

Family Fun

What is a Habitat?

Enduring Understanding: Habitats are distinct natural environments with their own unique features, including landforms, plant life, and animals.

Materials

- “My Favorite Habitat” drawing worksheet
- paper or white board
- Drawing supplies (crayons, colored pencils, markers, etc.)
- Google images of forest, desert, and ocean habitats
- Google images of animals from forest, desert, and ocean habitats
- Google images of landforms, plants, and earth materials from forest, desert, and ocean habitats

Setup:

1. Make copies of “My Favorite Habitat” drawing worksheet.
2. Prepare art supplies
3. Prepare habitat google images.

Program outline:

Review the concept of a habitat.

- A habitat is the natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.
- Habitats provide animals with all they need to survive, including food, water, and a space to live and move.
- Different types of animals live in different types of habitats.

Habitat overview

- Look at examples of different habitats (forest, desert, ocean) and ask them to describe what is different about the way each of these habitats looks.
 - In a forest you might see soil, grass, flowers, tall trees, rocks, and bodies of water (stream, creek, river).
 - In a desert you might see sand or sand dunes and desert plants (cacti). You probably won't see any bodies of water.
 - In an ocean, a huge body of water, you might see seaweed, sand, rocks, or coral.

Landform overview

- A landform is a natural feature of the earth's surface.
- Examples of landforms include valleys, hills, mountains, dunes, and volcanos.
 - For instance, a forest might be located on or near a mountain landform or you may see a dune in a desert.



Program outline continued:

- Landforms are different from earth materials. Earth materials are resources that come from the earth, such as rocks.

Animals in habitats overview

- Look up animals that live in different habitats. Draw them on your chart.
 - In a forest you might see spotted owls, blackbirds, mountain lions, black bears, porcupines, or elk.
 - In a desert you might find coyotes, rattlesnakes, bats, hawks, jackrabbits, or tortoises.
 - In an ocean you might see fish, turtles, sharks, dolphins, whales, sea stars, sea snails, oysters, crabs, sea otters, squid, or jellies.
- Certain animals live in certain habitats for many reasons
 - Animals live in a certain habitat because they need a specific type of environment and food to live.
 - The right habitat provides an animal with the food and environment it needs to live.
 - An animal (or plant) in the wrong habitat would not be able to live.
 - For example, a fish needs water to live. It cannot live on land. The ocean is the best habitat for a fish. It would be difficult for a fish to live in the desert because there are usually no bodies of water there.

Sample Chart:

Forest	Desert	Ocean
What plants, landforms, or other things might you see? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> soil grass ferns flowers tall trees (redwoods) rocks bodies of water (stream, creek, river) mountains 	What plants, landforms, or other things might you see? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sand sand dunes desert plants (cacti) 	What plants, landforms, or other things might you see? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> water seaweed sand rocks coral
What animals might live here? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> spotted owl blackbird mountain lions black bear porcupines elk 	What animals might live here? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> coyote rattlesnake bat hawk jackrabbit tortoise 	What animals might live here? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> turtles dolphins sharks fish whales sea stars crabs squid sea otters sea snails octopuses

Program outline continued:

Drawing your favorite habitat

- Draw your favorite habitat.
 - They must include at least five different things. For example, an ocean could have a fish, whale, seaweed, rocks, and coral.
 - The habitats (specifically, the colors of animals, plants, landforms) should look as realistic as possible.
 - Students can refer to the chart for help.

Sharing Results

- Share your drawing and explain why you chose it. What animals, plants, and landforms did you choose to include?
- Ask your child to share their drawing and explain why they chose it. What animals, plants, and landforms did they choose to include?



Background information:

Habitats

Learning about habitats can help students develop a great understanding about the organisms that live in them. There are many types of habitats around the world. Each has unique vegetation, wildlife, landforms, and climate characteristics. Some examples of habitats include grasslands, tundra, oceans, ponds, deserts, and wetlands. Knowing about different habitats can help people understand how to avoid environmental damage and protect wildlife. It also builds a more well-rounded sense of place and a sense of how nature interconnects.

Desert Habitat

Desert habitats are dry areas with little rainfall. While deserts are extremely hot during the day, they can become very cold at night, as they have few clouds and low humidity to keep in heat. Organisms that live in desert habitats have special adaptations that allow them to survive in this harsh climate. For example, desert plants, such as cacti, are able to absorb and store water for later use. Animals may also store water in their bodies. They may also come out at night to avoid the hot daytime temperatures. Some desert animals include armadillos, camels, coyotes, hawks, rattlesnakes, and jackrabbits. It is important to take care of desert habitats because, if harmed, their land and soil take a long time to return to normal. Damage to the land also negatively affects organisms living in desert habitats.

