



MINNESOTA ZOO
Medtronic
**MINNESOTA
TRAIL**

This Trail includes exciting exhibits for raccoons, coyotes and gray wolves, together with long-time residents like beaver, otter, puma and lynx.

Find more detailed facts on each of these animals as well as of the whole Zoo's animal collection at mnzoo.org/animals.



Turtles, frogs, and snakes—together they're called "herps." They rely on the environment around them—the sun, water, or ground—to generate the heat that every creature needs to survive. Despite the cold, Minnesota's relatively clean water and unpolluted air support a surprisingly high number of herps.

«DID YOU KNOW? FROGSICLES! Three of Minnesota's frogs, the gray tree frog, wood frog, and spring peeper, spend winters frozen and then thaw in spring. They replace water in their organs with a natural antifreeze that protects against icy damage.



SNEAKSTER! Curious, clever, nimble and adaptable, **raccoons** eat just about anything. They find more snacks around people than they do in the woods. As a result, as many as 170 may live in each square mile of neighborhood—more than in natural habitats.

«DID YOU KNOW? Raccoons use their nimble fingers to open trash can covers, coolers, latches and even doors to get at food or shelter. It's easy to identify raccoon tracks because the raccoon's front paws have five toes that resemble small human hands.



NATURE'S LOGGER! **Beavers** don't just live off the land—they modify it to fit their needs. Only humans change the landscape more. A beaver's hard work creates valuable wetlands, but occasionally problems for people living nearby.

«DID YOU KNOW? Because beavers' front teeth never stop growing, they must gnaw, chew, and chop wood constantly to keep them filed down. With their strong jaws and teeth, beavers can chew through a six-inch tree in 15 minutes. A single beaver can chew down hundreds of trees each year.



GOT FISH? **River otters** are the best fish hunters in Minnesota. Because they're so good at getting food, they have plenty of time to play and less need to compete with each other. They're fun to watch: often wrestling or spending hours sliding down muddy or snow-packed stream banks.

«DID YOU KNOW? River otters can remain underwater for more than 4 minutes and dive to depths greater than 60 feet! They swim an average of 6 mph. In murky water, stiff whiskers act like antennae and help otters detect moving prey and avoid obstacles.



YOU WEASEL! Watch **fishers** for their tree-climbing, hunting and agility. They are nearly the only animals that will kill and eat porcupines. They use speed to stay in front of the porcupine and swat at its face, where there are no quills.

«DID YOU KNOW? Hind paws that rotate allow fishers to grasp branches and climb down trees head first. Fishers like to nest in cavities in trees. They will even use cavities used by other animals. If you don't see the fisher in the exhibit, check inside the hollowed out log.



Wily and adaptable **coyotes** Minnesota's most abundant large predator does well where humans have changed the landscape. Here they find a booming population of rodents for food and less competition from other predators that have been pushed out.

«DID YOU KNOW? **CITY SLICKER!** City coyotes tend to live longer than their rural cousins, finding easier access to rodents and small pets as food and less competition from other predators. They are natural jumpers; can sail over four foot fences and can climb over eight foot high fences.



Porcupines are slow-moving rodents who protect themselves from predators with an unusual defense: 30,000 long, sharp quills—actually modified hairs over a sheet of muscle—that can be lodged in and even kill an attacker.

«DID YOU KNOW? STICK ‘EM UP! Porcupines cannot throw their quills but can release these hardened, barbed hairs once they’ve stuck them into an attacker’s skin. Porcupines often get stuck by their own quills, when falling out of trees. Most of the time they are able to remove these quills with their teeth and front paws. An antibiotic is present in the quill, which prevents infections from occurring.



The **wolverine’s** scientific name *Gulo gulo* translates to “glutton glutton.” It refers to the habits of this insatiable weasel. Wolverines are remarkably strong and ferocious for their size. Although not the best hunters, they have been known to kill animals as large as a moose. .

«DID YOU KNOW? LE PEW! Wolverines look like a cross between a weasel and a bear. Because of the strong smell of their musk and bear-like appearance, some native peoples call wolverines “skunk bears”.



CAT OF MANY NAMES! This feline has more common names than any other mammal—about 40 in English. Silent and elusive, **pumas** are extremely rare in Minnesota. Few Minnesotans have ever seen one in the wild. Although they usually avoid humans, you wouldn’t want to come close to this large predator.

«DID YOU KNOW? Pumas can run up to 43 mph, jump more than 20 feet from standing, and leap up to 16 feet straight up. One was even seen jumping 12 feet into a tree with a deer in its jaws. Although pumas can make a wide range of cat noises (hisses, growls, purrs), they cannot roar. Instead, they are well known for their distinctive “screams.”



CONSERVATION SUCCESS! Our nation’s symbol, this powerful bird of prey almost went extinct. The **bald eagle** has rebounded in recent years, with the Minnesota-Wisconsin border hosting one of the most successful recoveries.

«DID YOU KNOW? Because bald eagles occasionally “pirate” food from other species, Benjamin Franklin thought they were of “bad moral character” and a bad choice for our national symbol. He suggested the wild turkey instead.



The **gray wolf** is an integral part of Minnesota, a symbol of our state’s pride in wild lands. It is also the state’s most controversial animal: often loved, hated, feared and admired.

«DID YOU KNOW? Gray wolves have a sense of smell 80 times stronger than humans. This helps them track, hunt, communicate, and avoid danger. Wolves are known for strong frames and muscles. Their jaws, for instance, can crush bones at a pressure of 1,500 pounds per square inch. (A human jaw: 300).



Throughout the United States, Canada and northern Mexico; **black bears** live in a variety of wooded and swampy habitats with dense cover. In Minnesota, they are concentrated more in northern counties.

«DID YOU KNOW? During a bear’s hibernation its body temperature drops about 10–12 degrees and its metabolic rate is reduced only by about half. As cold weather approaches, the black bear forages selectively on the richest food to build up fat adding four inches of fat and gaining 2–3 pounds a day.

«FIND MORE DETAILED FACTS

on each of these animals and all of the Zoo’s animal collection at mnzoo.org/animals

All animals may not be visible every day due to animal care needs.