

Whatchoo just say? Swamper Slang



In *The Secret of Skullcracker Swamp*, Tabby had to think about some of the things that Aunt Mable and even her Dad were saying. “Swampers” have their own way of saying things! Using the clues next to each “swampy” word or term below, match them with their meaning in the “real world!”

Real World

Swamper Slang

- A. argument
- B. a moment
- C. female dog
- D. angry
- E. peanuts
- F. afraid
- G. crunchy pork skin
- H. wishbone of a chicken
- I. yodel heard for miles
- J. necktie
- K. social occasion with square dancing
- L. completely

- ___ 1. afyeard (I’m so scared!)
- ___ 2. biggity (How Mama Bear feels when someone comes near her cubs!)
- ___ 3. choke-rag (Your dad may feel like he’s choking when he wears one of these!)
- ___ 4. cracklins (They crackle when you eat ‘em!)
- ___ 5. frolic (Let’s “party hearty!”)
- ___ 6. hollering (Can you hear me now?)
- ___ 7. gip (She just had five puppies!)
- ___ 8. jower (Can’t we all just get along?)
- ___ 9. pinders (I prefer mine honey-roasted.)
- ___ 10. plumb (My bank account is plumb out of money!)
- ___ 11. pull-bone (It’s good luck to get the longest side when you snap it in two!)
- ___ 12. squirt (How time flies!)



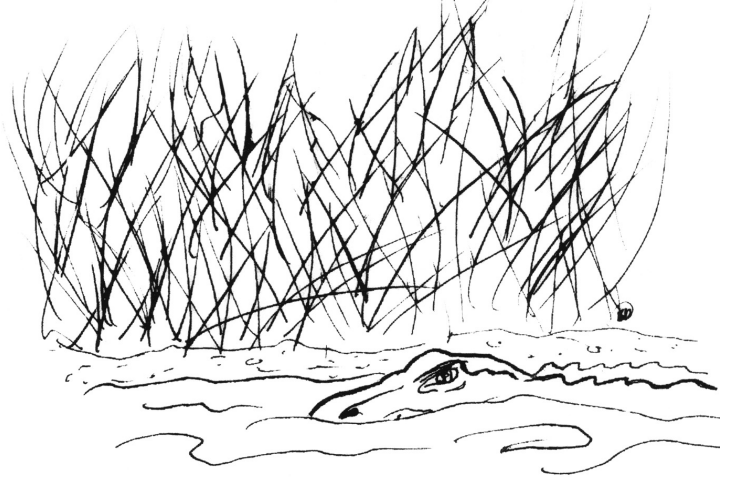
A-8; B-12; C-7; D-2; E-9; F-1; G-4; H-11; I-6; J-3; K-5; L-10

are You hungry? amazing alligator facts



In *The Secret of Skullcracker Swamp*, Tabby and her father have a frightening encounter with an alligator. What is the first thing you think about when you hear the word “alligator?” Probably that BIG mouth with those BIG teeth! Here are some fascinating facts about the eating habits of alligators!

- Alligators will eat just about anything that moves! They wait for something interesting to walk or swim near them, and then POW!—they grab it.
- When lurking around in the water looking for prey, only the eyes and nostrils of an alligator can be seen.
- Alligators have sensitive skin sensors that let them know when anything has entered the water near them. They actually feel the vibrations in the water!
- Alligators swallow small prey whole. They will drag larger prey underwater to drown it, but must come back up above water to swallow it.
- Alligators have very powerful jaws, which allows them to break bones or crush the shells of prey.
- Alligators are cold-blooded animals. They don’t have to eat very often because they don’t have to spend a lot of energy maintaining a high body temperature like warm-blooded animals.
- Alligators living in the wild usually eat once a week. They store fat in their tails. When living on its fat reserves, an alligator can go more than two years between meals!
- An alligator’s tail is very powerful! Alligators use their tails to push themselves up out of the water to grab small animals from low tree branches.

