



John Ball Zoo Field Trip Activity: Exhibit Use Study

Whether an exhibit design is looking to redesign an animal exhibit at the zoo or a zookeeper is trying to determine where to place an enrichment for an animal, it is helpful to understand how the exhibit is currently used. Observing how an animal uses the space may give hints of what features to include in a new design such as vines, rocks, or a pool. Understanding where the animal like to spend their time might provide ideas of where to hang an enrichment or whether or not an area of the space is avoided by an animal. Are they often found in the shade? In the sun? At the highest point in the exhibit? In addition to research, zoo staff can use this information to make sure exhibit designers include features that are enjoyed by the animal, to ensure that visitors can see them, or make decisions on how to better care for the animal.

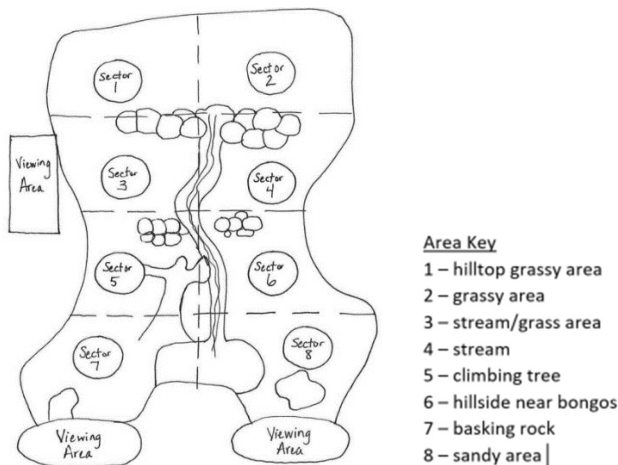
Directions:

- 1.) Choose an exhibit to study how the animals use the space as well as where the animals spend their time.

Exhibit Name: _____

- 2.) Create a large, simple outline map of the exhibit space. Divide the space into 6 to 8 distinct sections based on the features of the exhibit. Create an area key naming each section according to the major exhibit feature in that space. **Take time to draw in the major features.**

Sample: lion exhibit



- 3.) Now it is time to observe how the space is used. Choose one animal to observe at a time. Describe the animal on the Record Sheet. When you are ready to start observing, mark the animal's location on your map. Every 15 seconds, mark a dot to represent the animal's location.
- 4.) Observe the animal for 3 minutes, marking every 15 second. Connect the dots with a unique animal pathway pattern to represent that animal. Include a sample of the pathway patten on the record sheet.

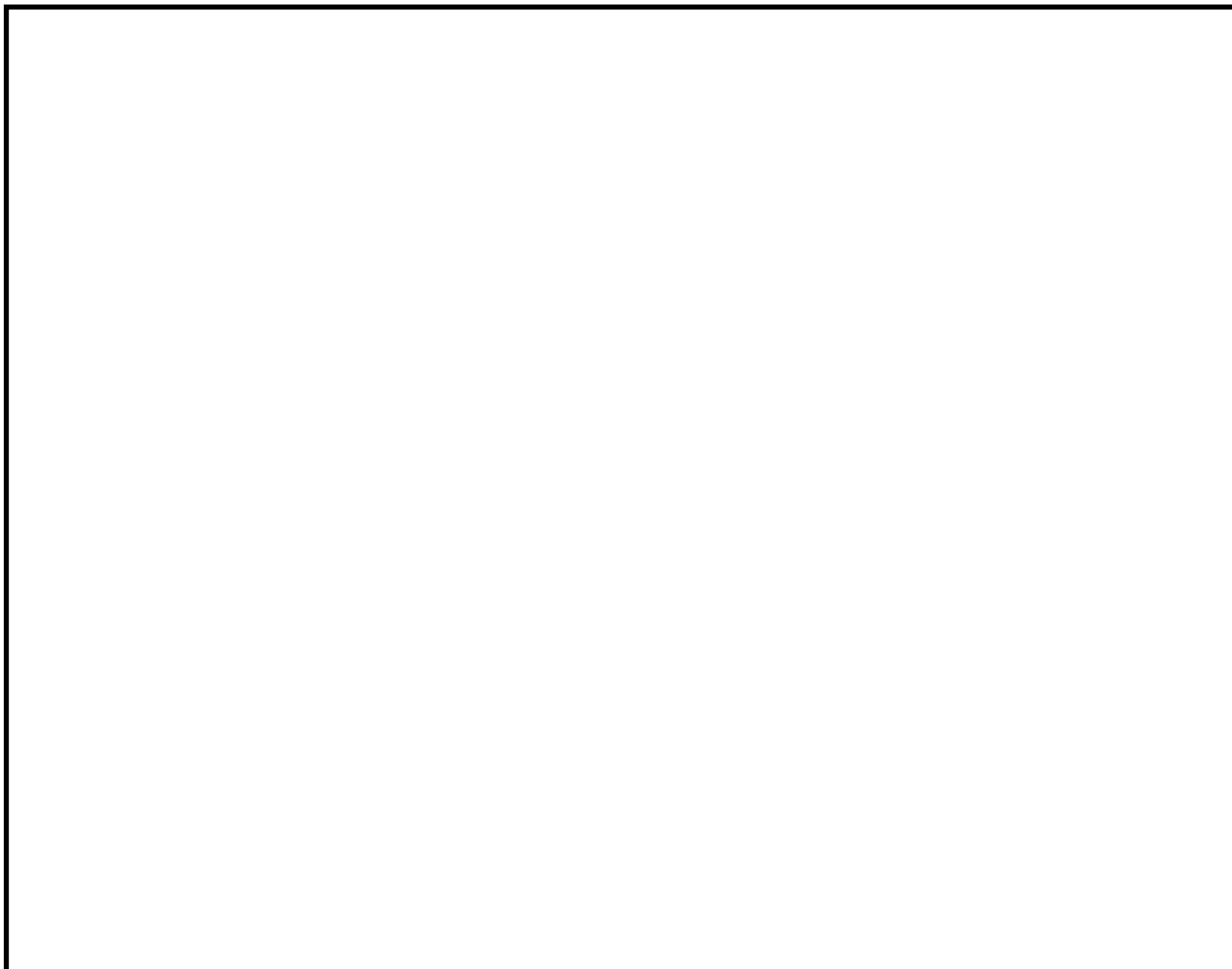
Pathway Pattern Example: ●-----●

- 5.) During the 3 minute observation, add any important 'exhibit use' observations to document HOW the animal was using the exhibit features.
- 6.) Look at the animal pathway and the number of dots in each section. What sections did the animal spend the most? Which areas did it spend the least? Record the section numbers in the Animal Pathway Summary section.
- 7.) Repeat steps 3-6 with two more individuals in the exhibit. Repeat as many times as you would like.



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Exhibit Map



Area Key





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Exhibit Use Record Sheet

Animal #1 Description: _____

Exhibit Use Observations		Animal Pathway Pattern	
Exhibit Feature Used by Animal	How/Why was the animal using the major exhibit feature?		
		Animal Pathway Summary	
		Areas Used the Most	Areas Used the Least

Animal #2 Description: _____

Exhibit Use Observations		Animal Pathway Pattern	
Exhibit Feature Used by Animal	How/Why was the animal using the major exhibit feature?		
		Animal Pathway Summary	
		Areas Used the Most	Areas Used the Least

Animal #3 Description: _____

Exhibit Use Observations		Animal Pathway Pattern	
Exhibit Feature Used by Animal	How/Why was the animal using the major exhibit feature?		
		Animal Pathway Summary	
		Areas Used the Most	Areas Used the Least