

MEET OUR ALASKAN ANIMALS!

This guide serves as an introduction to Alaskan animals that live at the zoo. Animals are grouped into families of classification with basic facts about their habitats and diets in the wild.

HAWKS & EAGLES Family Accipitridae

The zoo houses four species in this family: two hawk species and two eagle species. These birds of prey live in habitats ranging from tundra to boreal forest and rocky cliffs. Their diets include fish, mammals and birds. They are some of the world's most versatile hunters and scavengers, with amazing senses and flight



Species from left to right: bald eagle, red-tailed hawk and golden eagle.

SHEEP & GOATS Family Bovidae

Zoo visitors can visit three members of this family. Dall sheep and mountain goats are an alpine species, living high along the talus slopes and cliffs of mountain ranges. They graze on grasses and sedges, pawing down through snow in the winter. Musk oxen inhabit tundra and Northern edges of forest. They feed on stems, roots, mosses and lichens.



Species from left to right: muskox, mountain goat and Dall sheep.

Teacher Resource

CANIDS Family Canidae

There are three species of Canids at the zoo. Coyotes, red fox and wolves inhabit a broader range of habitat types from tundra to boreal forest. Their differences are apparent in hunting strategies; wolves being the only Canid among them to strongly prefer pack hunting. Coyotes and red fox both hunt in pairs or solo with more of a stalk-and-pounce style.



Species left to right: gray wolf, red fox, and coyote.

There are three deer species at the zoo. Moose occupy a range of habitat types, as long as willow and other plants are available for foraging. Caribou spend their summers on the tundra and coastal plains, with winters spent farther inland. Sitka black-tailed deer inhabit the rainforests of Southeast Alaska. All are herbivores that eat a variety of plants.

DEER Family Cervidae

Species left to right: moose, caribou and Sitka black-tailed deer



CROWS Family Corvidae

Species to the right: raven

There is one species from this family residing at the zoo. They are some of the most common and adaptable species in the world. They are scavengers and hunters of prey with a diverse diet, from small mammal prey to food left behind by humans.



PORCUPINE

Family Erethizontidae

Species to the right:
porcupine

Porcupines are in the rodent family and are the second largest rodent in North America. They live in boreal forests south of the Brooks Range, as well as the tundra of Southwest Alaska. They are herbivores which survive the winter by eating inner tree bark.



The zoo has one species of falcon. These predators are birds of prey that differ from other birds of prey by their wing and beak shape. They have long, thin wings that allow them to fly at high speeds and change direction quickly. Falcons also have a notch in their upper beak which is used for killing their prey.

Falcons

Family Falconidae

Species to the left: Peregrine Falcon.

FELIDS

Family Felidae

Species to the right: Canadian lynx.



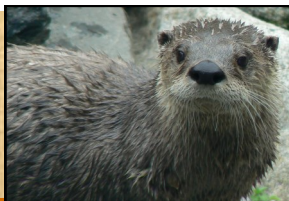
Although three cat species live at the zoo, only one is native to Alaska. Lynx are often found in mature forests and they travel over deep snow as they search for Snowshoe hare, their primary prey species.

River otter, mink and wolverine represent this family at the zoo. Both mink and river otters are semi-aquatic and spend time on land in riparian areas feeding on fish and other aquatic species. Wolverine live in boreal and sub-arctic forests and tundra and will feed on mostly carrion but may hunt in necessary.

WEASELS

Family Mustelidae

Species left to right: river otter, mink, wolverine



SEALS

Family Phocidae

Species to the right: harbor seal.

Harbor seals are the sole seal species that live at the zoo. They are well adapted to life in the sea and can be found along the coast and frequently use sea ice or glaciers to "haul out," a behavior necessary for mating and giving birth. These opportunistic feeders eat squid, octopus, salmon and a variety of other fish. They can stay underwater for up to 20 minutes at depths of 500-600 feet.



Teacher Resource

OWLS Family Strigidae

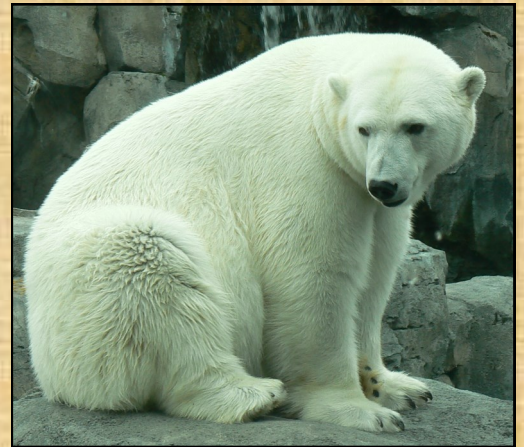
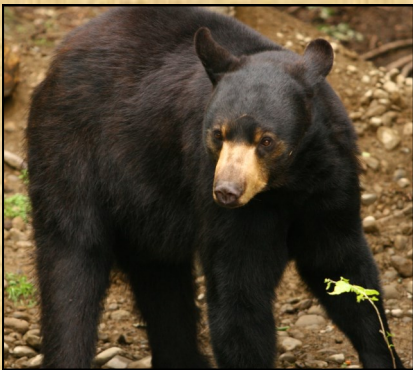
Three owl species live at the Alaska Zoo. This family is found in nearly all terrestrial habitats, however, they are primarily forest-dwelling. Small mammals such as shrews, lemmings, voles and squirrels are primary prey for this family.

Species left to right: short-eared, great horned owl, and great gray owl.



The Alaska Zoo has three species of bear. Polar bears live on and near sea ice habitat and their primary prey are ringed seals. Brown bears occupy open areas such as tundra, alpine meadows and coastlines. These omnivores eat almost anything nutritious and their diet changes with the seasons. Black bears are primarily found in forested areas and are highly omnivorous.

BEARS Family Ursidae



Species left to right: black bear, brown bear and polar bear

Note to Teachers:

The information provided in these animal pages can be incorporated into classroom activities or discussions prior to your virtual or in-person visit to the Alaska Zoo.