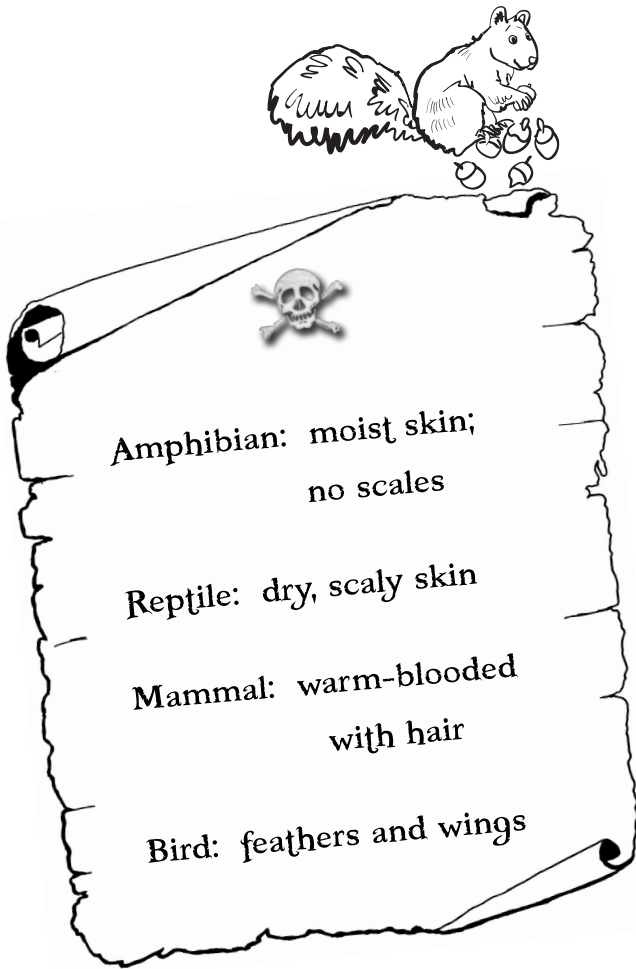


know Your animals!

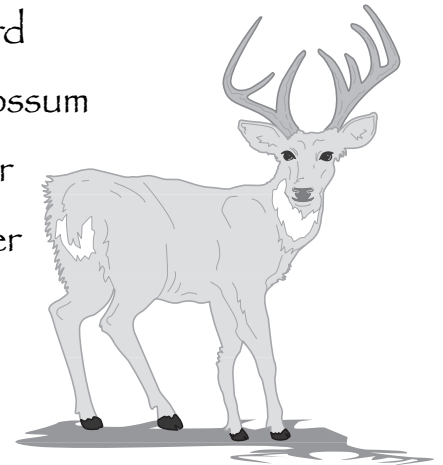
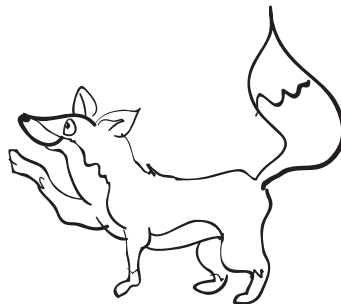
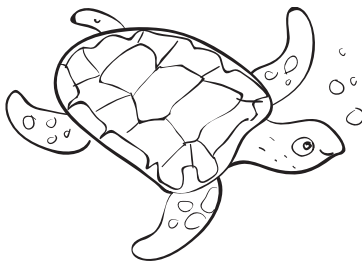
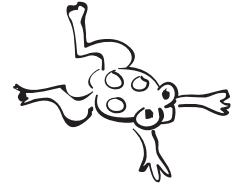


In *The Secret of Skullcracker Swamp*, Tabby gets a crash course on the plant and animal life of the Okefenokee Swamp. Below you will find a list of mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles found in swamps. But which is which?

Read the general descriptions of mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles, and decide which category each animal belongs in. Write M for mammal, B for bird, A for amphibian, and R for reptile.



