

Self Guided Tour

of the
**UW-Stevens Point
Museum of Natural History**

As you tour the museum,
please be respectful of the
exhibits and other patrons.
Cell phone use is discouraged.



**University of Wisconsin
Stevens Point**



Museum Highlights

- Menominee Clans exhibit by artist James F. Frechette, Jr. and Interactive Menominee Clans Story
- Geologic rocks and minerals collection
- Dioramas depicting endemic wildlife and related ecosystems
- Native American exhibits and rotating selections from the UW-Stevens Point native cultures collections
- One of the last passenger pigeons hunted in Wisconsin
- 1800's era Schoenbeck Egg Collection
- Life-like African savanna and waterhole exhibits
- A northern Wisconsin forest
- Wisconsin pond, wetland, and prairie grassland
- Muskeg tundra
- Southwestern desert
- Rocks and minerals of Wisconsin
- A full-size Allosaurus skeleton (smaller cousin to T-Rex)
- North American fossils
- North American insects
- Raptors of Wisconsin
- Insects from the 50 million-year-old Green River Formation
- Other intriguing exhibits!

Insects

Outside the Museum's main entrance you will find a rotating exhibit associated with our entomology collection. Entomology is the study of insects. All insects have the following characteristics:



1. An **exoskeleton** is a skeleton that is outside of the body! Exoskeletons are hard, rigid, and cannot grow. To grow larger, an insect sheds its exoskeleton by wriggling out of it (molting). Insects can also use these molts to go through metamorphosis, a process in which the insect's body changes before shedding its old exoskeleton. The picture to the right shows a dragonfly that has come out of its old exoskeleton, and its new adult body has wings to fly!

2. A **three-part body** includes the head, thorax and abdomen. The head has the antennae, mouthparts and eyes; the thorax (middle part) has the legs and wings; and the abdomen contains most of the internal organs.

3. Adult insects have **six jointed legs**. This means animals like spiders, centipedes and snails are NOT insects.

4. Insects have two types of eyes, simple and compound. Simple eyes have single lenses that can see light and dark and rough images. The much larger **compound eyes** are made up of hundreds of lenses fitting together like the cells of a honeycomb. Compound eyes can see colors, sharp images, and moving objects.

5. The **two antennae** on an insect's head are used to smell. Some types of insects can also use their antennae to sense humidity, motion, and sound.



Dragonfly after molting



Compound eye



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Geology Exhibits

If you look up when you enter the museum's main entrance hall, you will find the Geologic time scale surrounding the geology exhibits. If this time scale were in the form of a 24-hour clock, modern humans would only exist in the last millisecond of the last second!

Did you know?

The trilobite *Calymene celebra* is Wisconsin's state invertebrate fossil. These extinct animals had an exoskeleton and a flexible body that could roll up into a ball!



Rocks are made of minerals. The types and amounts of minerals present, along with the amount of time they take to crystallize and cool, determine the kind of rock. The display cases in this room contain many minerals, allowing you to see the great range of possibilities for rocks to form.

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There are three main types of rocks:

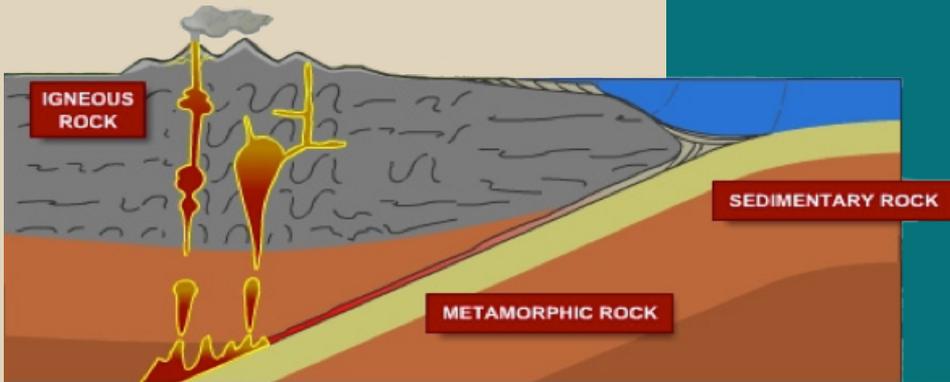
Igneous rocks begin as liquid magma underneath the Earth's surface. When a volcano erupts, the magma reaches the surface and becomes solid rock with crystals as it cools. Examples of igneous rocks are granite, basalt, and obsidian.

Sedimentary rocks form on the surface of the earth on land or under water. Some are cemented together by chemicals and minerals, while others are only loosely held together. Examples of sedimentary rocks are sandstone, breccia, and gypsum.

Metamorphic rocks are sedimentary and igneous rocks that have undergone changes from intense heat and/or pressure. They form deep under the Earth's surface where they become more dense and compact. Examples of metamorphic rocks are marble and slate.



Lava is magma that has reached the Earth's surface.



