Discovering Animals in Fermilab's Natural Areas

Bison
Bison bison
One of North America's largest grazers, bison widely roamed the prairies across the Midwest. Their feeding and herding activity created micro-habitats for native plant succession and opportunities for smaller animals to live in their wake. Bison viewing at Fermilab is available year-round.

Eastern Meadowlark
Sturnella magna
One of the classic prairie birds, this summer resident can be heard singing its sweet song in open grasslands. Meadowlarks are robin-sized birds with a bright yellow breast, thick black necklace and an array of black脸上。Migrating adults arrive in Illinois in March and stay until October or November. Flying by day short distances at low altitudes. You can hear its bubbly, cheerful song during the nesting season.

Bobolink
Dolichonyx oryzivorus
With a yellow tail, black nose and a golden-colored back, this summer resident provides a taste of the season often referred to as 'song dog' or 'red dog.' Bobolinks are small, brightly colored back and white wild indigo, compass plant, foxglove beard tongue and wild bergamot. These are robin-sized birds with a bright yellow song in open grasslands. Meadowlarks are robin-sized birds with a bright yellow breast, thick black necklace and an array of black patches. Migrating adults arrive in Illinois in March and stay until October or November. Flying by day short distances at low altitudes.

Great Horned Owl
Bubo virginianus
The great horned owl is one of the most common owls of the Americas, easily recognizable because of the feather tufts on its head. These “plumicorns” resemble horns or, to some, ear tufts. These primarily nocturnal birds are crested and hunt small mammals, birds and reptiles. Owl viewing is possible year round and dock.

Red-tailed Hawk
Buteo jamaicensis
The red-tailed hawk is one of the most widely distributed hawks in North America and is the most common raptor in the Midwest region. Breeding pairs live at Fermilab and sometimes migrate south during cold winters. Their food supply is focused on small rodents, reptiles and birds. Owl viewing is possible year-round.

Coypu
Myocastor coypus
Coypus, also known as ‘squirrel dog’ or ‘paca weasel,’ are known as the largest and most common predator in urbanized regions near Fermilab and have a noticeable impact on a variety of wildlife populations. Coypus can run up to 40 miles an hour. In the fall and winter, they form loose packs for more effective hunting. They are often seen along the bike path, with a year-round viewing season.

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Fermilab Visitors Guide & Map

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Fermilab Natural Areas
The mission of Fermilab Natural Areas (FNA) is to restore, manage and conserve Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory's natural areas in support of its science mission, and to encourage visitors to experience and enjoy Fermilab's natural beauty. FNA is a nonprofit organization that welcomes and promotes public access to the Fermilab site, which includes one of the largest restored prairies in the Midwest. It is a volunteer-based organization supported by member donations and grants. More information and opportunities to support FNA members can be found at www.fermilabnaturalareas.org.

Guided tours Our guided tours of Fermilab's natural areas, including the Main Injector wetland and Oak Sloughs, or focused on wildlife such as butterflies, are offered seasonally. To arrange a tour, call (630) 840-4845 or visit www.fermilabnaturalareas.org.

Visitors to Fermilab are welcome to use the general floor and return of Wilson Hall or the Lederman Science Center. The Wilson Hall return offers an exhibit, video and a café. The Lederman Science Center exhibits unique exhibits and public programs, from children’s to adults. Visitors can also attend lectures and arts performances held in Ramsey Auditorium. The schedule is at www.fnal.gov/culture.

Opening hours for the Fermilab site and Wilson Hall
Mid-April through mid-October: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. every day. Rest of year: 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. every day.
Opening hours for the Lederman Science Center
Monday through Thursday: 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Guided tours for the public: 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month at 1 p.m. Groups of 6 or more must book a visit: (630) 840-8258

Emergency First Aid/Security
(630) 840-1313

Directions
Fermilab's main entrance is located at the intersection of Kirk Road and Pine Street in Batavia, Illinois, about 45 miles west of Chicago. From I-88, take the Farnsworth exit and travel north. Farnsworth becomes Kirk Road, follow Kirk Road to Pine Street.
Discover Natural Areas at Fermilab

Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory is the United States’ premier particle physics laboratory. More than 3,500 scientists from around the world collaborate with Fermilab to explore the nature of matter, energy, space and time. Together with Fermilab’s 3,500 staff members, they use the laboratory’s technology and expertise to develop new particle accelerators and build the world’s most advanced particle detectors.

Site 1
Margaret Pearson Interpretive Trail

The Margaret Pearson Interpretive Trail is located near the Lederman Science Education Center. This one-quarter-mile paved trail and native woodland ecosystem trail meanders 3/4 miles. Visitors can learn about prairies from information panels placed along the trail and can observe prairie plant species including prairie dock, white wild indigo, compass plant, fogflower beardtongue and wild bergamot.

Site 2
Wilson Hall Reflective Pond

Wilson Hall Reflective Pond is a wonderful place to observe many species of insects and birds.

Site 3
Bison Viewing at Fermilab

The fenced areas of restored prairies at Fermilab honor the prairie heritage of Illinois. The lab’s first director, Robert R. Wilson, brought the bison herd to the lab in 1969.

Bison are a symbol of the frontier, in this case the frontier of high-energy physics, and a link to the origin of the site as a part of the great Midwest prairie heritage.

You can observe the bison as they mow their 80-acre double-fence pasture from either Road D or Old Bataria Road. The site of the bison varies seasonally and usually numbers about 80 bison.

There is a small parking area available at the farmlands for those who drive to the bison pasture. This is a good site for observing and photographing bison, however, it is important to note that bison are wild animals. For your safety, please stay well beyond the fence.