- ___ 1. bat
- ___ 2. fox
- ___ 3. salamander
- ___ 4. snake
- ___ 5. crow
- ___ 6. alligator
- ___ 7. mouse
- ___ 8. raccoon
- ___ 9. turtle
- ___ 10. rabbit
- ___ 11. frog
- ___ 12. owl
- ___ 13. woodpecker
- ___ 14. duck
- ___ 15. lizard
- ___ 16. opossum
- ___ 17. deer
- ___ 18. otter

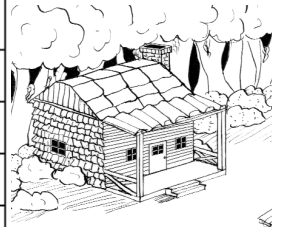
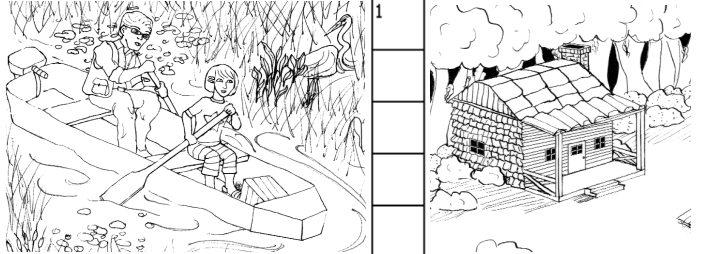


1-M; 2-M; 3-A; 4-R; 5-B; 6-R; 7-M; 8-M; 9-R; 10-M; 11-A; 12-B; 13-B; 14-B; 15-R; 16-M; 17-M; 18-M

Swampy Crossword

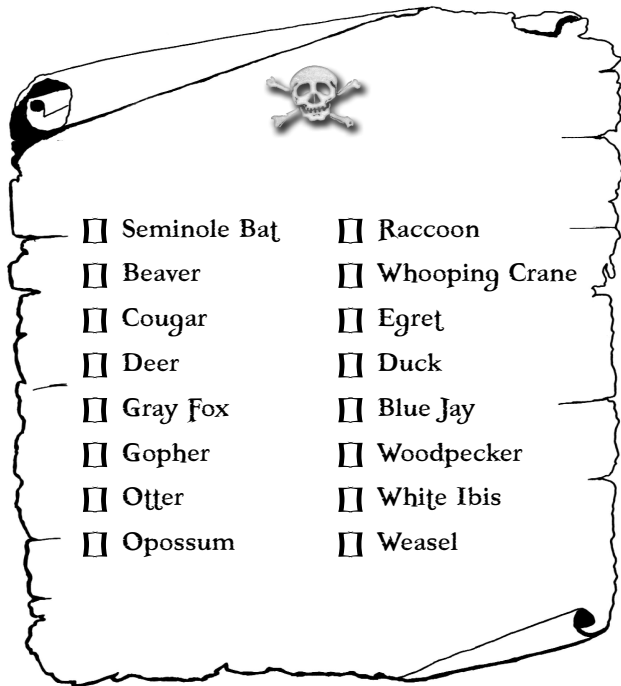
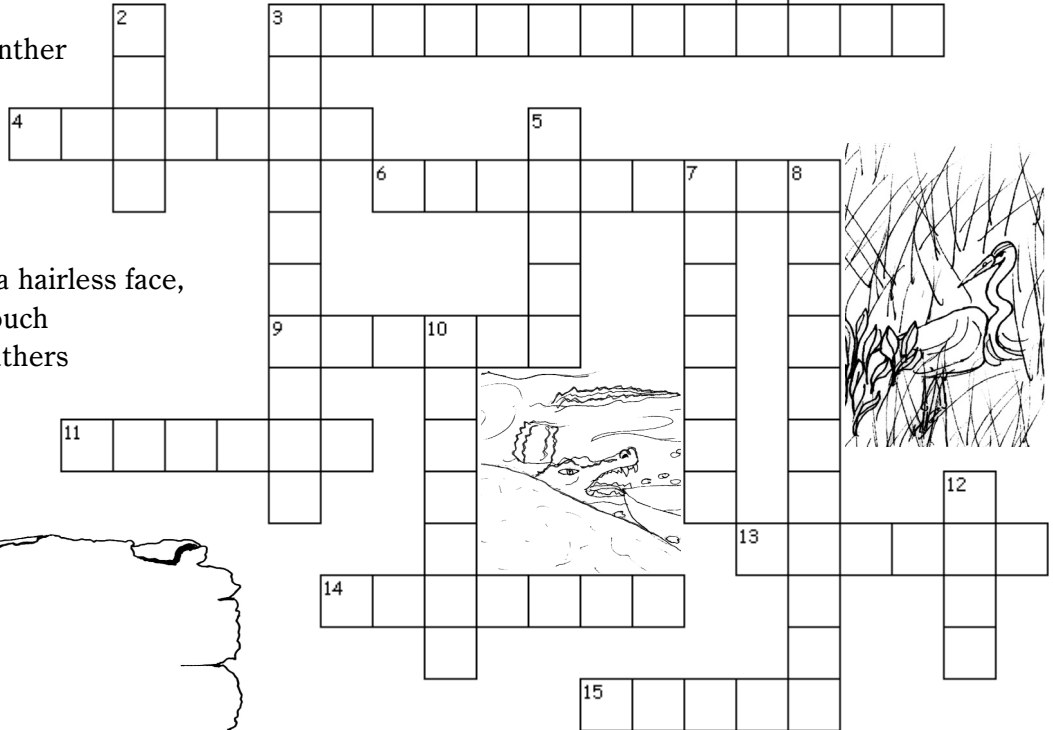


