



Southern Swamps Facts

CLIMATE

The Southern Swamps region is home to animals that would be found in wetland habitats, including the Florida Everglades and other swamps in the southern part of the United States. Wetlands are transition areas between dry land and water and are important habitats for wildlife. These areas may have water in them for the entire year or for only part of the year.

ANIMALS

Some animals that can be found in this exhibit include the *American alligators*, *barred owl*, *Eastern diamondback rattlesnake* and *Florida gars*.

An *American crocodile* also can be seen in this section of the Zoo. Found in the freshwater and brackish coastal habitats of extreme southern Florida, these crocodiles often alternate between basking in the sun and resting in the shade to regulate their body temperatures. Distinguished from the alligator by long, V-shaped snouts, crocodiles survive on crabs, fish, snakes, turtles, birds and small mammals.

FUN FACTS

- The *American alligator* is one of only two alligator species in the entire world.
- There are *American crocodiles* in the United States. Though listed as endangered in this country, the American crocodile has one of the most widespread distributions of any New World crocodilian.
- The call of a *barred owl* sounds like “Who cooks for you, who cooks for y’all?” (*Hoo-hoo-to-hoo, hoo-hoo-to-hoo-aw.*)
- The number of segments on the *Eastern diamondback rattlesnake’s* rattle does not indicate its age, but the number of times it has shed its skin.
- The pink feathers of *roseate spoonbills* are the result of carotenoid pigments in the algae and small crustaceans they eat.



The Great Southwest Facts

CLIMATE

Animals and plants found in The Great Southwest of North America live in deserts. Because that region is a place of little rain and much sun, species that live there develop unique adaptations for conserving water and avoiding intense heat to survive.

ANIMALS

Some animals that can be found in this exhibit include the *desert tortoises*, *roadrunners*, *scorpion*, *swift foxes* and *vampire bats*.

A new endangered species found in The Great Southwest is the *black-footed ferret*. The ferrets were thought to be extinct in 1979 but were rediscovered in 1981, after one was killed by a ranch dog. The 18 remaining ferrets were put into a breeding program to save them from extinction. **ZooAmerica** is one of several zoos that house ferrets in order to help educate the public about the importance of the species and how people can help protect its natural habitat. The Zoo is home to two such ferrets.

FUN FACTS

- Although it is a boa constrictor, the *desert rosy boa* from the Southwestern part of the United States never gets any longer than two to three feet.
- *Gila monsters* and *Mexican beaded lizards* are the only two venomous lizards in the entire world.
- Although able to fly, a *roadrunner* usually depends on its swift running style to capture prey and to escape from predators.
- Southwestern *tarantulas* are not deadly to people.
- A *vampire bat* needs about two tablespoons of blood nightly, and cannot go more than two nights without food.



Eastern Woodlands Facts

CLIMATE

The Eastern Woodlands region of North America consists of broadleaf trees, shrubs, wildflowers and animals that respond to the four-season cycle and moderate climate of such states as Pennsylvania. This region once contained endless forests and is now broken up by fields.

ANIMALS

Some animals that can be found in this exhibit are the *barn owls*, *bobcats*, *red-tailed hawks* and *river otters*.

A favorite stop in the Eastern Woodlands is the *American black bear* exhibit. This species can be traced back to exhibits in Hershey in 1910, when Hershey Zoo officially opened. Currently, the Zoo's two bears enjoy taking a dive in the pond and relaxing in the shade. They occasionally enjoy fruit, nuts and peanut butter provided on behind-the-scenes tours.

FUN FACTS

- Of the three bear species that inhabit North America, the *American black bear* is the only one found exclusively on this continent, and the only one that routinely climbs trees.
- A *barn owl* has the most sensitive hearing of all owls. It can pinpoint the direction and distance of rustling prey in total darkness.
- A *red-tailed hawk* is one of the most common North American raptors.
- *River otters* can swim on the coldest days of winter. Short, dense underfur and longer guard hairs combine with a layer of fat underneath the skin to insulate the body in cold temperatures.
- Benjamin Franklin considered the native *wild turkey* such a noble bird that he proposed it as the symbol of the United States.



Big Sky Country Facts

CLIMATE

Big Sky Country is home to animals found in western North America, an area that ranges from the grasslands to the Rocky Mountains. This region has enough rainfall to keep deserts from forming, but not enough moisture to support trees that survive away from streams and rivers.

ANIMALS

Some animals that can be found in this exhibit include the *American bison*, *American elk*, *mountain lions* and *turkey vultures*.

Big Sky Country is home to the very first species that lived at Hershey Zoo back in 1910, the *black-tailed prairie dogs*. Named for their barking call used to communicate, prairie dogs live in colonies or “towns” that range in size from one to several thousand acres. A favorite with Zoo visitors, the prairie dogs are constantly busy collecting items for their underground chambers.

FUN FACTS

- *American bison*, commonly known as buffaloes, are the largest land mammals found in North America.
- *American elk* are found in Elk and Cameron counties in Pennsylvania. In the early 1900s, a trap-and-transfer program reestablished elk in the state, and they now number more than 700.
- *Black-tailed prairie dog* burrows provide critical habitat and shelter for a wide variety of species, including black-footed ferrets, burrowing owls, rabbits, snakes, swift foxes and insects.
- The *mountain lion* is also known as a catamount, cougar, painter, panther, puma ... or Nittany lion.
- When threatened, *turkey vultures* regurgitate recently eaten food to help drive off the intruder, while also reducing their weight for a speedy takeoff.



Northlands Facts

CLIMATE

The Northlands region of North America has a harsh environment with short, cool summers and long, cold and snowy winters. Animals seen in this region of the Zoo can naturally be found from the northern evergreen forests of Canada and Alaska into the arctic tundra.

ANIMALS

Some animals that can be found in this exhibit include the *Canada lynx*, *gray wolves*, *porcupine* and *snowy owls*.

The Northlands is also home to two *American martens*, Steve and Dean (get it?), born in the spring of 2008. Brothers from Minnesota, their species are members of the weasel family and are sometimes referred to as pine martens. Most active during the night and morning, Steve and Dean enjoy climbing and catching small mammals or insects for dinner. They also can be spotted eating nuts and fruit.

FUN FACTS

- *American martens* are excellent climbers, unlike most other members of the weasel family.
- With long legs and huge, furry feet that act like snowshoes, a *Canada lynx* can move tirelessly across deep snow while hunting its preferred prey, snowshoe hares.
- Though known as *gray wolves*, fur color can range from white to shades of gray, brown and black.
- A *porcupine* gives birth to only one baby each year. The newborn's quills are soft, but harden as they dry.
- *Snowy owls* are equally comfortable hunting during the day or night.