Crystals form differently depending on how deep they are, if they are exposed to the atmosphere, and how quickly they cool. If minerals in magma are trapped underground, they cool slowly and the crystals can become larger. If the lava comes to the surface, the minerals cool quickly and crystals have little time to grow.



Fossils are evidence of ancient plants and animals. Fossils can be of bones, shells, or an impression of soft life like plants or invertebrates. A trace fossil is something made by an animal when it was alive, such as footprints, burrows, or dung. Fossils can be formed in a variety of ways, but most dinosaur bones are created by permineralization. This happens when a plant or animal decomposes but its structure remains intact. Minerals then fill the empty spaces like a mold and crystallize, forming rock.



Paleontology Exhibits

Earth's timeline continues within the dinosaur room. The animals exhibited here existed thousands to millions of years ago and most are now extinct. Although these animals are no longer alive, they can still leave clues behind about their location, diet, movement, behavior, and much more. As you look around the room, use the fossils to try to imagine what these animals looked like!

The pieces in the Allosaurus (Al-oh-SAWR-us) cast pictured above come from about 20 individuals. Complete articulated (hooked together) skeletons are extremely rare. This cast was one of the earliest skeletons of its species to be assembled using this method. Allosaurus was at the top of its food chain during its reign in the Jurassic period. These horned carnivores had sharp claws, a flexible lower jaw, and large, carved teeth which were ideal for eating large portions of meat.

MUSEUM MISSION

Can you find the button near the t-rex skull? Push it and see what happens.



Archaeopteryx (Ar-kee-OP-ter-ix) was a dinosaur which was similar to modern birds in that it had feathers, a wishbone and reduced finger bones. However, its teeth, flat breastbone, bony tail, and the claws on its wings differentiate it from today's birds. This fossil, from the Jurassic period, was made in fine-grained limestone which resulted in the impression of feathers. It is unlikely Archaeopteryx could fly, but it may have been capable of gliding.

Tyrannosaurus Rex fossils are rare; very few have ever been found that are close to complete. At roughly 40 feet long and 20 feet tall, these creatures roamed the Earth during late Cretaceous period, and were some of the largest land carnivores to exist. To compensate for its immense size, many of t-rex's bones were hollow, and its skull had large cavities for air. Look below the skull in the exhibit to see how large its brain was! T-rex would use its sharp curved teeth and strong neck muscles to bite its prey and tear away large chunks of meat.

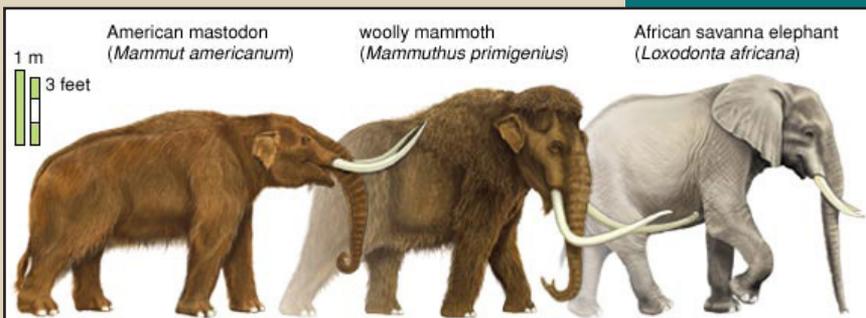
Mammoths and Mastodons were giant elephant-like animals that could be found in Wisconsin about 12,000 to 7,000 years ago. On the casts of its teeth, you can see that the Mastodon had rounded teeth, good for chewing leaves and branches. The Mammoth's teeth were flatter and ridged, good for grinding grasses. Using the picture below, what other differences do you see? The Boaz Mastodon, discovered in 1897, is the Wisconsin state vertebrate (animals with backbones) fossil! Interestingly, Archaeologists did not think humans occupied Wisconsin at the same time as large Ice Age fauna until they unearthed a Boaz Mastodon embedded with a stone spear point.



Archaeopteryx fossil



Mastodon (left) and Mammoth (right) teeth



A diorama of a lion with a thick, golden-brown mane, looking directly at the viewer. The background shows a dry, rocky landscape with sparse, yellowish-brown grasses and a light-colored rock formation.

African Dry Season

Did you know?

The African wildcat, an ancestor to modern cats, was domesticated by the ancient Egyptians.



This diorama depicts Africa during the dry season. In Wisconsin our main seasons are summer and winter, but in areas around the equator, they are the dry and wet seasons. During the dry season there is less humidity and rain. With many rivers drying up, animals from all over gather at the few remaining water holes. Among these animals are predators that benefit from having their meals come to them.

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Unique to the big cats, African lions form close-knit social groups, living and hunting in prides. The females within lion prides, usually the hunters, work together to bring down large game animals. When hunting alone lions will also eat rodents, birds, and fish. Hunting can be very demanding on an animal, so lions will sleep up to 20 hours per day to conserve their energy. A lion's roar is NOT used to scare prey, but to communicate with other lions, and they are incapable of purring. Like many predators, a lion's forward-facing eyes give them binocular vision, necessary to determine how far away their prey is.

