

ACTIVITY 2 SNOW AS A HABITAT

In *The Search for Snow*, we meet many different animals and plants that live in the Great Lakes region, Iceland, and the Alps. How do they survive the cold and snowy weather?

PART 1: ADAPTATIONS

Animals must adapt to survive in winter climates. Many birds and mammals *migrate*. That means they move their home to a warmer place during the winter. Other animals, like bears, *hibernate*. That means they find a sheltered place to sleep until spring. But some animals can stay active all winter. They have special *adaptive features* that help them live in the cold weather. Some plants also have adaptive features, but many go *dormant* in the winter, which is similar to hibernation.

This quiz describes how different plants and animals adapt to snowy winters. For each description, write an **M** for **migrate**, an **H** for **hibernate/dormant**, and an **A** for **adaptive feature** on the blank line. The first one has been done as an example.

1. **H** **Alpine marmots** stay in underground burrows from September until March.
2. **Arctic foxes** have thick fur that turns white in winter.
3. **Chamois** have special hooves that allow them to walk on snow.
4. **Conifers** have thin needles instead of flat leaves, and sloping sides that allow snow to slide to the ground instead of weighing down branches.
5. **Golden plovers** travel to the west coast of Europe and North Africa in winter.
6. **Green alder trees** are so flexible they can bend all the way to the ground without breaking.
7. **Hedgehogs** spend winter curled up in places like log piles and village gardens.
8. **Insects** and **reptiles** drop their body temperatures and stay hidden until weather warms.
9. **Rhododendrons** are evergreen shrubs, but their thick leaves curl in winter.
10. **Rock ptarmigans** turn white in winter and have feathers on their feet to keep them warm.
11. **Rock thrushes** fly from the Alps to Africa in winter.
12. **Snow hares** have wide, flat feet that don't sink in snow, and their fur turns white in winter.
13. **Tulip bulbs** live underground in winter and sprout flowers in the spring.
14. **Voles** live in underground tunnels when it snows.
15. **Alpine ibex** move up and down mountains to where temperatures suit them.



Snow can be a danger for plants and animals, but it also provides much-needed water. With your class, discuss all the ways in which people and wildlife use water.

PART 2: A LOCAL STORY

Consider the plants and animals (including humans) that live in your region. Could they adapt to a snowy habitat? Have they adapted? Choose one and answer these questions:

The plant/animal I chose is: _____

What features and/or habits does it have to help it survive in snow? _____

How might its life cycle be affected by shorter, warmer winters with more rain and less snow? Consider its habits, the availability of food, and the presence of predators: _____

How do you think it could evolve to thrive in this changing environment? _____