

Welcome To Animal Ark!

We are excited that you chose Animal Ark as a destination for your class. Animal Ark is a wildlife sanctuary committed to inspiring environmental stewardship through wildlife education.

As you move through our facility today, our Wildlife Educators will join your group and guide your students in games and activities. They will also provide you guidance for moving to the next area of the park.

We have prepared this Guidebook to aid you in your journey. The following pages provide a map and directions to guide you through the park as well as fun facts about each animal you will encounter.

To minimize traffic problems with the other groups moving through the park, please follow the order listed under your group's name (the Info pages that follow will be in this order).

Please help us keep the program timely. We suggest 2 minutes on *average* per exhibit.

Also, we ask that your students observe a few ground rules:

Please walk, do not run.

1. Our animals respond best to groups that are calm and quiet. Please no yelling, hooting, howling, barking, or any other animal sounds.
2. Please stay on the trails. Animal Ark is home to many wild animals besides those in our enclosures, including rabbits, lizards, snakes, and even badgers.
3. We need to respect the other classes and guests visiting the park. When we enter a viewing area, we should make sure the other guests can see as well.

These are the five possible routes your group may take. Numbers correspond to enclosures on a numbered map (not included in this PDF).

Black Bear

Route:

1. Raccoon
2. Badger
3. Black Bear
4. Bobcat
5. Canada Lynx
6. Mountain Lion
7. Mountain Lion
8. Desert Tortoise
9. Cheetah
10. Jaguar
11. Bobcat
12. Great-horned Owl
13. Gray Wolf
14. Vulture
15. Gyrfalcon
16. Red-tailed Hawk
17. Red Fox
18. Coyote
19. Canada Lynx
20. Kit Fox
21. Barn Owl
22. Kestrel
23. Tiger

Desert Tortoise

Route:

8. Desert Tortoise
9. Cheetah
10. Jaguar
11. Bobcat
12. Great-horned Owl
13. Gray Wolf
14. Vulture
15. Gyrfalcon
16. Red-tailed Hawk
17. Red Fox
18. Coyote
19. Canada Lynx
20. Kit Fox
21. Barn Owl
22. Kestrel
23. Tiger
1. Raccoon
2. Badger
3. Black Bear
4. Bobcat
5. Canada Lynx
6. Mountain Lion
7. Mountain Lion

Gray Wolf

Route:

6. Mountain Lion
7. Mountain Lion
8. Desert Tortoise
9. Cheetah
10. Jaguar
11. Bobcat
12. Great-horned Owl
13. Gray Wolf
14. Vulture
15. Gyrfalcon
16. Red-tailed Hawk
17. Red Fox
18. Coyote
19. Canada Lynx
20. Kit Fox
21. Barn Owl
22. Kestrel
23. Tiger
1. Raccoon
2. Badger
3. Black Bear
4. Bobcat
5. Canada Lynx

Peregrine

Falcon Route:

24. Tiger
1. Raccoon
2. Badger
3. Black Bear
4. Bobcat
5. Canada Lynx
6. Mountain Lion
7. Mountain Lion
8. Desert Tortoise
9. Cheetah
10. Jaguar
11. Bobcat
12. Great-horned Owl
13. Gray Wolf
14. Vulture
15. Gyrfalcon
16. Red-tailed Hawk
17. Red Fox
18. Coyote
19. Canada Lynx
20. Kit Fox
21. Barn Owl
22. Kestrel

Mountain Lion

Route:

6. Mountain Lion
7. Mountain Lion
8. Desert Tortoise
9. Cheetah
10. Jaguar
11. Bobcat
12. Great-horned Owl
13. Gray Wolf
14. Vulture
15. Gyrfalcon
16. Red-tailed Hawk
17. Red Fox
18. Coyote
19. Canada Lynx
20. Kit Fox
21. Barn Owl
22. Kestrel
23. Tiger
1. Raccoon
2. Badger
3. Black Bear
4. Bobcat
5. Canada Lynx

1. Raccoon

- A. Raccoons have a very well-adapted sense of touch. They may use their eyes and nose to find food, but they use their sense of touch to determine the suitability of the food. This also allows them to keep looking around for predators while they eat.
- B. Raccoons use their sensitive hands to “wash” their food. Some researchers think that this allows their hands to feel the food better.
- C. Raccoon habitats are marked with a year-round water source and plenty of places to hide and sleep. We may see raccoons in Reno sewers, but not in the open area of Animal Ark.