Burchell's Zebras are members of the horse family. They are herbivores, eating mainly grasses and occasionally leaves or shrubs. The stripes on the zebra offer protection from predators; when they are grouped together in large herds, it's hard to figure out where one zebra ends and another begins, creating a confusing sight for a predator. A zebra's eyes are located on the sides of its head, allowing it to see almost completely around itself without turning its head.

Lions and spotted hyenas are bitter rivals, stealing food from each other. Contrary to popular belief, lions scavenge more often than hyenas. Hyenas quickly eat large amounts of food and leave nothing, even eating the skin and bones of their prey. The famous "hyena laugh" is actually a male's signal of submissiveness to the alpha females, the leaders in hyena society.

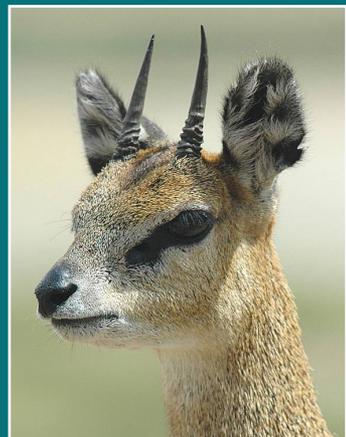
Klipspringers are perfectly adapted for living on rocky areas and cliffs, possessing the ability to bound up rock hills that are nearly vertical! Their backs are curved upward, allowing them to bend in a way that keeps all four feet together on the smallest patches of rock. A klipspringer's hooves are blunt and rubbery like climbing boots.



Zebras



Spotted Hyena



Klipspringer

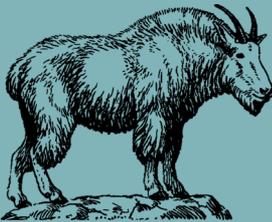


Snow Glade

(Western high plains/mountains)

Did you know?

Mountain goats are not true goats but are more closely related to antelopes.



This diorama depicts the mountainous regions of the American west. Most of the area lies in the dry 'rain shadow' of the Rockies; moisture and rain keep to the coastal west side. With each increase in elevation of roughly 100 feet, the environment change is comparable to traveling 100 miles north. As the elevation increases, the amount of oxygen decreases and the temperature drops, while the amount of ultraviolet light increases. Animals and plants in the mountains have adapted to these harsh conditions, but only the hardiest of life can survive at the very top. Mountain tops in these areas often provide refugiums (areas where plants and animals that lived there in the past persist, but under different environmental conditions).

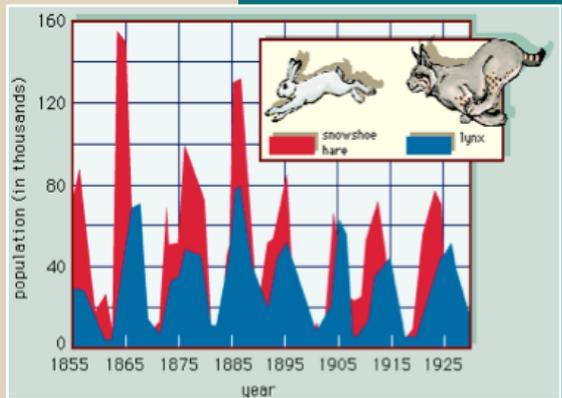
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Although a few isolated populations can be found in the Eastern United States (i.e. subspecies Florida panther), mountain lions (also called cougars) are quite common in the Western U.S. Male cougars are highly territorial and will cast out other males, many of whom travel east looking for a mate or territory. Because they are ambush predators, cougars (like the one pictured to the left) rarely chase after their prey. Instead, they stalk their prey and then use a short burst of energy to capture it. Amazingly, a few of these cats have been recorded recently in Wisconsin and other midwestern states.



Lynx

Many people think that lynx are bigger than bobcats because their thick fur and long legs make them appear so. Lynx and bobcats usually weigh about the same (15-25 pounds). Lynx live in boreal forests, much farther north than the bobcat's typical range, and they have large furry paws that act as snowshoes in the winter. Their main prey are snowshoe hares. For this reason, the lynx population every year is linked to that of the snowshoe hare, creating a cycle of high and low populations. Bobcats, on the other hand, live throughout the United States and Mexico. They have shorter legs and fur than the lynx, smaller paws and eat a much wider variety of animals.



Lynx and snowshoe hare cycle

Mountain goats can climb trees and cliffs that are nearly vertical. They are strong and agile, having the ability to pull themselves up a hill with just one hoof holding a ledge. A mountain goat has hooves with a soft inner part that attaches to rocks like a traction pad and dew claws that help to grip the rocks upon its descent. Its two front toes can also spread apart or draw together for a good hold. Both females and males of this species have horns.



