



MINNESOTA ZOO

Sensory Guides, Tips & Information

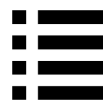


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Tips



Restrooms

All restrooms throughout the Minnesota Zoo are accessible; below is a list of the single-stall restrooms, those without automatic flushing mechanisms, and location of adult changing tables.

Single-Stall Restrooms (with automatic flushing mechanisms):

- Target Learning Center (near entrance to the Medtronic Minnesota Trail)
- Bee Hive Play Area (child-size toilet, manual flushing mechanism)
- Hanifl Nature Center
- Central Plaza (seasonal)
- Farm Granary (seasonal)

Restrooms with Manual Flushing Mechanisms:

- Just outside Call of the Wild Café
- Bee Hive Play Area (child-size toilet)

Full-Size Changing Tables:

- First Aid Office (ask at Guest Services Desk for access) – adult size, power adjustable
- Hanifl Nature Center Family Restroom (near Farm entrance) – wall mounted, non-adjustable, 400 lb. weight limit, 62"long, 21" deep, 31" high





Tips

🔊 Quiet Spaces

The Minnesota Zoo has large, concrete indoor areas that can get loud, especially when it's busy or rainy. Here are some quieter spots to check out, if you'd like to take a break:

- **2nd floor stadium in Discovery Bay:** A good place to take a break or eat lunch if it is open and there isn't a demonstration taking place. When the weather isn't nice outside, the space might get loud and crowded with school groups.
- **Lakeside Terrace:** Another good place to take a break or eat lunch if it is nice outside and there isn't a program taking place.
- **Crossroads Park near the path to the Wells Fargo Family Farm:** This is an area with large boulders for climbing on. This can be a good place to take a break.
- **Café in the Farmhouse:** A generally quiet space, except around lunchtime (seasonal).



👥 Busy Times

The Minnesota Zoo is open every day, except Thanksgiving and December 25, with hours varying by season. Spring and summer are the busiest times.

During the spring, you should expect large school groups from mid-April through mid-June. Wait times at admissions are generally longest between 10 am – 2 pm. If waiting in line becomes an issue, use the Exit Lane to access the Guest & Member Services desk. More detailed information is always available by calling 952-431-9200 during business hours.

