



Meets Illinois State Science Standard 13B

Lincoln Park
Zoo

Researchers at Work

We've created Zoo Tracks to guide your educational visit to Lincoln Park Zoo, complete with exhibit descriptions to prompt discussions with your students.

Lincoln Park Zoo is a leader in wildlife conservation, supporting research projects to help animals at the zoo and in the wild. In this installment of Zoo Tracks—Researchers at Work—we focus on the work of our conservation scientists and what they are doing to protect wildlife.

Projects in Progress

The zoo's professional research staff oversees many different projects focused on helping wildlife. Here are just a few examples of what these scientists are up to:

Ape Health and Welfare

From studying disease transmission in the jungles of Africa to advocating for the welfare and care of apes living in captivity, zoo researchers rely on animal-behavior data and hormone studies to draw conclusions on how best to help ape populations.

Urban Biodiversity

Protecting species in urban areas is just as important as protecting those in wild regions. Zoo researchers are working to learn more about the many different species that make urban Chicago their home and how humans and wildlife can successfully share this environment.

Ecosystem Health in Tanzania

An important part of wildlife conservation involves understanding threats animals face in the wild. Researchers at the zoo study how diseases can threaten wild populations and how the spread of diseases can be prevented.

Supporting Wild Populations

Zoo researchers study population trends of wild animals to better understand how to conserve them. This might include surveying local habitats or creating mathematical models that predict if populations will grow, stay the same, or decline.

What Now?

At The Zoo...

As you move throughout the zoo, you're likely to see additional examples of conservation research. You may want to stop and learn more from a zoo interpreter, or read exhibit signs that tell you more about how Lincoln Park Zoo is working to save species.

Back At Home...

Consider conducting your own research project. You might want to:

- Count how many different species might live in your schoolyard or neighborhood.
- Observe an animal's behavior.
- Monitor how seasons affect the species you find.
- Visit a natural area and record what you find in a science journal.

You might want to learn more about the research projects happening at Lincoln Park Zoo by visiting our website: http://www.lpzoo.org/cs_front.php.

Want To Know More?

Lincoln Park Zoo has numerous education programs that can help you learn even more about our animals and their wild relatives. To discover what's coming up, visit our website at www.lpzoo.org/education.

Let's Make Tracks!

Visit these four areas to learn more about some of the research projects supported by Lincoln Park Zoo. Start with #1 and work your way through the zoo.

1. Nature Boardwalk



The recently renovated Nature Boardwalk is an oasis for many different species native to Chicago and just one of the many locations where researchers from the Urban Wildlife Institute

collect data. This can include counting different species of birds or dragonflies or measuring water quality and plant growth.

- How many different species of plants and animals can you discover?

2. Chimpanzees and Gorillas



In this exhibit, researchers regularly record data on which part of the exhibit apes prefer to use and how they interact with each other. This helps us know what types of exhibit design

provide the healthiest environment and how best to group animals. During your visit, you might see a busy researcher collecting data. While they won't have time to talk, you can observe them at work.

- What do you notice about how the animals are using their exhibit space? How are they interacting with each other?

3. African Wild Dogs and African Lions



Because lions and African wild dogs are biologically similar to domestic cats and dogs, they can catch similar diseases. Zoo researchers work to vaccinate

dogs living near wild areas, to prevent the spread of diseases like rabies and distemper to lion and wild dog populations.

- Spend time observing each species. How are they physically similar to domestic cats and dogs? How are they different?

4. Smooth Green Snakes



Zoo scientists are working with wildlife officials to better understand why numbers of smooth green snakes are declining in the wild. In addition to doing population counts in their natural

habitat, zoo scientists are hoping to breed snakes at the zoo for later release into the wild.

- In order to study these snakes, scientists first have to locate them. That isn't always easy. How many snakes can you find inside this exhibit?

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