Mountain Goat



Grasslands



The grasslands of the American Plains are habitats that are too dry for trees to grow but have enough water for grasses. Animals here have adapted to an environment with extreme temperatures, very little shelter, and a low plant variety. However, with rich and fertile soil, grasslands contain more plant mass under the ground than over it! Grasses here have extensive, deep root systems which allow the land to recover quickly after a fire or drought. They also provide food and homes for burrowing animals.

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Pronghorn antelopes (pictured left) are the only animals in the world that have forked horns that shed. Pronghorns can reach speeds of more than 53 miles an hour, and are thought to have adapted their speed from being chased by the now extinct American Cheetah.

Coyotes are adaptable and intelligent. When coyote numbers decrease substantially, the remaining coyotes begin to produce larger litters with higher survival rates. This makes coyote populations very hard to control. Wisconsin now boasts a substantial population of this highly adaptable Canid.

American badgers are efficient diggers, using their long claws and webbed toes to scoop dirt and hurl it backwards. Badgers eat small animals, eggs, insect larvae and occasional plant food. Having no serious natural enemies, badgers choose to be solitary creatures and are highly territorial.

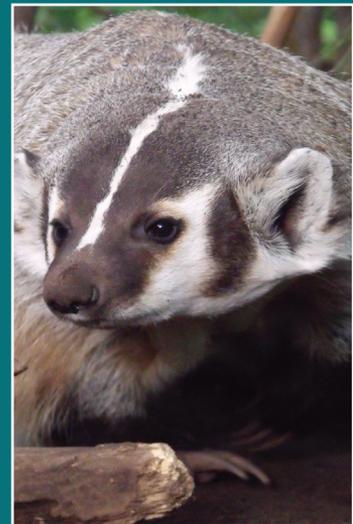
The prairie chicken, one of the larger members of the grouse family, is native to Wisconsin. Prairie Chickens prefer to inhabit undisturbed grasslands and were originally found in tall grass prairie habitats across the Midwest. Farming and marshland development have greatly decreased their numbers.



Greater Prairie Chicken



Coyote



Badger



Fish and Marine Life Exhibits

Did you know?

In the United States, sharks kill a human once every two years or so. Humans around the world kill more than 70 million sharks each year.



Fresh water fish differ from saltwater fish in that their gills, scales, and kidneys all work to keep salt within their bodies. Many fish species do not live their whole lives in fresh water but will travel there to spawn and lay eggs or vice versa. New fish species form most often in fresh water because fish populations can become isolated in ponds and lakes. Fish can have several types of scales or no scales at all! The image at the bottom of the next page shows types of fish scales.

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Most of a shark's brain is dedicated to its sense of smell; it is particularly good at sensing blood and chemicals released from frightened fish. Sharks can hear the heartbeats of fish from far away and are able to feel movement in the water through vibrations on their skin. Most sharks have several rows of teeth that are replaced constantly. Their skeletons are made of cartilage with the exception of their teeth and parts of their spine. As a result, their teeth are usually the only parts preserved as fossils and the only physical evidence scientists have of ancient sharks. The largest known extinct shark is the Megladon, estimated to have been about 40 feet in length!

A hammerhead shark uses the earth's magnetic field to create an electric current in its head. This allows it to navigate more easily (like a compass) and pick up electric signals in the water, telling it when and where fish are moving.

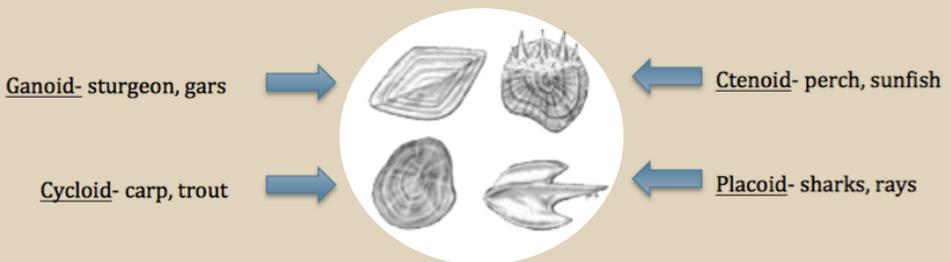
Bull Sharks tend to inhabit the same areas that humans like to frequent, such as shallow tropical bays and rivers. Hence, these sharks are considered the most dangerous to humans and account for more attacks than any other shark species. Bull sharks get their name from both their attitude and their tendency to head butt victims before attacking.



Hammerhead Shark



Bull Shark





African Wet Season

Did you know?

Cape buffalo only sleep about an hour each day for their own safety.



In contrast to the dry season, depicted in the front of the museum, this exhibit portrays the African savannah during the wet season. This season is marked by an increase in rainfall, resulting in an abundance of plants, water and food. Rivers flood and create critical new habitats for plant and animal species.