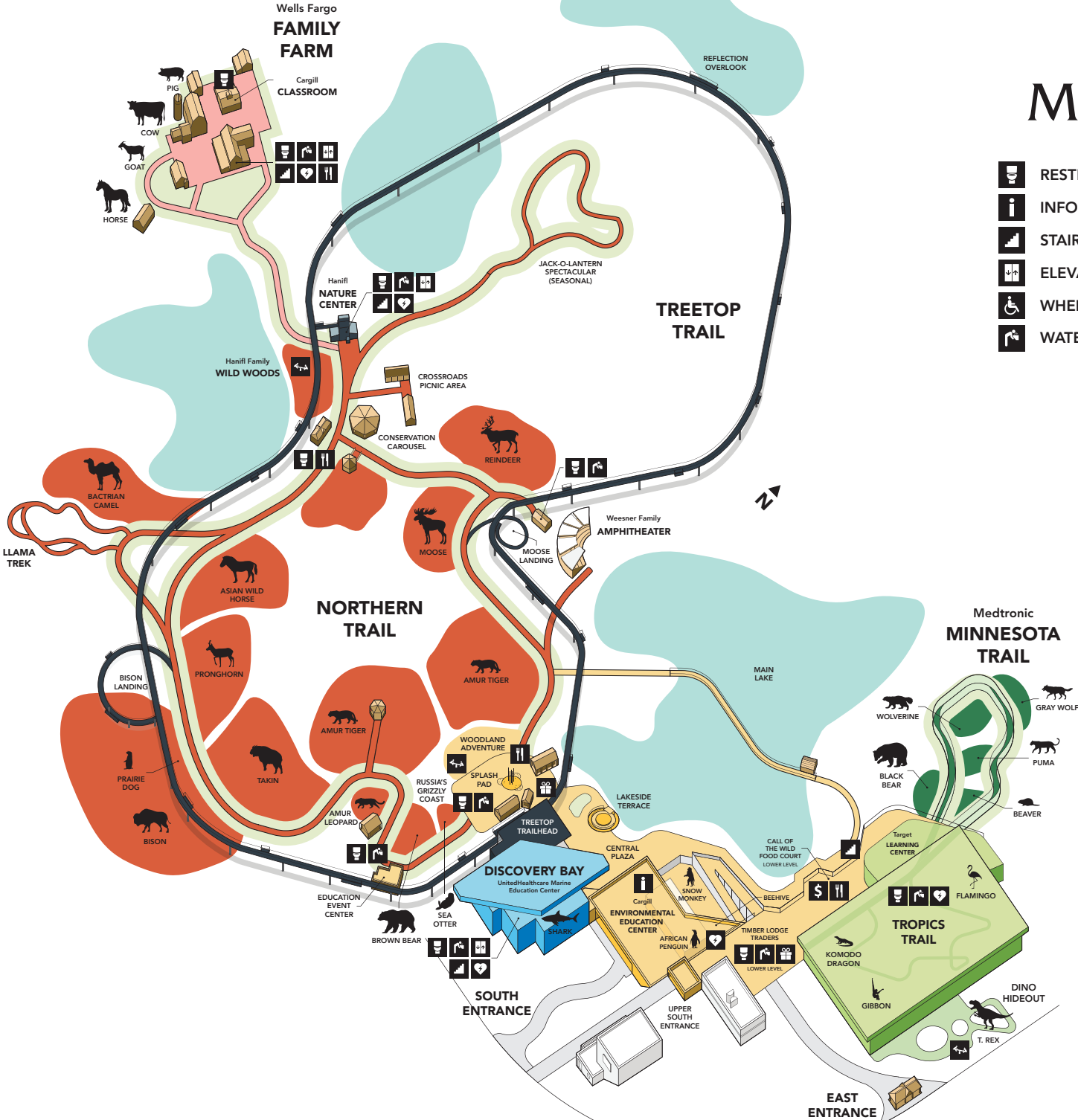




Overview



MINNESOTA ZOO





Main Building



Loud



Smell



Wait in Line



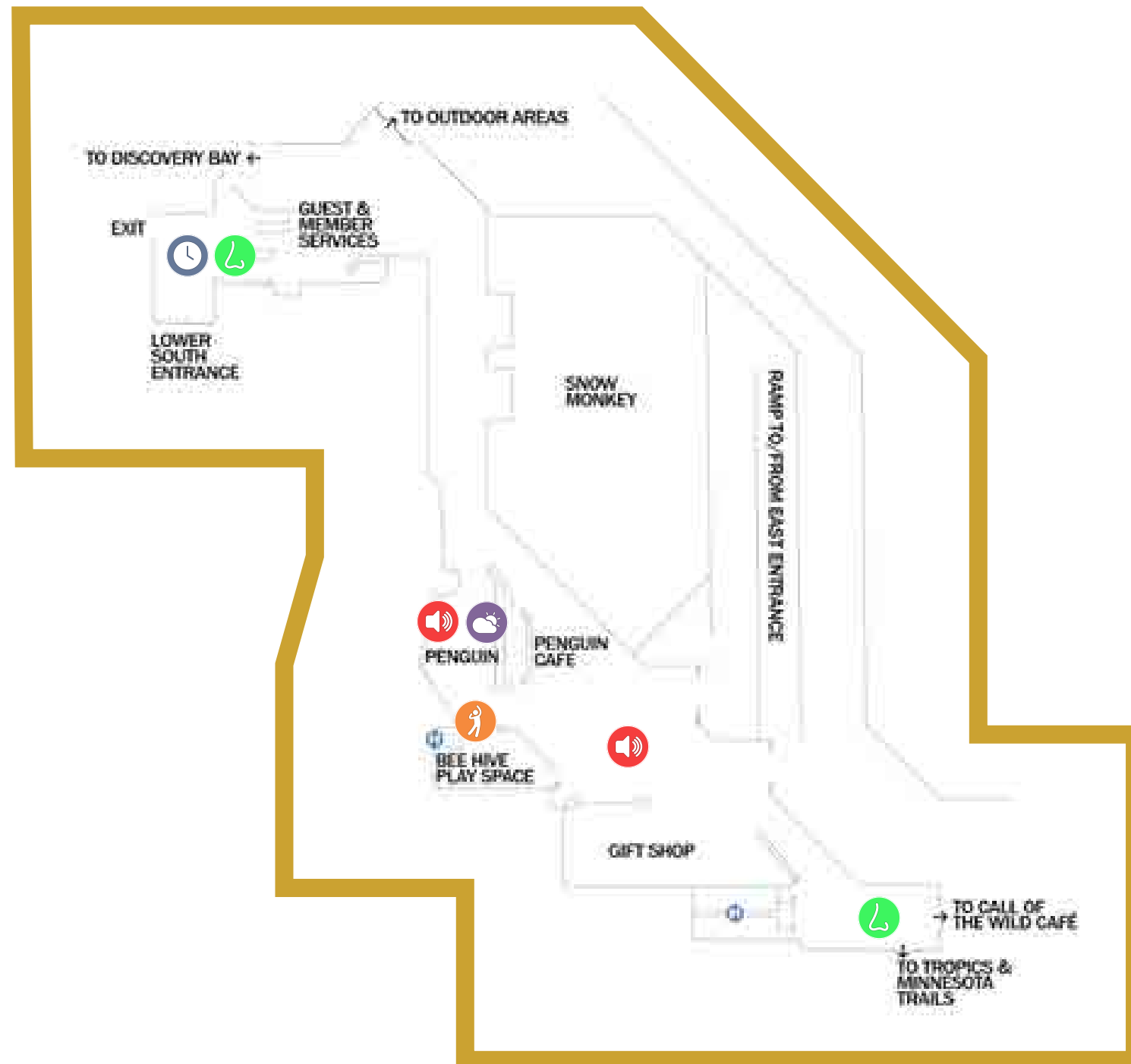
Nature Play /
Movement Area



Possible Animal
Contact



