unique to Haywood County.

There are quite a few different animals you could spot this season, but by far the most incredible creature to find is the elk. Many travelers flock from far distances to catch a fleeting glimpse of these beautiful creatures. They were almost extinct in the early 1900's from over-hunting. Reintroduction of elk into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park began in 2001, when 25 elk were brought from the land between the Lakes National Recreation Area, along the Tennessee-Kentucky border. The best time to view elk are usually early morning and late evening.

Another rare animal that can be spotted during the winter is the Rufous Hummingbird. It prefers to migrate during the cooler months, and travels to North Carolina to suckle on the sweet nectar left out in bird feeders. They are rare to find, but if you do get a chance to see one it is a truly unique experience. Their brightly colored feathers make them somewhat easy to spot—as long as you're in the right place at the right time.

The winter season can bring picturesque mountain views to this part of the United States. With the snow starting to fall, the leafless trees create a neutral backdrop of white and grey, making it the perfect time to spot a colorful animal. Make sure to keep your distance if it's an animal that is known to be aggressive, and always keep in mind that you are sharing the same environment. Always be cautious, keep your distance and don't try to disturb them.

Bird migrations are abundant in Western North Carolina, with some lasting a few months, and other just a few days. Birds that you can spot almost year round are the Dominique Chicken, Great Horned Owl, Red Tailed Hawk, Screech Owl and Turkey Vulture.

If you want to find out more about hunting seasons, endangered animals, conservation, or the best time to see a specific animal, be sure to visit [NCWildlife.org](http://NCWildlife.org) to get more information. You can also receive information about licenses for fishing and hunting, as well as ways you can help preserve north Carolinas natural habitat. Western North Carolina is a perfect place to get some hunting time in with the guys, take a hike to see what animals you can find around the forest, or sit and just sip on some hot cocoa while relaxing to the view of the mountains.

Along with its picturesque natural beauty, Haywood County offers year-round cultural, music, family-fun activities and special events throughout the year. For more information, click <http://www.visitncsmokies.com/do>.

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