The tusks of the warthog (like the one pictured to the left) are elongated canine teeth. Males have two pairs of warts that work as pads to protect their faces when they tusk fight for status and mating rights. They have a very good sense of smell and will use their spade-like noses to dig for roots. While feeding on their diet of grasses, roots, fruit, and carrion, they often bend their front legs and walk around on their cushioned wrists.

Sitatunga are antelopes that live year-round in the marshes and swamps of west-central Africa. They have flexible feet with widely splayed hooves for walking on muddy ground. When threatened, sitatunga retreat to the water and submerge themselves with only their nose and eyes exposed on the surface.



A Nile crocodile's eyes are on the top of its head so it can sneak up on prey with just its eyes and nose above the surface of the water. They are ambush predators, meaning that they wait for an animal to come along and then surprise it instead of chasing after it. Despite their intimidating nature, crocodiles are also very good parents, guarding their nests, helping their young hatch, and responding to their offspring's cries.

Cape buffalo wallow and roll in muddy pools to keep cool and protect their skin from insects. They also tend to allow birds to land on their backs to pick off ticks and insects. This is an example of mutualism; the bird benefits by getting food while the buffalo benefits from the removal of annoying pests.

Dwarf mongoose live in large family groups led by a head female. Their territory usually includes a termite mound which they use in two ways: as lookout towers to search for danger and as a food source, eating the termites inside. They often feed with hornbills. This is because the mongoose disturbs insects which the hornbill eats, and the hornbill warns the mongoose when predators are near.



Sitatunga



Dwarf Mongoose



Northern Forests (Upper Great Lakes Biome)

The forest of the Great Lakes region support many species of plants animals that must adjust to the changing seasons to survive. Some animals adapt by migrating, hibernating, or changing their behavior in order to deal with the harsh conditions of a northern winter.

Did you know?

Squirrels will bury nuts underground to store for later. They use their sense of smell to find them again. If they can't find the nut, the seed will sprout and grow into a new tree!



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Raccoons have omnivorous diets, meaning they eat both animals and plant material. These nocturnal animals will sleep in tree cavities, burrows, and man-made structures during the day. Their young are born in the spring and remain with their mothers for about a year. Raccoons have highly dexterous forepaws that allow them to climb, dig, grip, and even work doorknobs! They can also rotate their back feet 180 degrees to help them climb trees. Contrary to popular belief, Raccoons do not wash their food. It is believed that this behavior is actually the raccoon separating inedible from the digestible parts of its food.



Raccoons

Red foxes eat small animals, carrion, fruit, and vegetables. Foxes generally roam their territory at night looking for food. Their cubs are born in the spring in an earthen den or crevice. By the fall, the young foxes are off on their own to establish their own territory. When it's cold outside, the red fox stays warm by covering its face with its paws, legs, and thick fluffy tail. When it wants catch a meal, it will leap high into the air and plunge vertically with its front feet aimed at its prey. A startled rodent jumps upward, making the catch quicker for a fox.



Red Fox

Moose, members of the deer family, eat plant material and live in the northern United States and Canada. They have two layers of fur and long legs, ideal for wading through snow and water. Because they cannot sweat, they will wade in water to cool off.

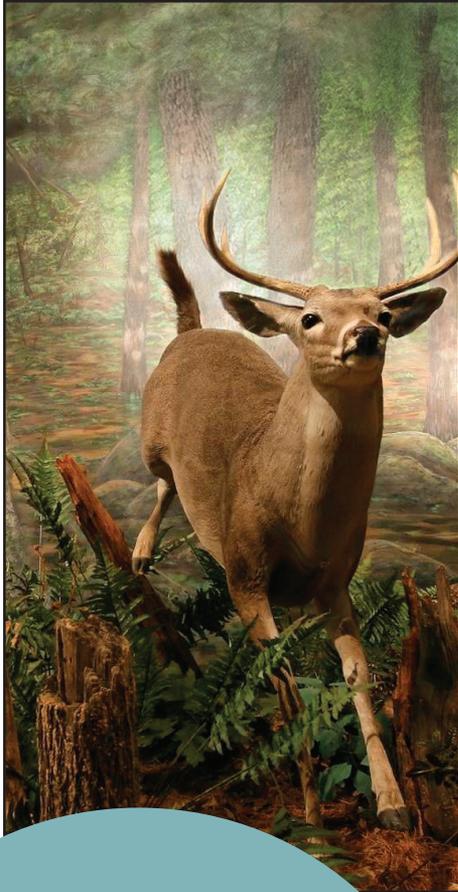
Western fox snakes use mimicry, a means of defence in which an animal imitates another animal in an attempt to avoid being attacked. The fox snake looks very similar to the Massasauga, a venomous snake that is dangerous to humans. When scared, fox snakes will sometimes flick their tails quickly in grass or leaves, making a sound like a rattlesnake!



Friend or Foe? Which one is the Fox Snake?

