

A Podcast Guided Tour of Shanghai Zoo

Leave the traditional guided walks behind and strike out at your own pace with an audio guide. You are about to embark on an exciting journey of Shanghai Zoo. This bilingual podcast is presented by Shanghai Daily and supervised by the Shanghai Science and Technology Committee.

Welcome to the Shanghai Zoo! Here, you will experience the mystery and excitement of the animal kingdom and receive an education in ecology. Have fun and enjoy your stay!

Let's begin our tour at the Amphibian and Reptile House.

We are now plunging into the aquatic reptile world. Here you can find ornamental fish, Loghead Turtles, as heavy as 450 kilograms, and Hawksbill Turtles.

On the second floor, we can see an Indian Python, the biggest snake in China. It's leaning against a tree. It inhabits mountains and forests, preferring warm areas. Its stomach is big enough to hold 2-3 chickens at one time.

In the viper section, there is a King Cobra. With a length of over three meters, it is the largest venomous snake in the world. Not far away are beige hundred-pace vipers (*Deinagkistrodon acutus*) and bamboo vipers.

Walking through a mini waterfall, we can see a Chinese Alligator. Indigenous to China, it is an endangered species protected under Chinese law. It inhabits the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, mainly feeding on fish and frogs.

Walking forward, we enter the building dedicated to scientific understanding of animals.

Displayed in the centre of the hall are a specimen and a fossil of the Yangtze River dolphin, a national first-class protected animal. The Yangtze River dolphin appeared as early as 23 million years ago. Due to dwindling living areas and lack of food, it was listed among the world's twelve most endangered species in 1986.

The scientific corridor on the right side conveys some useful knowledge about animals. You may not know the connection between cheetahs and studs and spikes in footwear. Actually, the cheetah is the fastest terrestrial animal. The special structure of its claw stops it from sliding by increasing its traction. On the basis of this discovery, people invented spikes and studs for sports shoes.

Walking up the staircase, we notice an illustration on the left hand side that explains how animals have adapted to different temperatures. For example, penguins' heavy fat is closely linked with their living environment, while the long neck of the giraffe is the

result of its adapting to meet its basic need for food. Here we also learn that the loss of biodiversity is largely due to endless fishing, hunting, and environmental pollution.

The pictures on the third floor show animal migration. Among birds, more than 3,000 species migrate.

At the end of the building is a hall showcasing various insect specimen. The world's biggest and rarest insect (*Titanus giganteus*) and the world's longest insect (*Pharnacia serratipes*) are on display here. On your right are specimens of scarab beetles. Because most of the scarab species feed on dung they are commonly referred to as dung beetles. Although the name is not that pleasant, dung beetles are really worth watching. Next to them are swallowtail butterflies with green decorative patterns on their wings, just like unfolding fans.

Have a rest, and then we will go to the bird area.

After watching noble white Peafowl and Flamingos, you can see Mute Swans swimming in the Swan Lake freely. They utter hoarse and low sounds. Not far away, there are graceful Black Swans.

Walking past the area where the Red-crowned Cranes live, we stand before the huge iron cage of European Black Vultures. The European Black Vulture lives in plateau and mountainous area with an altitude of 2,000-4,500 meters; therefore, it is a strong flyer. Viewed as a sacred bird in the Tibetan region, it is a scavenger which feeds on dead animals and rotten meat on the ground. As its eating habits accelerate material recycling in the ecosystem, and thus maintaining the ecological balance, this magnificent bird plays a critical role in cleaning up the environment.

Living in the Penguin House are Jackass Penguins which are native to Southern Africa. They stroll about freely despite the presence of visitors. They don't feel ridiculous at their stumbling gait. For them, this is the most effortless way of walking. But in case of emergency or when the ground is covered by ice or snow, penguins can slide along reaching speeds of 30 kilometres per hour. The penguin's black and white fur looks like a swallow-tailed coat. When they are swimming in the sea, their white belly and black back is hard to notice and thus helps them avoid enemies.

We can also see the Red-billed Leiothrix, the Common Crowned Pigeon (named for its huge blue crest) and the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo with pure white feather.

We continue our visit with a look at predators.

Here we can see jaguars. This big cat excels at swimming and climbing trees, often waiting in trees to ambush its prey.

Continuing our visit, we come to the Panda's House. A common misunderstanding is that the Lesser Panda is a relative of the Giant Panda. Although there is controversy concerning the classification of the Lesser Panda, many scientists tend to classify it as a member of the Procyonidae family (the raccoon family) instead of the bear family.

Walking through the Lesser Panda's house, we reach the Giant Panda house. You may say the reason why Giant Panda's fur is not white is because it doesn't take bath regularly. That would be wrong. The colour varies according to the different regions they live in and with their age. The illustration at the side tells us about the life of the Giant Panda. The Giant Panda grasps bamboo using a special protruding pad beside the thumb which plays the role of a sixth finger. It helps the Giant Panda when handling bamboo. The Giant Panda is the symbol of world wildlife protection. However, it is endangered. Food shortage, climate change, deforestation and human activity have all contributed to the current situation.

The South Chinese Tigers on the tiger hill are indigenous to China. Almost extinct in the wild, the number of South Chinese Tigers is far less than the Giant Panda. It tops the list of the most endangered species.

Not far away is the Sun Bear section. About 1.2 meters in height, the Sun Bear is the smallest member of the bear family. It lives in the tropical and sub-tropical forests, and is among the national first-class protection animals.

Have a rest, and we'll go to the Herbivore zone.

Herbivores mainly feed on grass or leaves. Special micro-organisms in their digestive system help them get nutrients from crude fibers. Here, you can see Ussurian Sika Deers, hippopotamus and rhinoceroses. The Ussurian Sika Deer lives in hilly areas and grasslands. Male deer fight fiercely in the autumn breeding season and the winner attracts the female deer.

At last we enter the Elephant House. Here lives the mascot of the Shanghai Zoo - the Asian Elephant. It is tamer than its African relative. The female Asian elephant's tusk is smaller than the male's.

Our last stop is the Primate zone.

On the right hand side of the cage is the Snub-nosed Monkey. It has a rigorous sense of discipline in the wild, which is rare among primates.

The Francois' Leaf Monkey on the left is totally black except for a very small part of white fur on its cheek, therefore, it is also known as the "black ape".

Beyond them, there are *Macaca assamensis* (famous for their fiery temper) and the Rhesus Monkey, the most widely spread monkey in the world. Rhesus Monkeys

communicate through sound and gestures.

The Gorilla is the largest of the primates, living in tropical rain forests. It has a very developed brain and is highly intelligent. The Gorilla here weighs 190 kilograms and looks like a huge mountain as it sits there.

In this section, we can also see the rare Golden-headed Tamarin with golden fur and the cute Common Squirrel Monkey.

If you want to get close to nature and explore the animal kingdom, please come to Shanghai Zoo at 2381 Hong Qiao Road.

Opening hours:

6:30am-4:30pm (autumn and winter)

6:30am-5:00pm (spring and summer)

Ticket price: 30 yuan. One adult can bring one child below 1.2m for free.

Getting there: Bus No 48, 57, 91, 519, 709, 739, 748, 806, 807, 809, 911, 925, 936, 938, 941, 945.

For details, please call on 6268-7775-8000.