

Primate, Cat, & Aquatics Scavenger Hunt: Grades 9-12

1. In Madagascar the fossa is the largest terrestrial (living) predator. Fossa's live in all the forested regions of Madagascar. Observe the fossa. How is the fossa adapted to live in this habitat?
2. The slow loris is a highly trafficked animal. They are taken from the wild to be sold as pets. However, the slow loris is not suited to life in a small cage and many die at a young age. Harsh lighting can damage their eyes, their sensitive feet are wounded by metal cages and excessive handling, and the stress of being caged can kill them. How can individuals like you address the illegal pet trade?
3. There are many types of primates that come in all shapes and sizes. Apes are large, do not have tails, and have large brains. Monkeys are generally smaller, usually have tails, and have smaller brains. Prosimians have more primitive characteristics: they are small, usually have larger eyes, and are sometimes nocturnal. Can you sort the following species into the right classifications: ape, monkey, or prosimian? Gorilla, black howler, ring-tailed lemur, aye-aye, white-faced saki, slow loris, and red titi.
4. Gorillas and other apes exhibit high levels of intelligence. Scientist and biologists study apes in the wild and in captivity to learn more about their cognitive skills. How do you think we can study ape intelligence? What ape behavior or actions indicate intelligence?
5. Invasive species are species that have been introduced to an environment in which they are not native to and which have a negative effect on the environment. Zebra mussels, lionfish, and pacu are three invasive species. What negative effects can invasive species have on an environment?
6. Head over to the aquatics area and find our tropical fish tanks containing the clownfish. These fish are also known as anemonefish because in the wild they live inside anemones, or stinging sea animals similar to jellyfish. Clownfish and anemones have a *symbiotic* relationship; the fish and the anemone help each other. What benefits might the clownfish get from living in an anemone? What benefits might the anemone get?
7. Now find the octopus. The Giant Pacific octopus is semelparous, which means it dies after reproducing once. After mating, males stop eating and die of starvation. After laying her eggs (up to 400,000 of them!), the female also stops eating, guards the eggs until they hatch, and then also dies of starvation or predation. What could be the benefit of reproducing only once?
8. Fish live in all layers of water from the surface to the ocean, lake, or river floor. Depending on which layer of the water they inhabit, their bodies take different shape. Those that live on the bottom, also known as bottom-feeders, tend to have flattened undersides and a downturned mouth which makes it easy to feed from the floor. Can you find any bottom-feeders?
9. Classifying animals can be a hard task. Red pandas and giant pandas have been reclassified many times. Although they share similarities in diet, habitat, and some body features, it has been concluded that they are only distantly related. Giant pandas are bears, while red pandas are an animal all their own; the only "true panda". Observe the red pandas. What other animals do they remind you of?
10. Cheetahs and lions are two species of big cats that live in Africa. Lions are social and live in large groups, but cheetahs are solitary. What are the benefits of living solitary lives? How does this help cheetah survive?