



*ALL ABOUT*  
***RAINFORESTS***

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Chapter One  
**ALIKE  
AND DIFFERENT**



Can you guess what the places are in these two photos? These places have a thick growth of tall trees and many other kinds of plant life. They spread over vast areas of land. Every **species** of animal you can think of lives here — insects, birds, fish, **mammals**, and more. These places are always wet or moist. That's because a great amount of rain falls here all year long. In fact, this is where they get their names. What do you think they are? If you guessed rainforests, you are right!

Rainforests are found all over the world. There are two kinds of rainforests: tropical rainforests and temperate rainforests. They are alike in some ways and they also have some differences.

## Tropical Rainforests

There are tropical rainforests in parts of South America, Central America, Asia, and Africa, near the **Equator**. This region is called the tropics. The climate here is very hot and **humid** all year. There is no change of seasons.



The lightly shaded areas of this map show where tropical rainforests are located. The general temperature in tropical rainforests is around 70 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit.

## Temperate Rainforests

Temperate rainforests are found in cooler spots near seashores. There are some temperate rainforests along the coasts of parts of North America, Australia, New Zealand, and Great Britain. Others are in East Asia in places such as China, Taiwan, and Japan. Temperate rainforests have a cool climate and the seasons change.

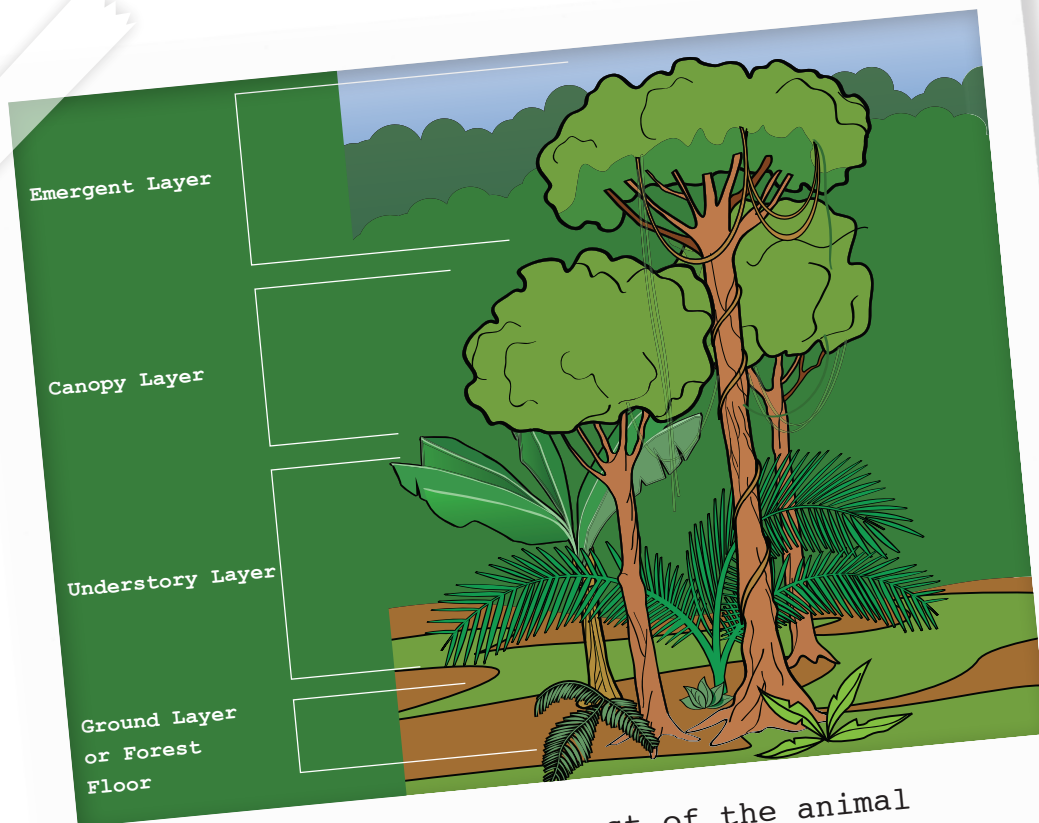


The lightly shaded areas on this map show where temperate rainforests are located. The general temperature in temperate rainforests is about 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Chapter Two

# LAYERS OF THE RAINFORESTS

Rainforests are divided into layers. They are the emergent layer, the canopy, the understory layer, and the ground layer, or forest floor. The layers of trees and plants provide homes for all kinds of animals.



Scientists believe that most of the animal species on Earth live in the many layers of rainforests.