In *The Secret of Skullcracker Swamp*, Tabby's father is a real swampmaster. He knows just about everything there is to know about swamps. We learned that Tabby became a swampmaster, too. Part of her education was to learn to identify animals she found in the swamp. Today, it's your turn to find the animals! Check off each animal on the list as you "find" its place in the crossword puzzle.



Across

3. A large, white endangered crane with black wingtips and a red face; trumpet-like call
4. Animal with gray fur and a black mask
6. White bird with a long, thin, curved beak it uses to get food out of the earth
9. Large cat related to the panther
11. A small furry animal that burrows underground
13. A long, thin animal with short legs and soft, reddish-brown fur
14. A gray-furred animal with a hairless face, it carries its young in a pouch
15. A tall heron with white feathers



Down

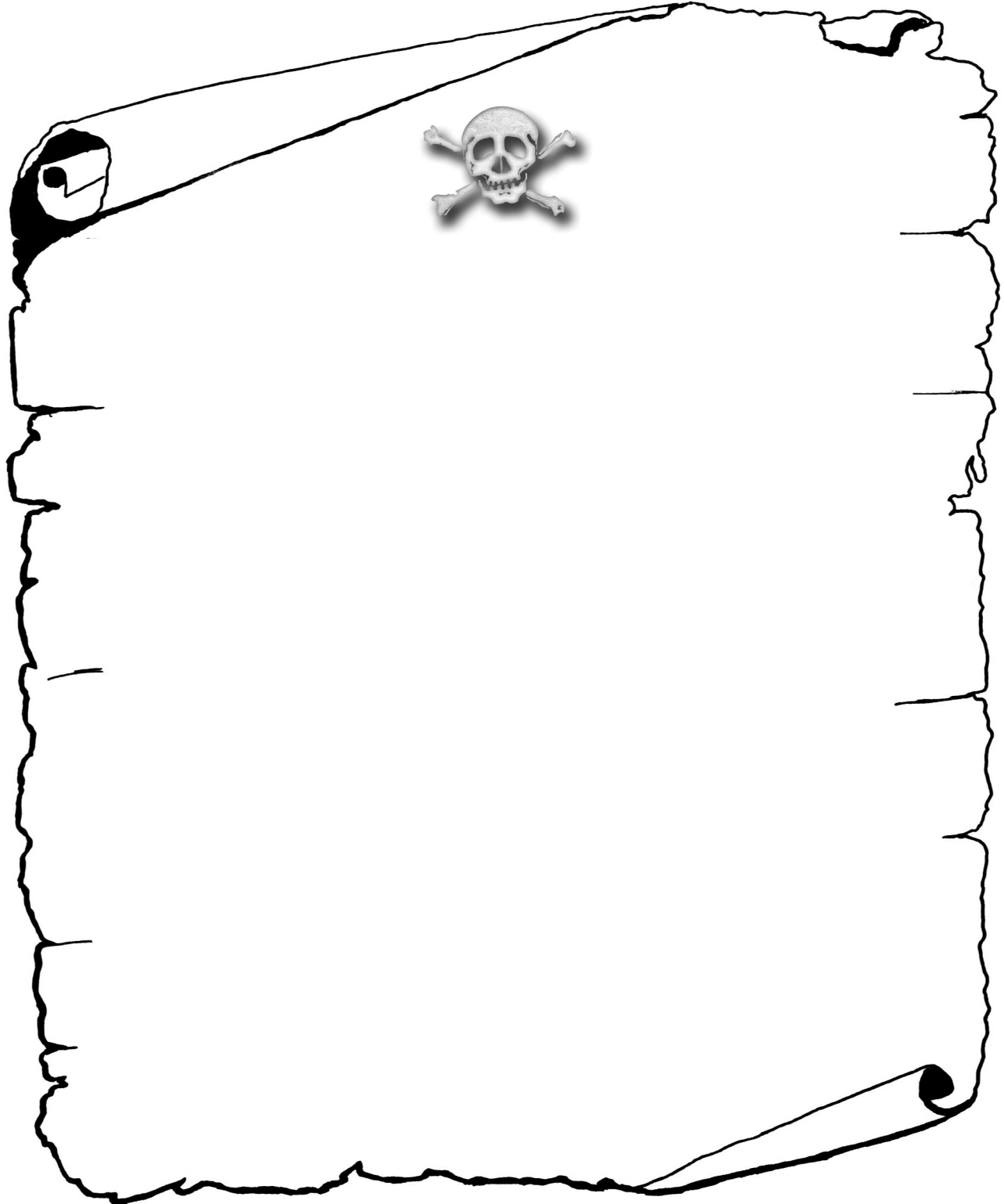
1. A large animal with a wide, flat tail; it gnaws down trees to build dams
2. Waterfowl with webbed feet; the ones in the swamp aren't rubber!
3. Bird that pecks holes in trees to eat bugs
5. Furry animal that lives in (and rhymes with) water
7. A blue- and white-feathered bird
8. A flying mammal that uses sonar
