

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM

EXHIBIT EXPLORER

Second Floor

Wisconsin Woodlands and North America

An ecosystem is a community of plants and animals living together in an environment. As we move across Wisconsin and the North American continent, the environment changes. Differences in the kind of rocks, soil, amount of water, temperature and rainfall occur. These differences result in changes in the plant and animal life. As you explore the Museum's second floor you'll encounter a variety of ecosystems and experience the diverse animal and plant life that can be found in the smaller habitats within each.

1. Crow Bison Hunt: The Crow Indians hunted bison in order to obtain many of the resources they needed to clothe and shelter their families. They could travel an area hundreds of square miles in size in search of the bison. There is another hunter present in this diorama. He is much smaller, and so is the habitat he lives in. He can be found in the grasses on the far right side of the diorama. What kind of animal is this hunter? _____

2. Milwaukee Migration: Continue to the rear of the Crow Bison Hunt and pass through the prairie and Horicon Marsh until you reach the *Birds of the Milwaukee Region and Wisconsin* exhibit. Birds migrate throughout the year in order to find food and good living conditions. Find the owls within the exhibit cases. List an owl that migrates through Milwaukee and another that lives here year round: _____

Hint: The lights next to the birds provide the clue.

3. Crowded Coast: Farther down, past the *Broadleaf Forest*, you will come to an exhibit of a rocky coastline full of birds. There are five species of birds nesting among the high cliffs and narrow ledges of this coastal ecosystem. What is the name of the bird with the short red and white beak? _____

4. Manatee at Blue Springs Florida: Down the hall on your right you will see the *Manatee at Blue Springs Florida*, an aquatic ecosystem. This exhibit shows the amazing adaptation of plants and animals. Living things evolved to survive in almost every ecosystem on Earth. Here we see plants and animals that grow and live entirely in and under water. How many different animals are living in this watery environment? _____

5. Grand Canyon: Only a certain number of individual animals can survive in a specific area. Natural predation, or hunting by humans, can help keep populations from outgrowing their food source. This is yet another way in which an ecosystem naturally balances itself. In this scene, a Rocky Mountain cougar is about to pounce on a pair of unsuspecting mule deer. What are three other names for the cougar? _____

What will you find around the next corner?

The ecosystems represented throughout the Wisconsin Woodland and North America galleries provide a glimpse into the diversity of life on Earth. The Museum's first and third floor exhibits provide more opportunities to discover how life exists under diverse conditions, from tropical rainforests to the chill of the Arctic. Explore on your own, or venture out with another Exhibit Explorer Guide.