Low
Lighting





Tropics Trail



Loud



Smell



Wait in Line



Nature Play /
Movement Area



Possible Animal
Contact



Low
Lighting





Minnesota Trail



Loud



Smell



Wait in Line



Nature Play /
Movement Area



Possible Animal
Contact



Low
Lighting





Discovery Bay



Loud



Smell



Wait in Line



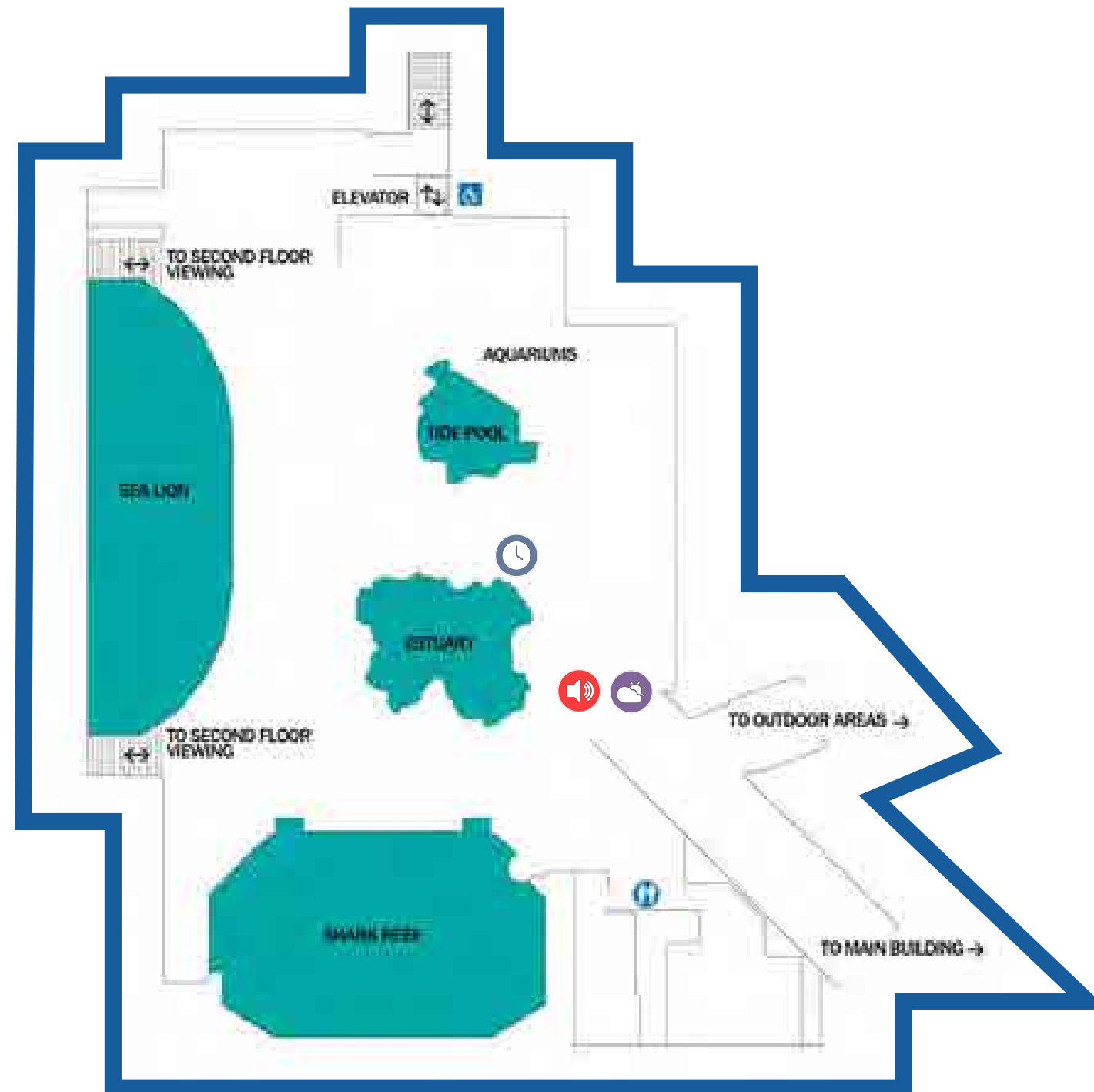
Nature Play /
Movement Area



Possible Animal
Contact



Low
Lighting





