

Building a Healthy Habitat

Animals come in all shapes and sizes, but their homes all need the same things. Each animal's home looks different depending on the type of animal and where they live. What does a healthy habitat need?

1. Food

Each animal eats and enjoys different foods. Zoo staff work hard to give each animal healthy foods that fit in their diets. Here are a few unique diets in the animal world:



- **Frugivore**—Eats fruits.
- **Granivore**—Eats seeds.
- **Insectivore**—Eats bugs.
- **Nectarivore**—Eats nectar.
- **Piscivore**—Eats fish.
- **Vermivore**—Eats worms.

2. Water



All animals need clean water to drink. Some animals spend a lot of time in water, like fish. Some animals need water to clean themselves, like birds. Some animals like to swim, like otters, polar bears, and penguins. Each animal habitat at the zoo has water sources in the public viewing area and behind the scenes.

3. Shelter and Space

Each animal's home has quiet places to sleep and indoor spaces to stay safe during bad weather. Also, staff make changes and additions to their habitats to provide them with enrichment. Enrichment, like a puzzle feeder filled with food, stimulates the animal to practice and learn species-typical behaviors.



Plants also add to shelter and space. Trees provide shade from the sun and places to perch. Grasses provide soft places to lay and safe places to hide.


4. Companions



Zoo staff think about many things when welcoming new animals to the zoo. Some animals live in groups, like gorillas. Some animals live alone, like snakes. Every habitat is a different size and is comfortable for a certain number of animals. Each habitat has the right number of animals.

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Choose an animal and create a habitat. What items will your animal need?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing a habitat. In the bottom right corner of this box, there is a small, simple line-art icon of a pencil, pointing downwards and to the right.