## The Emergent Layer

The tallest trees grow to the emergent layer at the very top of the rainforest. This layer gets lots of sunlight, but it is very windy.



The tallest trees grow above the others and make up the emergent layer.

## The Canopy Layer

The next layer is the canopy. It is often called the "roof" of the rainforest. That's because this layer has many tall trees. Their leaves and branches make a roof over smaller trees and plants below.

## The Understory Layer

The understory layer is right below the canopy. The canopy blocks sunlight so the understory layer gets very little sunshine.

## The Ground Layer or Forest Floor

The ground layer of the rainforest is very dark. Almost no sunlight reaches this bottom layer. Lots of dead leaves, dead plants, and rotting animal matter cover the forest floor. This layer is perfect for plants that grow in low light, like moss in temperate rainforests.



Moss is plentiful in the ground layer of the rainforest.





Chapter Three

# ANIMALS OF TROPICAL RAINFORESTS



Scientists believe that most of the animal species of the whole world live in rainforests. Let's look at a few of these animals.

## **Morpho Butterflies** (South America and Central America)

Morpho butterflies are famous for their bright, blue wings. Their wings are 3 to 8 inches wide. During the day, they fly around the trees to find rotting fruit. They drink the juices for food. At night, they fold up their wings and sleep.



Around 80 species of Morpho butterflies live in rainforests.

## Sloth (South America and Central America)

The sloth is the slowest-moving animal on Earth! There are two-toed sloths and three-toed sloths. They live most of their lives hanging upside down from tree branches. They eat, sleep, and even have their babies hanging upside down. Sloths can live for 20 years or more. Many don't leave the same tree for years.



Sloths sleep in the daytime and are active at night. At night they feed on leaves, young plants, and fruit.



Baby sloths hang on to their mothers until they can take care of themselves.

## Flying Dragon

(Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia in Asia)

The flying dragon is a lizard with flaps of skin folded on its side. They open up like wings so the lizard can glide from tree to tree. Flying dragons eat lots of ants.



The flying dragon is up to 12 inches long.



Orangutans use their long, strong arms to swing from tree branches.

## Orangutan

(Sumatra and Borneo in Asia)

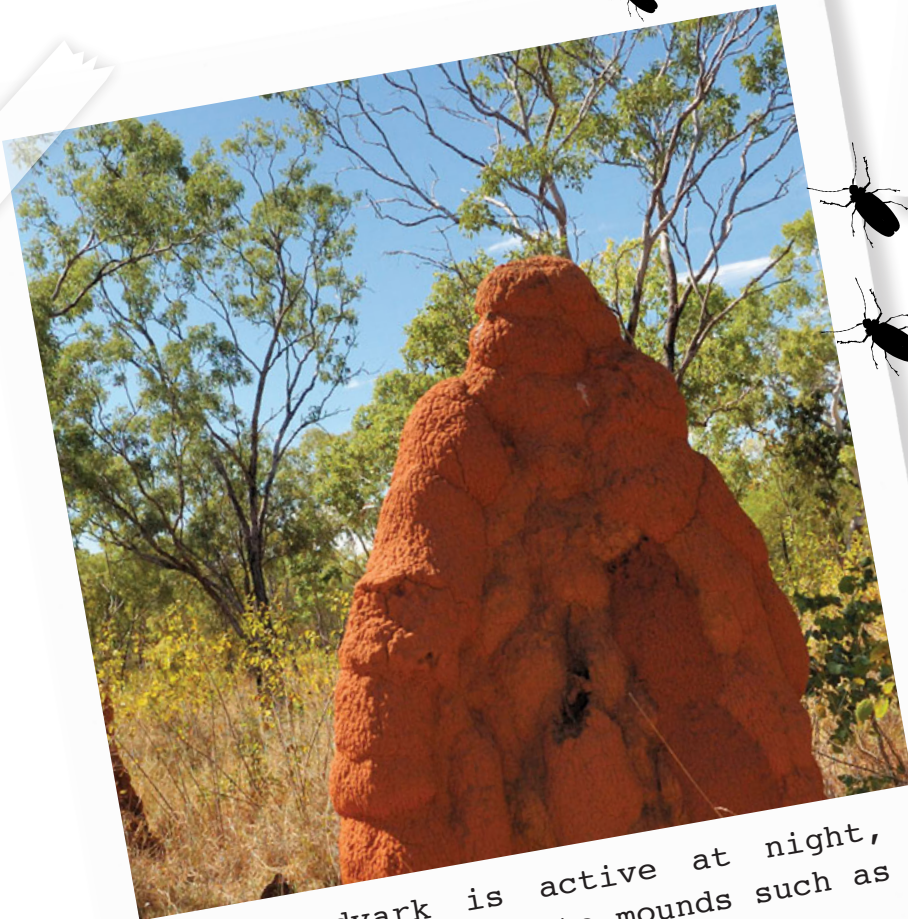
Shaggy hair covers the orangutan's large body. Orangutans walk on all fours or standing up, like we do. Their legs are short and weak, but their arms are long and strong. They reach the orangutan's ankles when it stands up!

