

MUTUAL of OMAHA'S
WILD KINGDOM

Tune in Sundays at 7pm E/P

Wolverine Habitats

Objective

To learn about the habitat needs of the wolverine and the basic habitat needs of zoo animals; and to investigate two major habitats: taiga and tundra.

Grades

Activity 1: Zoo Habitat, Grades K-6 (scalable from basic to complex)

Activity 2: Tundra and Taiga Trek, Grades 3-6

Activity 1: Zoo Habitat

Materials

- Shoe box
- Construction paper
- Markers
- Found objects (small rocks, sticks, moss, evergreen tree branches)

Explanation

Design a wolverine habitat for a zoo, after researching its needs in the wild. Its ideal habitat would contain:

- coniferous trees – prefers dense forest – occasionally likes to climb trees
- large area – likes wilderness, not small enclosed areas
- pond or bog
- logs or piles of boulders for dens

This project may be a 2-D drawing with labeled items, or a 3-D diorama—space, time and materials permitting.

An ideal zoo habitat is:

- based on the needs of a particular species (stress that each species has different requirements)
- modeled on the animal's natural habitat
- has ample space to allow animals to act as they would in the wild
- sensitive to the social needs of the particular animal (some like companionship, while some don't)
- accommodates needs for food and water, and for companionship if relevant
- contains opportunities for animal recreation and exercise
- has a variety of physical features, props, and even toys to stimulate animal interest
- allows visitors to view animals from most angles
- is designed to keep both animals and zookeepers safe
- has adequate shelter and shade from the sun

Resources

To learn more about Zoo Habitats:

Indianapolis Zoo

<http://www.indyzoo.com>

Features web cams inside certain animal exhibits, so you can watch them in their zoo habitats.

San Diego Zoo

<http://www.sandiegozoo.org>

Live web cams of animals in their zoo habitats, plus a huge library of online video clips.

Woodland Park Zoo

<http://www.zoo.org>

Take a video tour of the zoo and many of its habitats.

NC Zoo

<http://www.nczoo.org>

Features include a photo tour and “360 views” of the zoo and its inhabitants.

To learn more about Wolverines:

The Wolverine Foundation

<http://www.wolverinefoundation.org>

Wildlife Conservation Society – Wolverine Ecology and Conservation

<http://www.wcs.org/international/northamerica/yellowstone/wolverine>

Animal Diversity Web (search under Wolverine)

<http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/index.html>

Activity 2: Tundra and Taiga Trek

Explanation

The wolverine goes between two habitat types—tundra and taiga—based on the season and availability of food.

Make a list of different animals and vegetation you’d find in the tundra, and another list for the taiga. Then write a short adventure story that takes place in one or both of these habitats, incorporating details about these plants and animals.

Vocabulary

Tundra: A level or rolling treeless area in arctic and subarctic regions, having a permanently frozen subsoil and supporting low-growing vegetation such as lichens, mosses, and small shrubs.

Taiga: A subarctic, evergreen coniferous forest of northern Eurasia located just south of the tundra and dominated by firs and spruces.

Examples:

Taiga

Animals: lynx, moose, snowshoe hare, wolves, reindeer, elk, beavers

Plants: mosses and lichens

Trees: spruces, firs, pines and conifers

Tundra

Animals: lemmings, Arctic fox, Arctic hare, Arctic wolf, polar bear

Plants: permafrost (the ground is covered with a permanently frozen layer); mosses and lichens; woody plants and scrub

Trees: above the treeline

Resources

“Biomes of the World: What’s it Like Where You Live?”

<http://www.mbgnet.net/>

Explore the Taiga and Tundra on the Missouri Botanical Gardens website.

“Major Biomes of the World” – FactMonster.com/Pearson Education

<http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0769052.html>

See Arctic Tundra and Coniferous Forest