(Answer: The snake on the rocks is the Fox snake)

Northern Forests (Upper Great Lakes biome)



Amazing Animals

When a bat gives birth, its baby weighs a quarter of the mother's weight. That is like a 120 pound woman giving birth to a 30 pound baby!



The Blanding's turtle is a species of turtles that lives primarily around the Great Lakes with some isolated populations on the eastern coast of the United States and Nova Scotia. Its most distinguishing feature is the bright yellow underside of its neck. These turtles eat crayfish, worms, snails, fish and carrion. Blanding's turtles have a partially hinged plastron (bottom part of shell, pictured right); when they hide in their shell, a part of the plastron can pull up to protect their head and front legs. These turtles are an endangered species in areas of their native habitat for two reasons: the marshes where they live are threatened by development and pollution, and their eggs are common victims to predation.



Although the bats displayed in this diorama are insect eaters, there are other bats that consume nectar, fruit, blood, and even fish! Bats are nocturnal mammals that use echolocation for hunting food. They send out a series of extremely loud, high frequency clicks that humans cannot hear. The sound vibrations bounce off of an object and allow the bat to pinpoint its exact location. Bats in the upper Great Lakes biome can eat thousands of insects each night, making them great at pest control!

A porcupine quill is actually a modified hair. These quills cover most of the porcupine's back and are loosely attached to the skin for easy detachment. The quills also have tiny scales at the tips that work like a fishhook, catching onto whatever they pierce.

Hummingbirds are the smallest type of bird in the world. Their wings can beat up to 200 times a second, and they must drink their own body weight in nectar every day.

Beavers are very well adapted for swimming: they have webbed hind feet, transparent eyelids that work like goggles, waterproof fur, closable ear and nostril flaps, and they can utilize 75% of the oxygen in their lungs (compared with 15% in humans). A beaver's teeth never stop growing throughout its life. Beavers are important to the ecosystem because, by building dams, they create marsh/wetland habitat for many other animals to live in. A beaver's unusual tail helps it swim, store fat, sit up, and make noises to warn other beavers of potential danger.

American black bear are very adaptable animals, often venturing into close proximity with humans. These excellent tree climbers are primarily herbivores (plant eaters), but will occasionally eat carrion (*so don't play dead if you encounter one*).

American crows are extremely intelligent birds. They have been known to make and use tools, work together, problem-solve, and recognize themselves in mirrors! Because crows can live up to 50 years, they know their immediate neighborhoods very well and can recognize individual people.



American Crow



Hummingbird



American Black Bear



Beaver

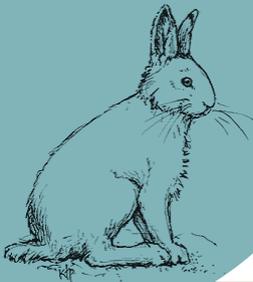


Arctic Tundra

The arctic tundra, which circles the North Pole, is a place of extremely cold temperatures, little rainfall, and no trees. Most of the species exhibited in this diorama either can be found currently in Wisconsin or lived in here during the last Ice Age. They are adapted for surviving harsh, freezing conditions. The bird species displayed here are migrants, flying south before the arrival of the long Arctic winter.

MUSEUM MISSION

Find three animals that have white fur or feathers to blend into the snow of the arctic tundra.



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Muskox live in herds and when threatened, they will form a protective circle or crescent around their young with their horns facing out. Their hooves have sharp edges that give them traction when moving over frozen ground. Muskox have two layers of fur: the outer layer being coarse and water-proof, while the under fur is soft and traps heat.

Without the grey wolf to prey on herbivores (plant eaters), plants would be overeaten, leading to decreased growth of new vegetation and soil erosion. Wolves live and hunt in packs lead by an alpha male and female.

Wolverines are members of the weasel and otter family. They have great endurance and strength for their size; they have been known to take down caribou and moose, animals 20 times a wolverine's weight! Their oversized paws act as snowshoes, and their claws help them to dig out hibernating prey or buried carrion.

Caribou, also known as reindeer, use their impressive antlers to defend against predators like wolves. Unlike any other deer species, both the male and female caribou have antlers! In the spring, Caribou form large herds consisting of hundreds of thousands of individuals, migrating south to find food.

Sandhill Cranes travel thousands of miles each year to spend their summers near the arctic circle and Canada, sometimes in Wisconsin! Before the winter arrives, they migrate south to the southern states, coastal California, and Mexico. They eat Insects, grains, seeds, and small animals. Pairing up for life, sandhill cranes sing, incubate eggs, and migrate with their mates. This crane is the longest known surviving species of bird; fossils have been found that are over 90 million years old and which are almost identical to modern-day cranes.