Russia's Grizzly Coast and Northern Trail



Loud



Smell



Wait in Line



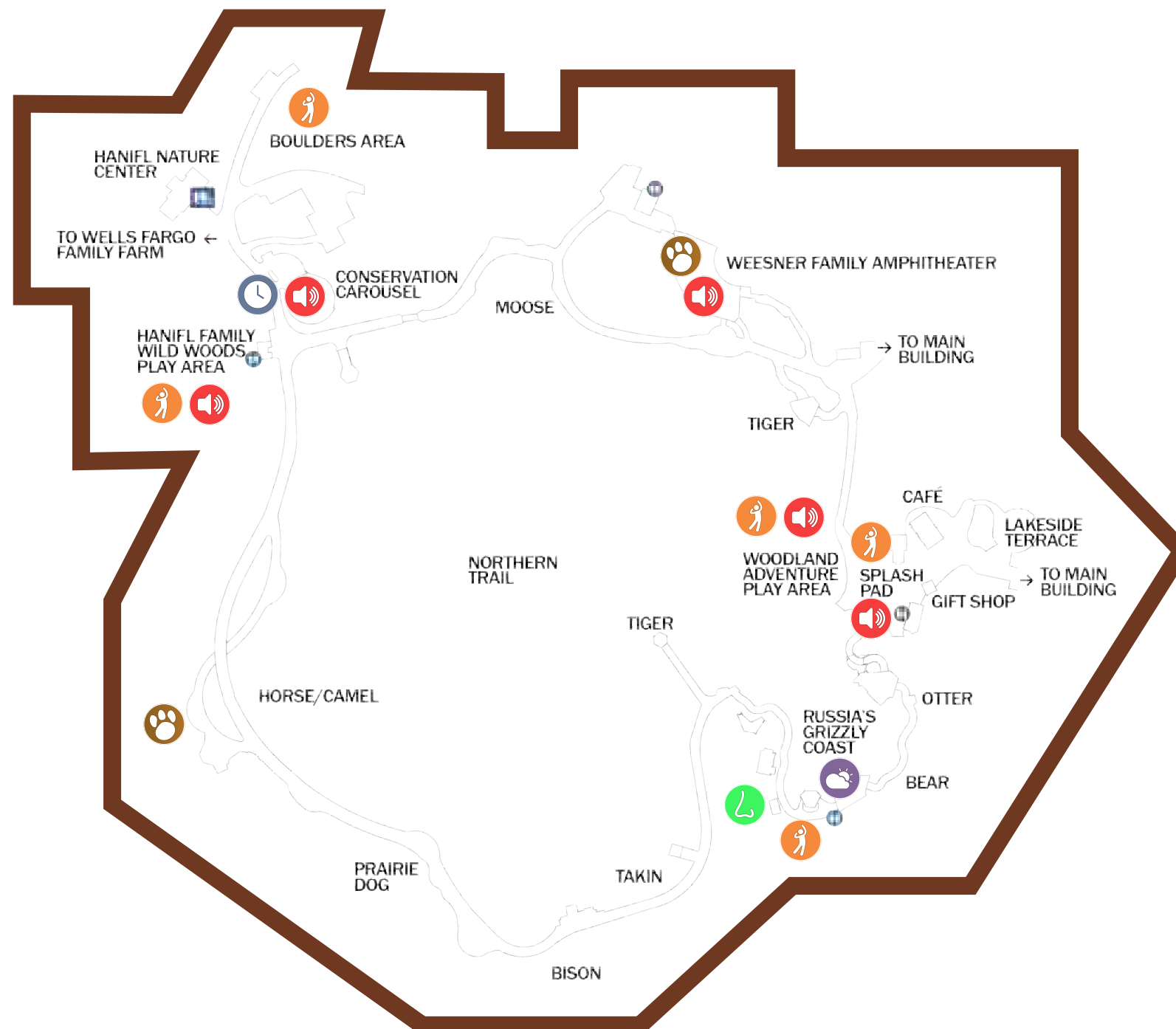
Nature Play /
Movement Area



Possible Animal
Contact



Low
Lighting





Wells Fargo Family Farm (Seasonal)



