

STANDARDS CORRELATIONS

This Zoo Trek was designed for students in upper elementary school. Participation in the Small But Mighty Zoo Trek supports the Next Generation Science Standards (DCIs) and Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards listed below.

LS2.A
LS2.B
LS2.D
LS4.C
LS4.D

RI.3.1
RI.4.7, RI.5.7
RI.4.9, RI.5.9
W.3.8, W.4.8, W.5.8
W.4.9, W.5.9
SL.3.4

Crosscutting Concepts:

- Cause and Effect
- Systems and System Models
- Structure and Function
- Patterns

Maryland Environmental
Literacy Standards
4.B.1
4.C.1
4.E.1

zoo trek

SMALL... BUT MIGHTY!

Teacher Guide

Often at the Zoo some of the smaller animals get overlooked. But they can just as amazing as the largest, heaviest, and tallest animals! In this Zoo Trek, we highlight some of the smaller animals here at the Zoo to show that they might be small, but they play important roles in their habitats and even for people.

USING THE ZOO TREK ON YOUR FIELD TRIP

Print at least one copy of the Zoo Trek for each group. The Zoo Trek file was designed so that when printed, the pages can be folded as a booklet. Encourage students and chaperones to read the materials for each featured species as they visit that species and to have discussions with each other using the "Let's Talk" prompts.

Chaperones can access an [interactive Zoo map](#) on their phones. You can also print a pdf version of the [Zoo map](#) to provide students and chaperones.

Please keep in mind that every day is different at the Zoo. Some animals may be off exhibit during your visit.

"LET'S TALK" PROMPTS

For each of the featured species, we have identified a discussion prompt called "Let's Talk" to encourage students to engage in conversations on science-related topics. Although there are no right or wrong answers for these prompts, here are a few ideas plus background to share with chaperones to help them further guide the students in their groups as needed.

MARYLAND
ZOO

Prairie dog

In spite of the name, prairie dogs aren't related to dogs at all! Instead, they are a type of ground squirrel. A close relative that students would be familiar with is the gray squirrel. Squirrels belong to the larger groups of rodents, so that means they are also relatives of animals like mice and chipmunks. Although the behavior of standing guard looks similar to what meerkats do, prairie dogs are not closely related to meerkats.

Corn snake

Some people think the name "corn snake" comes from the similarity between their scale patterns and brightly colored Indian corn. Others think they got this name because people saw them in barns and thought they were eating the corn stored there. In reality, all snakes are carnivores. Corn snakes are non-venomous. They are constrictors, meaning they kill their prey by wrapping their coils around it and squeezing. Corn snakes are not inherently aggressive, and do not attack people unless they feel threatened. (This is true for most snakes!) In most cases, if you encounter a snake, it is best to let it alone, since it is otherwise unlikely to cause any harm to people.

Nigerian dwarf goat

The farm breeds at the Zoo are considered heritage breeds, not ones that would be found on large-scale industrial farms today. The sheep and alpaca are primarily kept for wool. The kunekune pigs, while traditionally bred for meat, today often help keep vineyards and orchards well managed by grazing the undergrowth. Mediterranean donkeys were originally used in mills to turn the grinding stones to process grain. Miniature longhorns (viewable from the train) were bred for meat, but are also kept today as "lawn mowers" and even as companion animals.

Warthog

Wallowing is an important behavior for many animals that spend a great deal of time with their skin exposed to sunlight or to biting insects. Wallowing is an important behavior for animals like rhinos, pigs, and elephants.

Panamanian golden frog

Panamanian golden frogs resemble another group of animals called poison dart frogs. Both groups have glands in the skin that produce the poisons that protect the animals from predators. And both have the bright warning coloration. Bright or dramatic colors can be found in other animals to signal that they are dangerous. Porcupine quills are dark brown and white--easily seen as night--to warn potential predators that they are too prickly to touch. Skunks share this same dark and light color contrast to warn of their potential smelly spray. A skunk's spray isn't highly dangerous, but it is definitely unpleasant!