Muskox



Wolverine



Sandhill Crane



Northern Raptors

This collection depicts Great Lakes regional birds of prey (raptors), all of which have been recorded in Wisconsin. Birds of prey are distinct in their acute eyesight, carnivorous (meat eating) diet, and sharp beaks and talons. They hunt mainly by sight and can detect movement from long distances. Many of them are able to ride thermals (columns of warm, rising air) and stay aloft for hours while barely flapping their wings. In the mid 1900s, many birds of prey became victims of the pesticide DDT which seemed concentrated at the top of the food chain. Thankfully with important legislation and conservation, many of the raptors have made successful recoveries. Bald Eagles and Osprey have once again become common residents along Wisconsin waterways.

Did you know?

The edges of owl feathers are fringed, allowing them to fly without making any sound!



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Peregrine falcon wings are noticeably pointed, allowing them to fly fast and maneuver the skies with ease. This falcon usually hunts by circling high in the air and then diving downward to catch birds or bats midair with its talons. They are fastest animals in the world, reaching speeds of up to 200 miles per hour!

Turkey vultures eat carrion. This vulture and its relatives are the only birds of prey with a good sense of smell, letting them locate food from long distances. The turkey vulture has a bald head so that when it reaches its head into a carcass for food, bacteria and other unwanted material don't get caught in its feathers.

Owls have large eyeballs that allow them to see in very little light. Their eyes are fixed in place, but with extra vertebrae in their spines, they can turn their heads around 270 degrees. Even though the feathers on an owl's face channel sound into its un-level ears, an owl's ears are not useful in pinpointing the origin of a sound. Owls are carnivores (meat eaters) and after six to seven hours of digesting their food, owls will regurgitate the indigestible parts of the meal (fur, feathers, and bones) in pellets.

Great horned owls are the largest of the American owls and can have a wingspan of three to five feet. The horns on top of their heads are not actually horns or ears, but just tufts of feathers. They are very territorial and are usually active between dusk and dawn. Their prey mainly includes small mammals, insects, reptiles and amphibians, and even other owls! Great horned owls do not have a good sense of smell which makes them one of the few predators that will eat skunks!

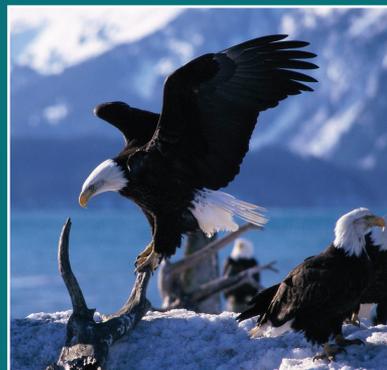
With a wingspan of nearly nine feet, the bald eagle is the second largest bird in North America after the California Condor. This eagle can spot a rabbit from two miles away and will use its sharp talons to snatch fish from the water and birds in flight. Bald eagles have no vocal chords; the sound usually accompanied with a bald eagle in modern media is actually that of a red-tailed hawk!



Turkey Vulture



Barred owl



Bald Eagle

Desert Biome



Peccary

Deserts are places of extreme weather. With less than 16 inches of rainfall a year, deserts are dry environments with strong winds, scorching heat during the day and freezing temperatures at night. Despite these conditions, animals have adapted to live within this harsh landscape. Some animals can go their entire lives without drinking water- instead they get it from plants or animals they eat. The Pocket gopher will eat the water-storing roots of plants underground. To survive the heat of the day, many smaller animals stay in underground burrows where it is much cooler and will come out during the night.

Growing up to seven feet in length, the Western Diamondback rattlesnake is one of the largest in North America. Being pit vipers, Western Diamondbacks have a heat sensing pit located behind each nostril that can detect a fraction of a degree in temperature change.

The Gila monster is one of only two venomous lizards in the world; the other is the beaded lizard. Both of these lizards live in North America. Their bright colors are a warning sign to other animals that it is dangerous (bees, Monarch butterflies and some snakes also use this method). Gila monsters lick the air to pick up scent particles and determine where food is. The skull of the Gila monster is just as bumpy as its skin.



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Did you know?

A rattlesnake's rattle is made of the protein keratin. This is the same material that makes up your nails and hair!



American Bison

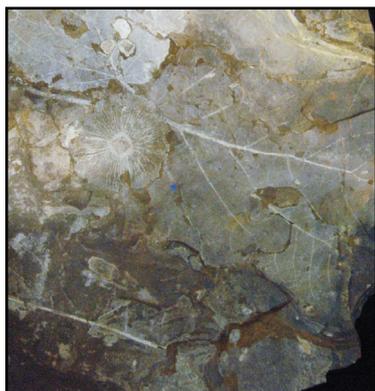
American Bison are incredibly tough creatures. They are able to tolerate drought, searing heat, winds, snow, and freezing temperatures. In the past, bison lived in huge herds that would trim the grasses of the Great Plains while fertilizing the area with their dung. Females and males live in separate herds and only join each other during mating season. With the expansion of new settlers in the 1800s, bison were on the brink of extinction; by 1890, there were only 635 known bison left. They have now recovered with over 350,000 bison flourishing today. Notice the dense, tough fur that protects this animals head from temperature extremes.



