

**BECAUSE  
OF THEM  
WE CAN**

**BOX**

**JUST FOR KIDS**

# BECAUSE OF MARY J WILSON

AGES 9 - 12



# MARY HAD MANY ANIMALS INSTEAD OF A LITTLE LAMB

*Instructions: Answer the questions, using quotes from the text to explain your answer*



Mary J Wilson was born in Baltimore, Maryland on January 2nd. She graduated with a **high school diploma** and realized she had a huge love of animals. She started out working at what was then called The Baltimore Zoo, now the Maryland Zoo, in 1961. Before working she did not have much **experience** but Arthur R. Watson, who was in charge of the zoo, saw that she loved animals and thought she would work hard! He was right!

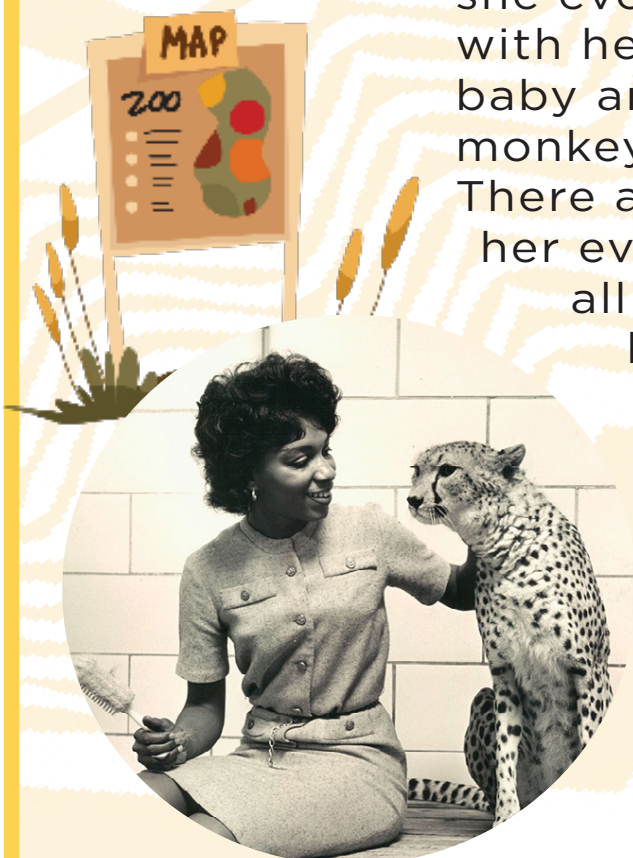
Wilson was the first Black senior **zookeeper** in Baltimore.

Most women who were working at the zoo at that time either worked with birds or baby animals but Wilson worked with **mammals** like gorillas and elephants. One of the people she worked with said that elephants were her favorite. Other people who saw her work with the animals described her as **fearless**.

She loved her work so much that sometimes she even brought work home with her. She would care for the baby animals at her home - like monkeys, gorillas, and snakes. There are many stories about her even calming animals of all sizes and getting them back in their cages - even really **dangerous** animals like leopards.

She worked at the zoo for 38 years and retired in 1999.

She had an amazing **legacy**. Years later, her daughter was the first Black zookeeper at Omaha city zoo. Mary J Wilson died of **Coronavirus** in 2020 but the memories, her passion, and the impact of her work live on.



# READ & RESPOND

1. How would you describe Mary's character? How do you know?

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2. Based on the text do you think Mary opened doors for women? Why or why not? How do you know?

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3. Mary had an extreme love for animals. Use the text to support this statement.

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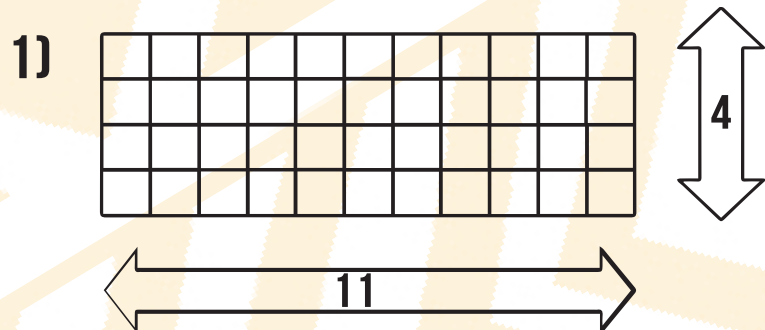
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# HABITATS

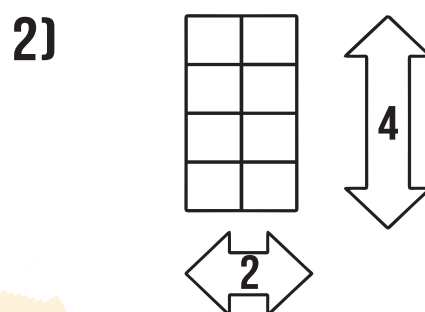
There are many different animals at the zoo and they are kept in separate areas. Animals in a zoo need space to move around. Bigger animals need more space. To make sure this happens you are going to think like a zoo director. Each square below represents one square mile - find the area of each of the animal habitats!