10. Animal related to dogs; has thick fur, pointed nose and ears and a bushy tail
12. Tall, graceful animal that grows antlers

Down: 1. Beaver; 2. Duck; 3. Whooping Crane; 4. Raccoon; 5. White Ibis; 6. Woodpecker; 7. Blue Jay; 8. Bat; 9. Otter; 10. Dog; 11. Gopher; 12. Heron; 13. Weasel; 14. Opossum; 15. Egret

Swamper Scrapbook



One of the ideas in the Built-in Book Club at the end of *The Secret of Skullcracker Swamp* was to make a swamp scrapbook. Print out and copy this page as many times as you wish. Find pictures and articles about swamps and their plant and animal life. Paste it to the page below, cut it out, and make your own Skullcracker Swamp Scrapbook!



What's Cookin'? Swamp Stew!



In *The Secret of Skullcracker Swamp*, Tabby was horrified by the thought of having to eat “swamp food”—armadillo steaks and sandwiches, fried possum... even gator! We know that she enjoyed at least one good meal of chicken, veggies, homemade biscuits, and huckleberry pie. But... was that *really* chicken? Cut out the recipe card on the dotted line, then fold on the solid line. Use it when cooking, then place it next to the pot at servin’ time!



Cook up a pot of steaming hot **SKULLCRACKER SWAMP STEW** for a long night of ghost storytelling out in your neighborhood swamp!