Loud



Smell



Wait in Line



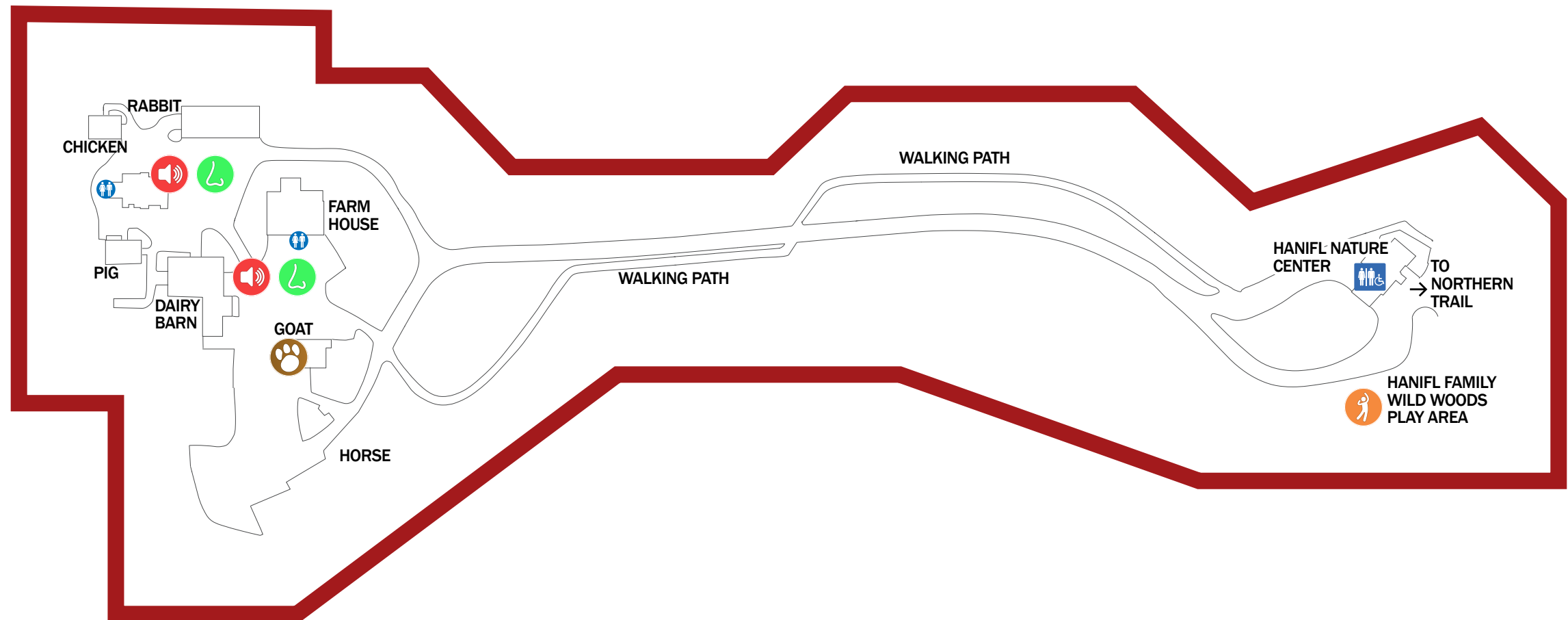
Nature Play /
Movement Area

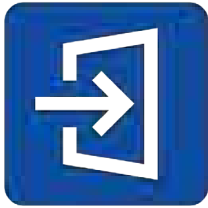


Possible Animal
Contact



Low
Lighting





Smell



Loud



Wait in Line

Going to the Zoo



It is time to go to the Minnesota Zoo! When I arrive, it might be a long walk from the parking lot to the entrance. When I get to the entrance, our group will get our tickets scanned. If it is crowded, we might have to wait in a long line. It is important that I stay with my group.

Some animals at the zoo have strong odors and I might smell them when I enter the building.

When I am at the Zoo, there are a few rules for me to follow. It is important to keep a quiet voice and calm body when I am close to the animals. This will help the animals also stay calm. I also can't share my food with the animals. The animals have their own special food to eat. It is important to keep my feet on the walking path or ground.

While I am at the Minnesota Zoo I can look for staff and volunteers in blue or green shirts if I have questions or need help. The volunteers might show me different items like animal bones or feathers that I can touch and ask questions about.



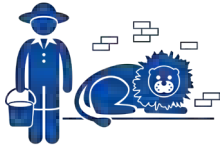
Zoo Animal Care



There are many animals to see at the Minnesota Zoo. During my visit, I am there to carefully watch and learn about the animals. The animals live in different habitats, or homes.

I might see the animals eating. Sometimes the animals eat grass or vegetables. Other times they might eat other, small animals. This type of food is called 'prey.' The zookeeper might hide the animal's food inside of a fake prey. This helps the animal use its problem-solving and hunting skills to find their food.

Sometimes, I will see the zookeeper inside the habitat working on training an animal or cleaning the space. Some animals may not be in their habitat. That is okay. I can keep walking and look for other animals.



Animal Trainings, Demonstrations, and Encounters



There are fun activities that happen every day at the Minnesota Zoo! The activities usually last between 10 and 25 minutes. I might be able to sit during the activity, unless it is too crowded. During these programs, I might:

- See an animal being trained;
- Watch an animal get fed; or
- Learn special information about an animal.

I can try to listen carefully and at the end I might be able to ask a question!

The schedule for these programs changes every day. When I enter the Zoo on the day of my visit, I can ask which programs are happening that day.

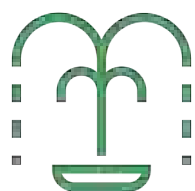


Leaving the Zoo



When it is time to leave the Minnesota Zoo, I can walk with my group to the exit. I might feel sad to leave the Zoo, but I can try to remember all the fun that I had and think about all the amazing animals that I saw.

I can try to talk to my family and friends about my favorite parts. I hope I can come back again soon!



Loud



Wait in Line

Central Plaza

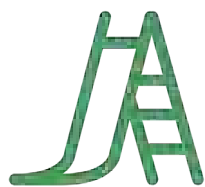


Central Plaza is a large outdoor area. There is a splash pad that has animal sculptures and fountains that spray water, if it is warm outside. I might want to run through the water and get wet!

Lakeside Terrace is a small outdoor amphitheater. Sometimes there are programs or musical performances here. If the space is not being used for a program, I can climb on the rocks or take a break.

Woodland Adventure is an outdoor play area. It might be closed when it is cold outside. There are slides, a treehouse, and a pretend bear cave.

There is also a gift shop and places to get food in Central Plaza when the weather is nice. This area can get crowded and noisy, especially on nice days.



Loud



Wait in Line

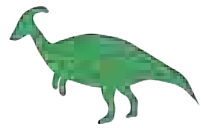
Crossroads Park



Crossroads Park is an area with a carousel and a nature play area.