Bison

Almont site plant fossils

These unique fossils were collected by UW-Stevens Point students near Almont, South Dakota. They were created during the Eocene Era, 35 to 55 million years ago in an accumulation known as a 'Lagerstätten' (a location with rich, well preserved specimens). This site had one of the world's most diverse set of plant remains from this time period. UW-Stevens Point holds the largest collection of Eocene plant fossils from the Sentinel Butte Formation, the geologic strata found at the Almont Site. Look for an expanded exhibit of these rare fossils as we continue to identify species in the collection.



Ginkgo leaves

Passenger Pigeon

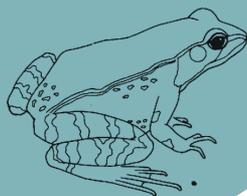
This superb male specimen is among one of the last passenger pigeons killed in Wisconsin. Native to North America, these birds used the area south of Wisconsin Rapids as nesting grounds and would migrate thousands of miles each year to Mexico for winter. During migration, passenger pigeons would form dense flocks that would take hours to pass and could block out the sun. Although reasons for their extinction are still unclear, an avian disease known as Newcastle's Disease and excessive hunting may be to blame. The last known passenger pigeon, affectionately named Martha, died in 1914 in the Cincinnati Zoo.



Marsh / Wetlands

Amazing Animals

A frog's skin is semi-permeable, which means it can breathe and soak in water through pores in its skin! This makes frogs very sensitive to pollution.



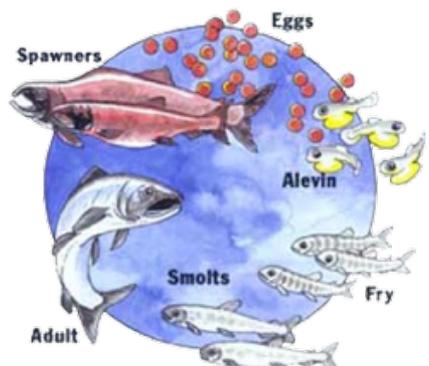
Marshes are habitats of low-lying land, water-soaked soil, and many unique species. They help the environment by controlling floods, purifying and cleaning water, refilling underground water stores, and creating places for animals to live, feed and breed. Unfortunately, with human development and pollution, many wetland habitats are in bad condition or disappearing altogether.

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Temperate Rain Forest

This unique, wet landscape is created by coastal rainfall and warm water currents flowing up from the equator, resulting in mild temperatures all year round. Trees growing in the temperate rain forest are almost entirely coniferous (needle-leaved) and some can reach heights of over 200 feet tall and live to be hundreds of years old. These trees make temperate rain forests in great demand for the lumber industry, whose clearing of large areas of trees threatens to destroy the habitat of the many animals and plants that live there.

Sockeye salmon undergo several transformations throughout their lives. During spawning season, their silvery bodies turn to a bright red color and their heads a dull green. Salmon are born in freshwater and will travel toward the saltwater seas of the Pacific after about a year. Three years later, the salmon return to the streams where they were hatched to spawn and eventually die. Throughout this process, some will travel hundreds of miles up raging rapids and across the paths of various predators such as the brown bear pictured above right.

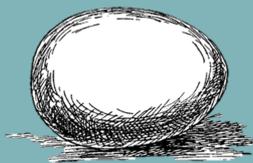


Schoenebeck Bird Egg Collection



MUSEUM MISSION

Try to find the world's largest egg and one of the world's smallest eggs!



This amazing collection of eggs could not be reassembled today because many of the eggs displayed here were collected in the late 1800s and a number of the bird species represented are now rare, protected, or extinct! In addition to eggs and nests, Mr. Schoenebeck also mounted adult birds that are very valuable for current and future DNA and Oxygen-Isotope analysis.

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This collection was once one of the Midwest's largest, but as Mr. Schoenbeck stopped collecting in the early 1900s, other regional collections have surpassed this one in numbers. Still, the 4,000 plus eggs, 400 bird mounts, and numerous nests remain invaluable for scientific research. Take note of the handwritten field notes on the specimens that detail where and when the eggs were originally collected.

Did you know?

An ostrich egg is equivalent to about 24 chicken eggs.



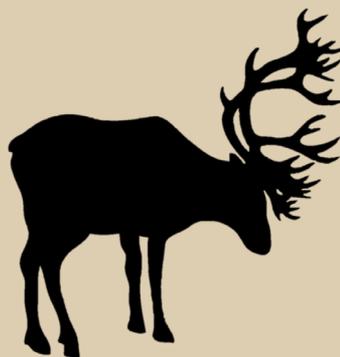
Thank you for visiting!

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Hours

We are open during university library hours.

Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. to midnight

Friday: 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Sunday: 11 a.m. - midnight

(summer hours and store hours may vary)



**University of Wisconsin
Stevens Point**