## Aardvark (Africa)

The aardvark lives in burrows in the ground. It has a very long head and an even longer snout. Its snout sniffs out termite or ant hills. Then its long, sticky tongue catches thousands of ants and termites to eat.



In captivity, armadillos can live up to 23 years.



The armadillo is active at night, searching out termite mounds such as this one.



## Red-Eyed Tree Frog (Central America and South America)

Red-eyed tree frogs are brightly colored, tiny **amphibians**. They get their names from their big, bulging red eyes. Suction cups on their toes help them hang on to the backs of leaves. This is where they lay their eggs. When the eggs hatch, the tiny **tadpoles** fall into the water below. When the tadpoles grow into frogs, they return to land.



The male frog is about 2 inches long and the female is about 1 inch larger.



There are many tree frog species. Tree frogs catch flies and other insects to eat.

# ANIMALS OF TEMPERATE RAINFORESTS

## Salmon (North America and other parts of the world)

The salmon is a fish that's hatched in cold mountain streams. When they are young, they swim from their fresh water **habitat** to the salty ocean. When fully grown, they swim back to the stream where they were born to lay their eggs.



In the ocean, salmon eat other small fish, small krill, and shrimp, which give them their orange-red color.



## Black Bear (North America)

Black bears can weigh from 150-600 pounds. They **hibernate** in winter, crawling into their dens, until spring. During this time, female black bears have babies called cubs. They may have as many as three cubs at once.



Female black bears emerge from their dens with their cubs in spring.

## Bald Eagle

(British Columbia, Canada, Alaska, and Mexico)

Bald eagles are not bald. They have white feathers on their heads. These giant birds live high up in huge, old trees near rivers or lakes. They build super-large nests from twigs and leaves. They have strong, sharp claws, called talons. They use these to catch fish to eat.



Bald eagles are the national symbol of the United States. Some of these massive birds have wingspans almost 8 feet wide.

## Roosevelt Elk (Pacific Coast, North America)

The Roosevelt elk lives on the ground layer of the rainforest. The male is the larger of the species. They can weigh as much as 1,000 pounds. They have sharp, heavy antlers that point straight up. These help them fight bears, lions, and cougars that attack them.



Roosevelt elk eat shrubs, weeds, grasses, and wild berries.



## Mountain Lion

(North, Central, and South America)

Mountain lions hunt for food day and night. Animals such as elk, beavers, raccoons, and sheep are **prey** for the mountain lion. The male lion can grow over 8 feet long. They can weigh as much as 200 pounds. Females are smaller cats. They can grow 7 feet long and weigh up to 100 pounds.



Mountain lions are mighty,  
large cats.



# CONCLUSION

## Rainforest Facts

- Some people call tropical rainforests “the world’s largest pharmacy.” That’s because we use a great many rainforest plants to make medicines for all sorts of illness.
- The largest rainforest on Earth is the Amazon rainforest in South America. It covers more than 1 billion acres of land.
- Some rainforests get as much as 400 inches of rain each year.

Many rainforests and their animals are in danger. People cut down the trees to grow farms, build houses, and make products. **Pollution** makes the water and air dirty. Then the animals lose their homes and don’t have enough food to eat. Today, many people are working to help save the world’s rainforests and their animals.



Sometimes people also chop down trees in the forest for lumber to make furniture.





# GLOSSARY

**amphibian:** a cold-blooded animal that can live on land and in water

**Equator:** an imaginary line around the Earth that forms a circle midway between the North and South Poles

**habitat:** the type of surroundings in which animals or groups of animals live

**hibernate:** to hide away and sleep through winter

**humid:** having a lot of water vapor, or moisture, in the air

**mammal:** a warm-blooded animal, usually with hair, whose babies drink their mother's milk

**pollution:** harmful substances in the environment

**prey:** an animal hunted or caught for food

**species:** a group of similarly classified living things

**tadpole:** a newly hatched frog or toad

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