2. Badger

- A. Badgers are burrowing animals. They need good, soft dirt to dig into.
- B. Badgers tend to live where there is a large rodent population for food. Badgers will burrow in and around meadows and valleys where the rodent populations are plentiful.
- C. Badgers have small ears on the sides of their head and distinct facial markings, making them easy to identify.
- D. Badgers have double-jointed wrists which aid in digging burrows that have multiple "rooms."

3. Black Bear

- A. Black bears have an excellent sense of smell – they may be able to smell a food source over 2 miles away if conditions are right! Just look at the size of the nostrils on the skulls.
- B. Look at the black bear's back teeth. They have sharp teeth for catching and tearing meat, but they also have flat molars for crushing seeds and plants – black bears are omnivores.
- C. Black bears eat a lot! A single bear at Animal Ark may eat more than 12 pounds of food daily, especially in the fall.
- D. Black bears eat a lot of small, easy foods like bugs, grass, and pine nuts. Therefore, they need food-dense habitats with lots of space.
- E. Compare the bear claws. The black bear's is very sharp and curved – the black bear is the only bear in North America that can still climb trees as adults. The brown bear's claw is long and flat, making it great for digging or moving heavy objects. The polar bears' is thick and strong and has a sharp spike like a soccer cleat – helping to keep the bear from slipping on the ice.
- F. Black bears come in many colors. Some are shades of red, brown, whites and grays.

4. Bobcat

More information is provided for the other Bobcat Enclosure, on page 13.

- A. Bobcats are medium-sized felines with very small tails.
- B. Like mountain lions, bobcats can live in a variety of habitats including the high deserts around Reno, swamps of Florida, and forests like in Washington and Maine.
- C. Bobcats and Canada lynx are closely related (both are members of Genus *Lynx*). Bobcats are sometimes called the American lynx.
- D. Bobcats are generalist, ambush predators which means they will hunt anything they can sneak up on. They especially love rabbits.

5. Canada Lynx

More information is provided for the other Canada Lynx Enclosure, on page 21.

- A. Canada lynx are closely related to bobcats and share the trait of a very short tail.
- B. Canada lynx have longer ear tufts and their ruff of fur makes it look like they have beards.
- C. Canada lynx are taller and longer than bobcats, but generally weigh *less* than bobcats. This is because they have less-dense bones.
- D. Their light-weight bone structure and extremely large paws allow Canada lynx to walk across the snow as though they were wearing snow shoes.

6. Mountain Lion

More information is provided for the other Mountain Lion Enclosure, on the next page. This information also pertains to the skulls displayed at this mountain lion enclosure:

- A. Cats in general can see and smell better than humans, but rely more heavily on their eyesight than their sense of smell. Notice that the eye sockets on these skulls are very large and their noses are relatively small.
- B. Felines are carnivores. If you feel your back teeth with your tongue, you will notice they are flat which is helpful for grinding up the fruits, vegetables, and nuts that we eat. The back teeth on these skulls are very sharp, better for shredding meat.
- C. Also, our flat molars land on top of each other to grind food. The cat's back teeth slide past each other like sharp scissors, shearing off just the right amount of meat which the cat swallows whole.

7. Mountain Lion

More information will also be provided for the other Mountain Lion Enclosure, on the previous page.

