

New Worlds

Today is special. You are at a zoo, and there is so much to see! There are many creatures. Each **enclosure** is its own world. Each is a **habitat**, or home, for a different animal.

You see a mongoose. It comes out of its tunnel to eat an insect. You see a fox. It naps on a pile of rocks in the sunshine. You also see a rodent. It sits on a large branch in its enclosure.

Yes, today is special. You are at Smithsonian's National Zoo. At the Small Mammal House, you will see wonderful new worlds!


A fennec fox naps at the Small Mammal House.



A dwarf mongoose comes out of its tunnel at the Small Mammal House.



A degu rodent sits on a branch.

A black Goeldi's monkey is perched on a thick, brown branch. The monkey has thick, black fur and bright orange eyes. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an enclosure. The monkey is looking slightly to the right of the camera.

A Goeldi's monkey sits on a branch in its enclosure.

Arts

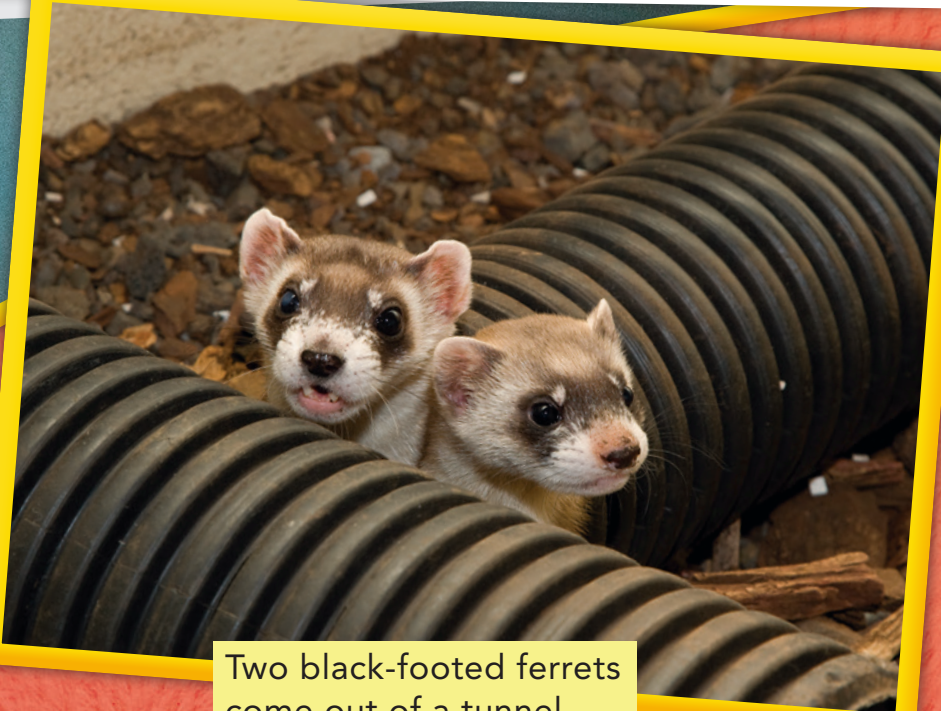
The Perfect Fit

Enclosures are made to fit the needs of creatures. For example, a monkey needs a space that fits tall trees. Spaces are also designed with visitors in mind. They have large windows so that people can see inside.

To be happy and healthy, creatures need the right homes. At zoos, enclosures are their homes. They are made with creatures in mind.

When creating a zoo home, designers ask many questions. Should it be hot or cold? What kind of plants should be there? Should it have other creatures? These questions help designers meet animals' needs.

Designers find these answers by looking at creatures' **natural** habitats. Their zoo homes should **mimic** their homes in the wild. This takes time and research. Once that is done, animal keepers have to take care of the creatures.



Two black-footed ferrets come out of a tunnel.

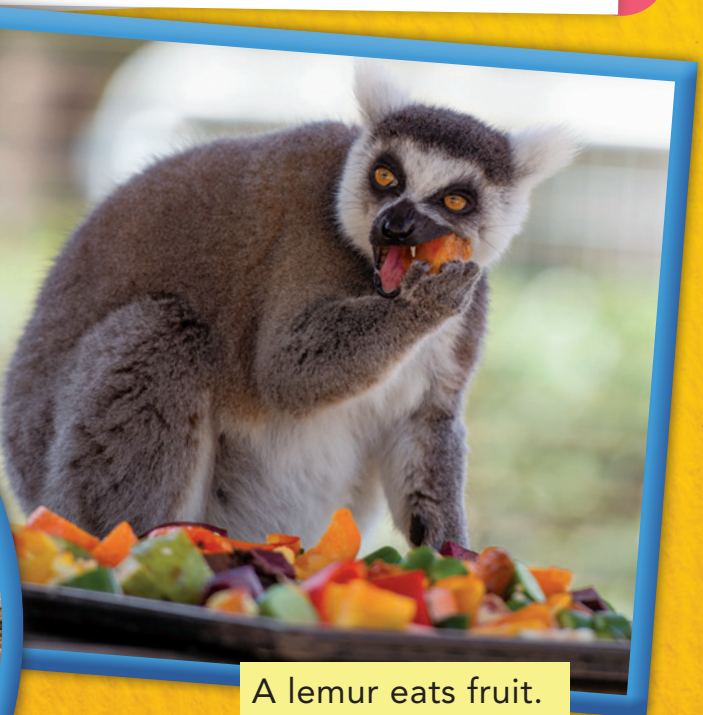
Daily Duties

Caring for creatures is a full-time job. Keepers arrive bright and early. They have many tasks to do.

