

# Habitat

In ecology habitat means either the area and resources used by a particular species (the habitat of a species) or an assemblage of animals and plants together with their abiotic environment. The focus of this introduction addresses the latter. The most comprehensive hierarchical approach for describing habitats in European ecosystems is the EUNIS habitat classification. EUNIS stands for the European Nature Information System. The definition of habitats used for the EUNIS habitat classification is: "a place where plants or animals normally live, characterized primarily by its physical features (topography, plant or animal physiognomy, soil characteristics, climate, water quality etc.) and secondarily by the species of plants and animals that live there.

Every organism has a unique ecosystem for its habitat. This ecosystem is its natural habitat. This is where the organism meets its basic need for its survival: food, water, shelter from the weather and place to breed its younglings.

## Different Types of Habitat

### 1. Forest Habitat

Forest is a large area covered with plants. Forest covers about one-third of our planet. Most of the different types of plants and animals have their forest as their habitat. Forest broadly divides into three types:

#### *Tropical forest or Tropical rain forest*

These are found between the equator and two tropics, that is, Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn. The Temperature of these forests ranges from 20 to 34 degree Celsius. These regions receive heavy rainfall throughout the year with annual rainfall of more than 200cm.

- *Plants:* Orchid, vine, moss, and fern.

## ***Temperate forest***

Temperate forests are found in eastern North America, northeast Asia and western and central Europe. The temperature of these regions ranges from -30 to 30 Degree Celsius. The annual rainfall is about 150 cm. Temperate forests have well-defined winter and summer seasons.

- ***Plants:*** Maple, oak, and elm.

## ***Boreal or Taiga forests***

These forests are found in Canada, Russia, Scandinavia, China, Mongolia, and north Japan. Here, temperature dips from as low as -50degree Celsius to as high as 30 degree Celsius.

- ***Plants:*** Evergreen trees such as pine, fir, deer, etc.

## **2. Aquatic Habitat**

Habitat in water is aquatic habitats. Such places include all the water bodies like rivers, lakes, seas, oceans. The organisms that live in water are aquatic animals. It is mainly of three kinds: freshwater, marine, and coastal.

- ***Freshwater habitat:*** Rivers, lakes, ponds, and streams are examples of freshwater habitat. Fish, frog, duck, lotus, and water lily are found in fresh [water](#),
- ***Marine water habitat:*** Oceans and seas form the largest habitat on the planet. Some commonly found animals are whale, dolphins, sharks, octopus, starfish, jellyfish, seahorse, etc, and plants, seaweeds are the most common.
- ***Coastal habitat:*** Coastal habitat refers to the region where the land meets the sea.
- ***Estuaries:*** These places where the saline water of sea or ocean mixes with the fresh water of rivers. It is the home of marine animals like crab, oyster, worms, and waterfowl. Mangroves seaweeds and marsh grasses are plants found here.

- **Coral reefs:** These are the rock-like structure made from calcium carbonate by corals. They are also called 'rain-forest of the sea'. Some are commonly found plants are algae like Rhodophyceae.

### **3. Grassland Habitat**

Grassland is regions dominated by grasses. There are too many trees and shrubs here. Temperature ranges between -20 degree and -30 degree. The annual rainfall varies between 50 cm and 90 cm. Some plants found here , are Sedges, Cynodon etc.

### **4. Dessert Habitat**

Deserts are areas that receive very little rainfall less than 25 cm annually. In hot desert, daytime temperature in summer can reach 45 degree Celsius. Organisms such as cactus, camel, gila monster and kangaroo rat are found here.

### **5. Mountainous and Polar Habitat**

Polar and mountainous regions are the coldest of all the habitats found on earth. These include the Arctic and the Antarctic regions. In the Antarctic, the lowest temperature recorded was -88 Degree Celsius. Rhododendron, Moses , Pteridophytes etc. are most commonly found plants here.