A	B	C	D
Pandas need 44 square miles of space	Birds of the same kind need about 3 miles of space	Cheetahs need about 300 square miles of space	Chimpanzees need about 8 square miles of space



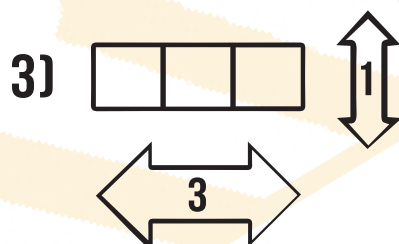
Which animal?

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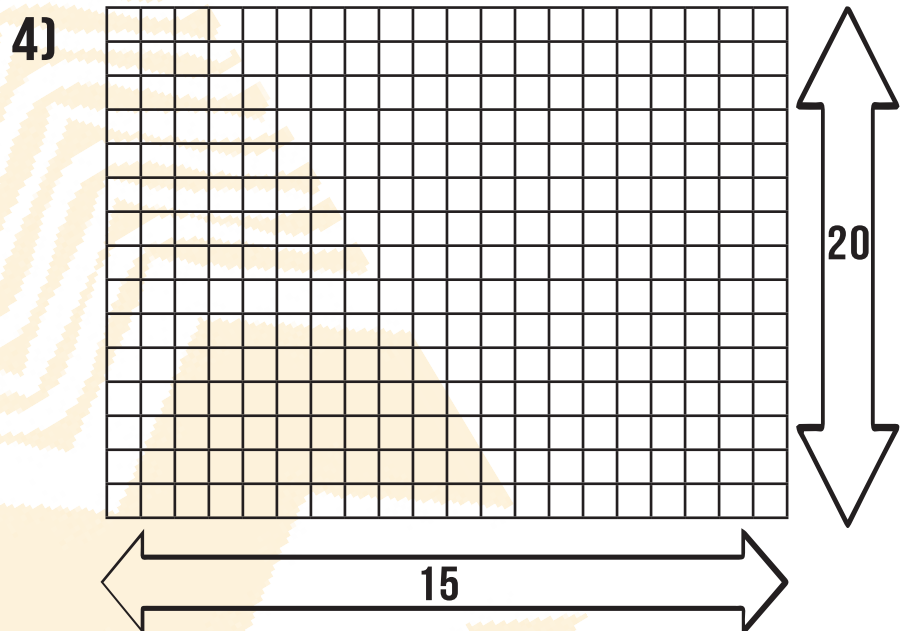
Which animal?

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Which animal?

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Which animal?

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"IT'S LIKE BABY-SITTING, ONLY MORE SO,  
AND YOU CAN GET JUST AS  
ATTACHED TO YOUR WORK..."

- MARY J. WILSON



HIDDEN ANIMAL ANSWER KEY:

MATH ANSWER KEY:  
(1) A (2) D (3) B (4) C

# MARY & WILSON

*There are two River Otters at the Maryland Zoo named after Mary J. Wilson - Mary and Wilson! Color the otters in, and add what other kinds of life you can think of that would live in the river with otters, such as fish, bugs, plants...whatever you can imagine!*



## GLOSSARY

**High school diploma** - document which shows that a person has finished a course of study or has graduated from a high school

**Zookeeper** - a person who takes care of the animals in a zoo

**Mammals** - a type of animal that feeds milk to its young and that usually has hair or fur covering most of its skin

**Fearless** - not afraid : very brave

**Dangerous** - able or likely to cause injury, pain, harm, etc.

**Coronavirus** - an illness caused by the coronavirus, is like the flu and can cause a person's body to feel sick

**Legacy** - something that happened in the past or that comes from someone in the past

# HIDDEN ANIMALS

Instructions: Find all of the hidden objects. The images of the animals you need to find are on the left.



## TAKE THE PLEDGE

**I WILL HONOR**  
THE SACRIFICES OF  
MY ANCESTORS.

**I WILL BELIEVE**  
IN ME.

**I WILL PURSUE**  
MY DREAMS.

**I WILL HELP**  
OTHERS ALONG  
THE WAY.