Feeding

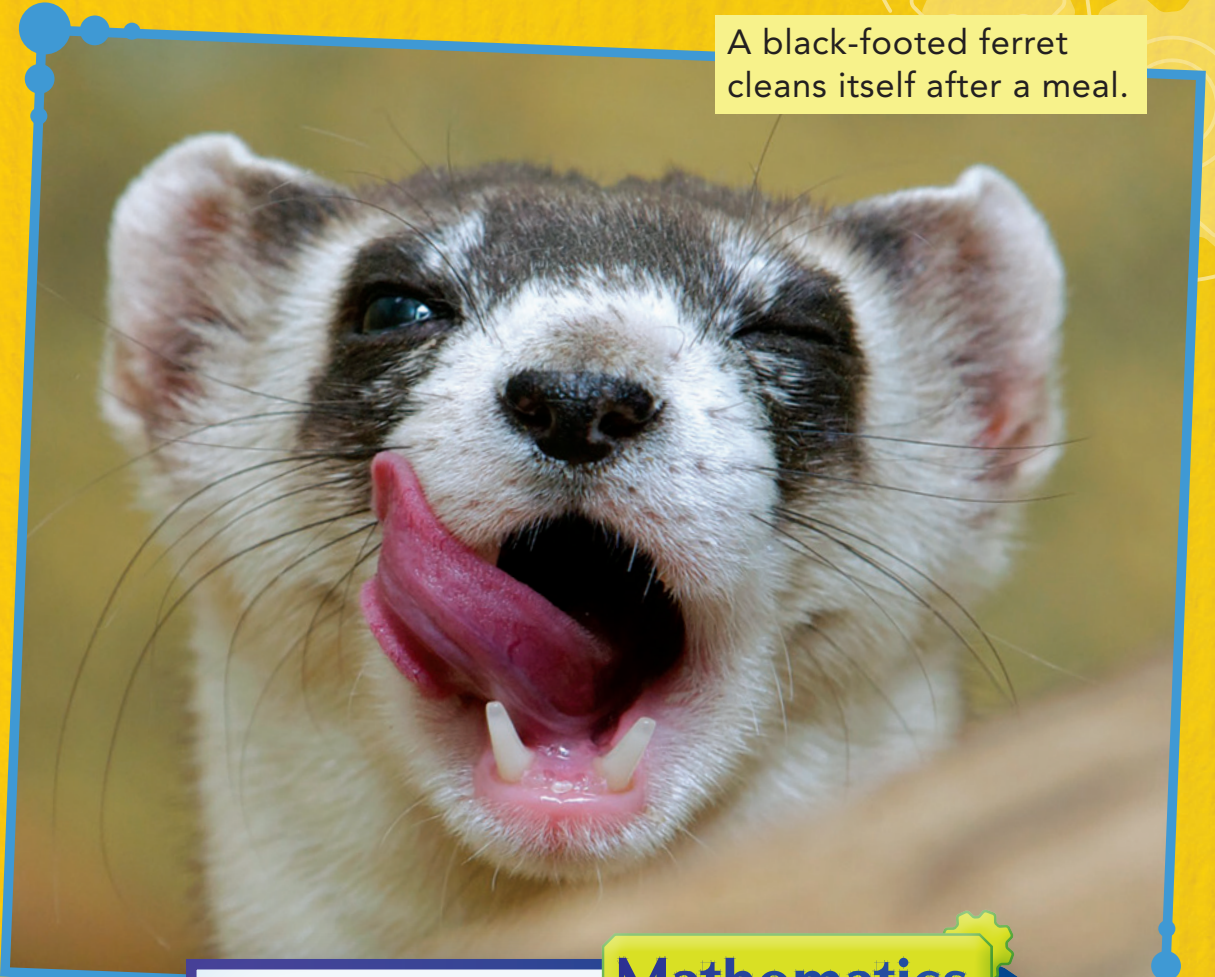
Keepers make meals for each creature. The food they make depends on what the creature eats in the wild. Some animals eat fruits and vegetables. Other animals eat meat. At the zoo, they get those meals too. Keepers want to mimic what each creature eats in the wild.

A creep of tortoises eats vegetables.



A lemur eats fruit.

A black-footed ferret
cleans itself after a meal.



Mathematics

A Proper Meal

In one year, one wild ferret can eat over a hundred prairie dogs! Keepers use that information to figure out how much food ferrets need each day. Then, keepers make sure they have the right amount of food to feed all the ferrets at the zoo.