

Grossology



Working with animals is a dirty job! Dealing with urine (pee), waste (poop), blood, and even vomit is part of the job. These things may seem “gross” to us, but they help animals survive and succeed in life. They even help us learn a lot about animals. When we know more about animals, we have a better chance of helping them and protecting their habitat. Complete the activities below and become a “Grossologist” while you explore the Zoo today!

EVERYWHERE

Scat. Feces. Dung. Droppings. Waste. All of these words mean the same thing – poop! Here at the Zoo, we usually call it “scat.” Studying animal scat can tell us about their diet and even their emotional state. As you explore the Zoo today, look for some interesting scat and draw it below.

LION HABITAT

Some people can't stand the sight of blood, but it can tell us a lot about an animal's health. Here at the Zoo, we train some animals to let the Zoo vets draw small amounts of blood for medical testing. We can do this by teaching the animals that they'll get a tasty treat when they cooperate for a blood draw. What do you think a lion would like as a treat?

SCALY SLIMY SPECTACULAR



This icon means that a species is poisonous. If an animal causes harm when it's eaten or touched, it's considered poisonous. Even though poisonous animals are often beautiful, their bright colors are meant to warn predators of the risk of trying to eat them because the effects of the poison are quite nasty! Look around for a poisonous species and draw it below.

NAKED MOLE RATS

Naked mole rats build tunnel systems to connect the chambers of their colony. Each chamber has a special purpose. Some are nurseries, some are bedrooms, some are food pantries, and some are bathrooms. Draw a map of the naked mole rat colony. Can you identify which chamber is the bathroom?

KING VULTURE HABITAT

Some birds, including king vultures, will urinate (pee) on their legs to keep cool. This is called urohidrosis (yur-oh-hi-DRO-sis). It works because heat is pulled away from the body when the urine evaporates. What's the weather like today? Do you think the king vulture will need to cool off?