

## **BIOMES**

As geographers study the many ecosystems around the world, many similarities or patterns become evident from one ecosystem to another. This allows scientists to group ecosystems into categories called biomes. The most commonly accepted biomes that exist on the Earth are Tundra, Desert, Grassland, Tropical Rain Forest, Deciduous Forest, and Coniferous Forest.

### **TUNDRA**



The frozen cold ecosystems found near the northern most parts of the Earth are called tundras by scientists. These locations are known for their long cold winters, and their short cool summers. The Earth's tundras are home to a variety of specialized plants and animals that have adapted to survival in such brutal environments. Animals such as seals, polar bears, arctic hares, and arctic foxes, as well as a variety of other animals have become experts at finding food and surviving the long cold winters. Many of these animals have white fur in order to allow them to blend in with the snow.

### **DESERT**



Desert biomes are found throughout the Earth. These dry locations have specialized plants and animals that have become adapted to surviving on little water. Some plants and animals can actually store water within their bodies, such as cactus, camels, and some varieties of frogs found in Australia. Due to their being fewer resources available, there are generally smaller concentrations of life forms in the deserts than in other biomes.

## **GRASSLANDS**



Grassland biomes exist throughout the Earth, and in many cases can be vast, expanding across millions of square miles. These biomes are marked by sparse trees and extensive grasses as well as a variety of small and large animals. Some of the largest land animals on Earth live in grasslands, including American bison, elephants, giraffes, and so forth.

## **TROPICAL RAIN FORESTS**



Tropical rain forests are found in locations that receive significant amounts of precipitation. These locations are easily recognizable by their abundance of life forms. These life forms include numerous trees, plants such as ferns, and an abundance of insects, spiders, snakes, monkeys, and other plants and animals. Tropical rain forests are very important to the overall health of the planet Earth, and are responsible for replenishing a significant portion of the atmosphere's oxygen supply.

## DECIDUOUS FORESTS



Deciduous forests exist in areas with a moderate amount of precipitation and where temperatures are also moderate. These ecosystems typically have long warm summers, and short cool winters. The most noticeable feature is the abundance of deciduous trees. A deciduous tree is a tree that loses its leaves in the fall. Many other plants and animals live in these ecosystems as well, including birds, deer, and insects.

## CONIFEROUS FORESTS



Coniferous forest ecosystems are found in regions of the earth that experience somewhat long and cold winters, with summer being much shorter. Thus, it is no surprise that these biomes are more common the closer one travels toward the Earth's poles. Additionally, this biome is found high atop mountains where temperatures tend to be lower and winter tends to last longer. Common life forms living in this biome are evergreen trees, small mammals such as rodents, large mammals such as moose and deer, and a variety of insects, spiders, and plant life.