1-1/2 pounds of stew meat, cut in small pieces
Six small red potatoes, quartered
One medium onion, diced
Yellow prepared mustard
2 cloves minced garlic

Four medium carrots, sliced
One 14 oz. can diced tomatoes
Small can corn
Salt and pepper

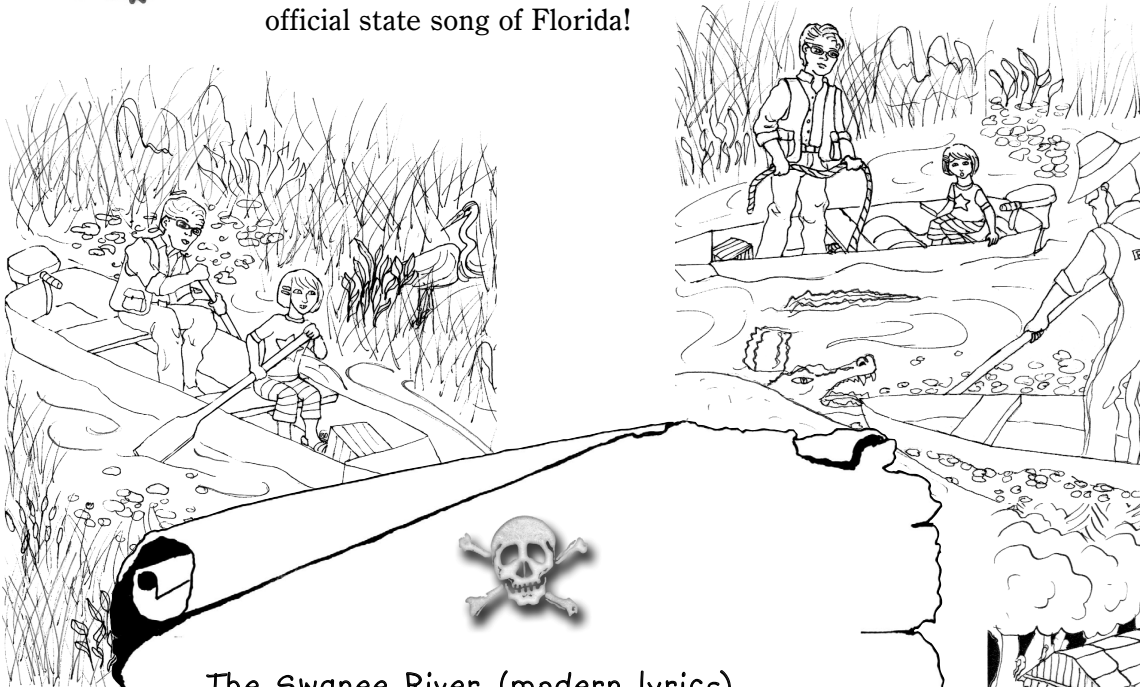
Brown stew meat in two tablespoons of vegetable oil. When it is almost brown, add a tablespoon of yellow mustard to the meat and stir. Add enough water to cover meat. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Peel and cut potatoes and carrots. Dice onion. Add tomatoes to meat mixture. Add salt and pepper to taste. Cook mixture for about 30 minutes till meat is almost tender. Add potatoes, carrots and onions. Cook for about 45 minutes. Add corn to stew about five or ten minutes before serving. Thicken mixture with a little flour and water if necessary before serving.

Serve with hot rolls, hot bread, or fresh cornbread straight out of the oven!

Way down Upon the Swanee River...



The Suwannee River runs through the Okefenokee Swamp, the setting for *The Secret of Skullcracker Swamp*. In 1851, songwriter Stephen Foster wrote a song titled, "Old Folks at Home," which is also known as, "The Swanee River." He purposely misspelled the river's name because he needed a river name that had two syllables! Today, this song is the official state song of Florida!



The Swanee River (modern lyrics)

Way down upon the Swanee River,
Far, far away.
That's where my heart is yearning ever,
Home where the old folks stay.

All up and down the whole creation,
Sadly I roam,
I'm a still a-longin' for the old plantation,
Oh, for the old folks at home.

Chorus
All the world is sad and dreary,
Ev'rywhere I roam,
Oh, brothers, how my heart grows weary,
Far from the old folks at home.