The Carousel is only open at certain times. If I want to ride on the Conservation Carousel, I will have to buy a token and wait in line.

Each animal on the Carousel is different. If the animal I want to ride is taken, I can pick a different animal. There are also benches to sit on if I don't want to go up and down on an animal. If the music on the Carousel is too loud, I can wear my headphones or ask the staff person for earplugs.



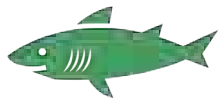
Dino Hideout



In **Dino Hideout**, I can climb, play, and see pretend dinosaurs! There are 12 animatronic dinosaurs. That means the dinosaurs can move and make noises, but they are not real. I can look at the dinosaurs, but I should not touch them.

The dinosaurs might move or make noise when people walk by them. Sometimes the dinosaurs are turned off or need to take a short break from moving. If a dinosaur isn't moving, that is OK. I can wait to see if this dinosaur will move, or I can go find another dinosaur.

There are lots of places for me to play and explore in Dino Hideout. I can climb and jump, or it can be a fun place to just relax in the shade. There might be lots of other kids in Dino Hideout, so I can be careful to not crash into anyone else when I am playing.



Discovery Bay



Discovery Bay is a large building with ocean habitats. I can visit the Estuary or the Tide Pool. These are pools where I can try to touch sharks, stingrays, or fish as they swim by. I might have to wait in line for my turn. I need to wash my hands before I use my fingertips to try to gently touch the back of the animal. I need to wash my hands when I am done.

The nearby Shark Reef has sharks, sea turtles, fish, and stingrays. Sometimes I might see divers in the tank, or the animals being fed.

I can watch the sea lions swimming or go upstairs where they may be resting on the deck. Sometimes the sea lions make loud noises!

Finally, there is a volunteer station where I might be able to touch a turtle shell, a shark jaw, or other interesting artifacts from the sea! There are also restrooms in Discovery Bay if I need them.

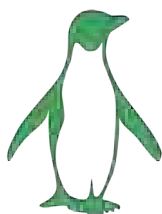


Hanifl Family Wild Woods



The **Hanifl Family Wild Woods** is a nature play area that is open during the summer.

This space has slides, musical instruments, fairy houses, and a floating path that goes through a marsh. The musical instruments can sometimes make loud, sudden noises. There is also a quiet area across from the picnic shelters with climbing boulders if I need a break.



Nature Play /
Movement Area



Wait in Line



Smell



Loud



Low
Lighting

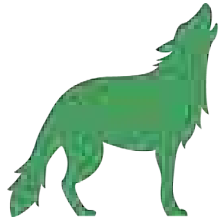
Main Building



The **Main Building** has a lot to explore. I can look for the snow monkeys and penguins. I can climb on the rocks while I watch them. There is also a penguin sculpture with a nest and eggs that I can explore.

The Bee Hive is a play area for young children ages 1 to 3 years old. It has a climbing area, books, and blocks for building.

There is also a cafeteria, a gift shop, and restrooms in the Main Building. This area can get very crowded. If it feels too crowded, I can ask my group to walk to a different place.



Loud



Low
Lighting

Medtronic Minnesota Trail



Medtronic Minnesota Trail is a path that I walk along to learn about Minnesota wildlife. Parts of the Trail have a roof and are darker; other parts of the Trail will be brighter and outside.

I enter the Trail by walking through a log cabin. Inside this cabin I can look at small reptiles and amphibians.

As I keep walking on the trail, some of the animals that I might see on the walk are coyotes, wolves, river otters, black bears, puma, lynx, and birds. Some animals might be hard to find at first because they might blend into their habitat.



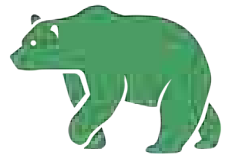
Northern Trail



The **Northern Trail** is a long, outdoor trail where I can see many different animals. I might see tigers, bison, prairie dogs, camels, horses, moose, and caribou. The habitats are very big and the animals might be hard to see if they are far away. I can keep walking to the next habitat if I don't see any animals.

The Northern Trail loop is one mile long, but there are places to sit and rest if I need a break. Along the Trail, I see signs that explain more about the animals. Some of the signs have things to touch, like a sample of what the animal's fur might feel like.