- A. Mountain lions are known for extreme jumping capabilities. Their long, powerful back legs can propel mountain lions over 20 feet across and 15 feet vertically. They would win the Cat Olympics jumping competitions.
- B. Mountain lions can live in a wide variety of habitats including the high deserts around Reno, the swamps of Florida, and the cold mountains of Argentina and Chile.
- C. Mountain lions are listed in the Guinness Book of World Records (2004) as being the animal with the most common names. These names include *panther*, *painter*, *puma*, *catamount*, *screamer*, *American lion*, and many more!
- D. Although they are really big, mountain lions are not included in the “Big Cats.” Big Cats can roar and purr (only when exhaling) whereas other cats, like mountain lions, cannot roar but can purr both when inhaling and exhaling.

8. Desert Tortoise

- A. Desert tortoises may go a full year without drinking water.
- B. Desert tortoises get a lot of water from the food they eat, like cactus flowers.
- C. Desert tortoises sleep in long underground burrows.
- D. Tortoise burrows will be reused year after year, generation after generation.
Each tortoise that uses the burrow may lengthen it by a few inches per year.

9. Cheetah

- A. Cheetahs have spots, but no rosettes (ring-like markings such as on leopards and jaguars). They also have distinct “tear lines” absent in other cats.
- B. Cheetahs have equal-height front and rear legs, improving their running capabilities (compared to longer back legs for jumping, as in the mountain lion).
- C. Cheetahs can run up to 70 miles per hour. They would win the Cat Olympics running competitions.
- D. Cheetahs cannot fully retract their claws like other cats, which actually helps with traction, like soccer cleats. This is because their smaller paws, which are better for running, cannot contain the retracted claws.
- E. Cheetahs have flattened tails, shaped like our wrists, which act like rudders when they're running at high speeds.

10. Jaguar

- A. Jaguars are one of the “Big Cats” and can roar.
- B. Jaguars, weighing *up to* 300 pounds, are the largest feline in the Americas and the third largest in the world, following tigers and lions.
- C. Jaguars have spots *and* rosettes while cheetahs only have spots and leopards only have rosettes.
- D. Jaguars would win the Cat Olympics strength competitions. An adult jaguar could break a bowling ball with its mouth!

11. Bobcat

More information is provided for the other Bobcat Enclosure, on page 6.

- A. Bobcats are named for their very short tails. “Bobbed” is another way to say “short.” At one point they were called bobbed-tailed cats.
- B. Bobcats are *generalist* predators. They can hunt a variety of foods including rodents, birds, and rabbits.
- C. The white spots on the back of the bobcats’ ears are called “eye spots.” Some biologists think these spots serve to deter predators (the predator cannot tell which way the bobcat is facing). The spots can also serve a mother bobcat as a “follow-me” signal to her young.

12. Great-horned Owl

- A. Great-horned owls have very large eyes to help them see at night. An owl your size would have eyes the size of your fists.
- B. Owl eyes are essentially stuck in their heads. If they want to look to the side, they have to actually face what they want to look at.
- C. Owls have 14 bones in their necks (compared to 7 bones in our necks or in giraffes' necks). All of these tiny bones in close proximity allow owls to turn their heads 270 degrees each direction (compared to about 90 degrees for humans).
- D. A favorite food for great-horned owls is skunk. It's a good thing owls have almost no sense of smell!

13. Gray Wolf

- A. Wolves are pack animals, living in social groups. The leaders of the pack are the alpha male and the alpha female.
- B. A wolf pack works like a team to catch larger prey, like moose!
- C. Wolves may trot following a herd or scents for 5 miles before deciding to attack its prey. Imagine jogging 5 miles to Burger King and you don't even know if it is open.
- D. Wolves can then eat $\frac{1}{5}$ of their body weight in a single meal. That would be like you eating 30 hamburgers once you got to Burger King - no leftovers allowed.
- E. Wolves can communicate a lot through body language. They also sometimes use howling, growling, barking, and whining.

14. Turkey Vulture

- A. Turkey vultures are nature's vacuum cleaners. They have incredibly strong stomach acids which let them eat bacteria-laden carrion (dead, rotting meat).
- B. Turkey vultures' bald heads let them stay clean when pulling apart carrion.
- C. Turkey vultures are lazy and will float on pillars of rising hot air, called thermals.
- D. Turkey vultures can find food using their sense of smell - a sense that is really weak in most birds.
- E. To cool themselves off in hot weather, turkey vultures actually urinate on their feet!