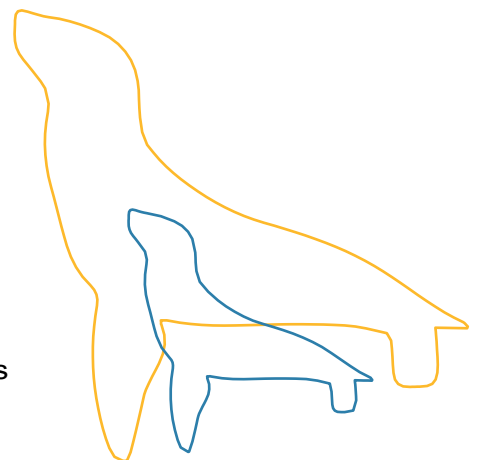
The Mojave Desert, located in Southern California, is ecologically and geographically diverse. It is home to sand dunes, the Joshua tree forest, mountain ranges, and volcanic cinder cones. In fact, the Joshua tree, which can live for about 150 years, has become a well-known symbol of the Mojave Desert. This desert also has a wide variety of amphibians, birds, insects, reptiles, and mammals. Many of the animals are nocturnal—they come out at night—to avoid hot daytime temperatures. Some animals that can be found here include red-spotted toads, Pacific tree frogs, ravens, roadrunners, hawks, black-tailed jackrabbits, coyotes, and bats. The Mohave tui chub can be found in the Mojave River basin. It is the only fish found in this area.

Forest Habitat

Forest habitats are home to a variety of plants, animals, and other organisms all over the earth. Their trees provide the planet with great amounts of oxygen, which is necessary for many plants and animals to survive.

Forests have three layers: the forest floor, the understory, and the canopy. On the forest floor, one can find soil, dead animals and plants, grass, and small plants. The understory comprises small trees and bushes. The canopy contains the leaves and branches of various trees. Animals living in forests vary around the world.

The Sierra Nevada is a diverse forest habitat in California. It contains a variety of landforms, plants, and animals. The Sierra Nevada is so diverse that the west and east sections of the forest have their own unique species of plants and animals. While the plants and animals in the west are adapted to a wetter climate, those living in the east are prepared for drier conditions.



background information continued:

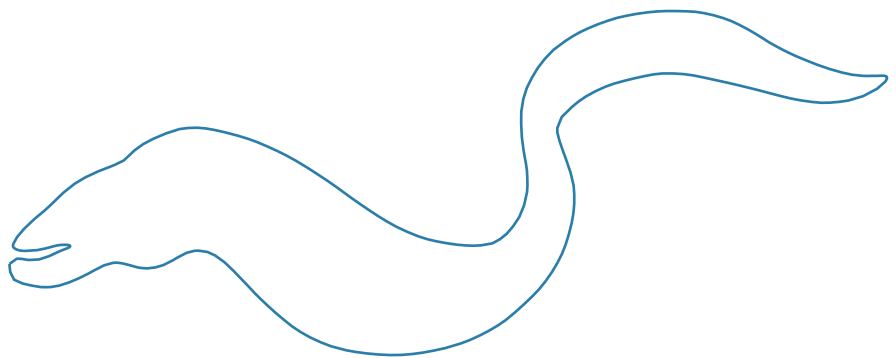
The redwood forest, found in Northern California, is another important local habitat. It is home to a variety of life, including the great redwood trees, which can live to be 2,000 years old. Some animals that can be found in the redwood forest include black bears, Douglas squirrels, porcupines, elk, and spotted owls. Plants that are native to the redwood forest include deer fern, sword fern, bigleaf maple trees, salal, and evergreen huckleberry shrubs.

Finally, the California oak woodland habitat, spread across coastal California, contains oak trees, a variety of grasses, herbs, and other coniferous trees. The oak woodlands of Northern and Southern California consist of many types of oak trees, such as live oak, valley oak, canyon live oak, and California black oak.

Ocean Habitat

Ocean habitats are diverse. They include various plants, animals, and organisms. Ocean life is separated into the benthic environment (the sea floor) and the pelagic environment (the ocean waters). Because the ocean is so vast, it has a number of smaller habitats, such as coral reefs, kelp forests, and sea-grass beds, with many different types of plants and animals living there. Marine animals found in ocean habitats include fish, dolphins, seals, sea lions, whales, sharks, turtles, manatees, octopuses, crabs, sea snails, sea stars, corals, oysters, and jellyfish. Ocean habitats are currently suffering from many types of pollution, including oil spills, plastic debris, and carbon dioxide level imbalances, which affect wildlife and can even lead to species endangerment or extinction.

California contains some of the most diverse ocean habitats on Earth. Monterey Bay is one local habitat that contains distinct landforms, marine animals, and plants. One special landform found here is the undersea canyon, which is deeper than the Grand Canyon and one of the largest in the world. Marine animals that thrive here include whales, krill, Humboldt squid, mola mola (the world's largest bony fish), otters, and jellyfish. Sea urchins and kelp also thrive here. Overfishing has affected the ecosystems living in this habitat, but conservation laws have been enacted to help protect this area.



glossary:

Desert: Dry region with little rainfall, water, or vegetation and extreme temperatures

Forest: Large area covered with trees, plants, and underbrush

Habitat: Type of natural home or environment in which an organism or group of organisms typically lives

Ocean: Large expanse of saltwater that covers nearly three-fourths of Earth's surface

Sand Dune: Mound or ridge of sand or other loose sediment formed by the wind



Name: _____

My Favorite Habitat



My favorite habitat is _____.

Here is a picture of a _____ habitat.