Halfway through the loop, I will see Crossroads Park, which has restrooms and a carousel.



Nature Play /
Movement Area



Smell



Low
Lighting

Russia's Grizzly Coast



Russia's Grizzly Coast is a path that I walk along to learn about the land and animals in Russia. Animals I might see include sea otters, grizzly bears, and leopards. Some of the animals can be smelly!

As I start down the path, I walk through a sea cave. I can sit and watch sea otters swimming. There is also a cave I can walk through to see the grizzly bears. Sometimes the bears may look like they are fighting. This is how bears play - they are not hurting each other.

At the Mammoth Dig Pit I can dig to find pretend mammoth bones buried in gravel. There are restrooms in this area if I need them.



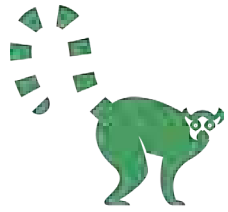
Treetop Trail



Treetop Trail is a 1.25 mile path that will take me up to the treetops! The path goes up to 32 feet off the ground, so I will be able to walk past the tops of trees and look down to see the ground below me. I can look for big and small animals grazing in the fields, climbing the trees, or swimming in the water below.

The decking is made of recycled plastic and the railings are steel. Because of this, sometimes I might feel a small static shock when I touch the rail. This is OK. It is the same small shock I might feel after going down a metal slide in the summer!

I can remember to walk carefully on the path and stay with my group. If I need to take a break, there are benches where I can sit. It can be beautiful to see the view from the Treetop Trail!



Possible Animal
Contact



Low
Lighting



Smell



Loud

Tropics Trail



Tropics Trail is a long path that I walk along to learn about the tropical rainforest. A tropical rainforest is a place with tall trees, lots of rain and very warm temperatures.

I will feel a strong gust of air blow when the doors open. Sometimes there will be pretend rain and soft thunder inside the building. The rain will fall into the pond, but I will not get wet on the path.

I will see lots of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians. Some of the animals are in habitats behind glass. Other animals are behind the netting, and some of the birds fly throughout the building! I might see a bird on the path. If that happens, I will try to be careful so the bird doesn't get scared.



Wells Fargo Family Farm

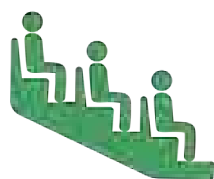


The **Wells Fargo Family Farm** is a real working farm! It is a long walk out to the Farm.

The Farm might be smelly and the animals can make loud, unexpected noises. I might see cows, pigs, goats, sheep, chickens, rabbits, or horses.

There might be programs for me to watch. I might be able to gently touch some of the animals. If it is OK, I might be able to buy special food to feed the goats. If I touch or feed any animals at the Farm, I need to wash my hands when I am done.

There might be places to buy drinks or food at the Farm, and there are restrooms in this area. The café in the Farmhouse may be a quiet place to rest if it is not lunchtime.



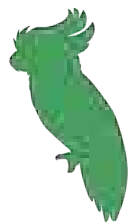
Wings & Things Show



Wings & Things is an animal show that takes place in the indoor Target Learning Center. During the show, the zookeepers work with birds that may swoop through the air and fly very close over the heads of the audience! There are also trained animals walking around on the stage.

It is very important that I stay in my seat and keep my hands in my lap. The show can be loud and crowded. If the show is too noisy or overwhelming, I can ask to take a break.

Note: Music is played before the program and microphones are used throughout.



Wings Credit Union World of Birds Show



The **Wings Credit Union World of Birds Show** takes place during the summer at the outdoor Weesner Family Amphitheater along the Northern Trail.

During the show, the zookeepers work with different kinds of birds. The birds swoop through the air and often fly very close over the heads of the audience! Some birds may eat small animals like mice.

It is very important that I stay in my seat and keep my hands in my lap. The show can be loud and crowded. If the show is too noisy or overwhelming, I can ask to take a break.

Note: Music is played before and during the program and microphones are used throughout.



MINNESOTA ZOO

🔍 See all accessibility services: <https://mnzoo.org/accessibility/>

❓ Questions about accessibility? Contact us: email access@mnzoo.org; 651-539-6596 (voice); 711 or 1-800-627-3529 (TTY)