15. Gyrfalcon

- A. Gyrfalcons are the largest and most powerful falcons. Streamlined bodies and sharp, pointed wings help falcons reach incredible speeds.
- B. Gyrfalcons are also extremely agile and may fly 90 miles per hour close to the ground to flush out its prey.
- C. In medieval times, when falconry was extremely popular, it is said only kings could have gyrfalcons because they were a sign of power.
- D. Gyrfalcons live in the Arctic Circle.
- E. This bird, Aragon, weighs about two pounds.

16. Red-tailed Hawk

- A. Red-tailed hawks have large, rectangular wings that catch the thermals. It is possible for a red-tailed hawk to float on a thermal for 30 minutes without needing to flap its wings even once.
- B. Red-tailed hawks are generalist predators, meaning they will catch and eat whatever they can find including rodents, birds, and rabbits.
- C. Red-tailed hawks' bright red tails and dark belly bands make these birds easy to identify. They are often seen sitting on power lines and fence posts, so watch out the window on your way home.
- D. Red-tailed hawks are the most widespread and common raptors.

17. Red Fox

- A. Red foxes come in many colors. Most are some shade of red with some darker shades mixed in. Some can be black or silver. All red foxes have a white-tipped tail, although this trait is very small in these two red foxes.
- B. Red foxes often live in burrows or thickets.

18. Coyote

- A. Coyotes are highly adaptable animals.
- B. Coyotes are also called singing dogs, in reference to the wide range of vocalizations they make.
- C. Coyotes do not always live in packs. In many areas, where they live near humans, they will live just with their mate. In areas without humans, they will live in packs, like wolves.

19. Canada Lynx

More information is provided for the other Canada Lynx Enclosure, on page 7.

- A. Canada lynx are very specialized hunters. Anywhere from 60% to 97% of their diet comes just from snowshoe hare!
- B. Canada lynx are very beautiful. While they do NOT make good pets, many people still try. This lynx was used as a breeder for pet lynx and was not in good condition when Animal Ark found her. She is now a beautiful cat.

20. Kit Fox

- A. No, that is not a baby fox – kit fox are very small animals. Their ideal food sources are rodents, lizards, and small birds.
- B. Kit fox have huge ears. Like an elephant's ears, this serves to cool them off in hot weather! A blowing breeze would cool off the ear and all the blood that is in the ear, which would then flow to the rest of the body and cool it off.
- C. Kit fox can cover their nose and ears with their long, fluffy tail if it starts to get too cold.
- D. Kit fox are very common at lower elevations such as Fallon and Fernley.

21. Barn Owl

- A. Barn owls can actually hunt without seeing their food! That is because of something funny. Human ears are straight across from each other. Owl ears are not! One ear is higher on the head than the other. Have you seen a dog hear a funny noise and tilt its head? They are trying to pinpoint where the sound came from. The owl doesn't have to tilt its head because its ears are already tilted for it!
- B. Owls eat everything including the bones and fur. The good, digestible stuff continues through the digestive tract. The indigestible material, such as those bones and fur, get packed together into a pellet and coughed back up!

22. Kestrel

- A. This little bird is another species of falcon. Like the peregrine and gyrfalcon, this bird is built for speed and can reach speeds of 60 miles per hour.
- B. Kestrels are one of the few species of raptor where the males have a different appearance from females. You might notice that Calvin has bright, vibrant blue on top of his head and his wings. Females don't have that much blue. Also, he has just one black stripe across the tip of his tail. Females have lots of stripes on their tails, looking like a ladder.

23. Tiger

- A. Tigers are the world's largest cats with male Siberian tigers reaching over 700 pounds! Ours are mixes of smaller types of tiger and weigh around 450 pounds each.
- B. Each tiger's stripes are unique, like our fingerprints.
- C. White tigers are extremely rare. Only 17 white tigers have been seen in the wild in over 100 years. We have more in captivity because of humans breeding specifically for the white trait.