



# TEACHER GUIDE

## HABITATS GRADES K-2

### COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

- **Animal features are not related to the habitat in which they live.**  
Unique features are adaptations that help animals survive in a specific habitat. For example, animals living in a cold habitat have lots of fat and fur to help keep them warm. This adaptation may not be useful in other habitats.
- **The only habitats that exist are the ones near where the students live.**  
There are a very wide variety of habitats around the world. Young students may not be familiar with habitats beyond their home communities. Sharing a wide variety of habitats can help students appreciate the diversity of life on Earth.
- **There are only a few different kinds of living things in each habitat.**  
The diversity of life found in each habitat is incredible. There are many different kinds of animals in each habitat. Some habitats are more diverse than others, such as the rainforest.
- **A habitat is not related to the needs of an animal.**  
Animals will only live in a habitat that meets their needs. That includes food, water and shelter. If an animal's needs are not met in a specific habitat they will die, adapt over many generations or move to a different habitat.

### HABITATS, ECOSYSTEMS AND BIOMES

These terms are related to each other and have similar definitions, so it's easy to understand why they can be confusing. A biome is a very large area with one particular type of climate. It has animals and plants with features that allow them to live there. Some examples of biomes would be African grasslands, the Amazon rainforest, the Arctic tundra and the Pacific Ocean. An ecosystem includes all the living and non-living things that work together in an environment. An ecosystem is smaller than a biome, so there are lots of ecosystems in a biome. A habitat is a specific place where an animal lives. A biome is like a country, an ecosystem is like a neighborhood and a habitat is the house where the animal lives.

## TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Exposing young students to the wide variety of habitats in the world, and the diverse animals that live in each, is important. There are many websites and books that have animals that students are not used to seeing. One great book for young students is *The Animal Book: A Visual Encyclopedia of Life on Earth* by David Burnie. It has fantastic pictures to spark interest in your students.

