

# What is a habitat?



A habitat is where an animal lives.

What does an animal need in a habitat to survive?

- Food (of the right sort and enough of it)
- Water (clean water that they can reach)
- Shelter (warm and dry or wet and cold – whatever suits the animal)
- Space (the area needed to hunt, find a mate and raise their young)

Different combinations of ecosystem LAWS (light, air, water and soil), together with variations in climate and topography, create different habitats.

- A shady area has different types of trees and shrubs than an area with bright sunlight.
- Pure air helps growth, but polluted air retards or stops it.
- Less water creates a desert, while more water creates a swamp or wetlands.
- Poor soil supports only certain plants and rich soil produces greater growth.

Habitat destruction can lead to a species or type of animal becoming endangered, or even extinct.

What can cause habitat destruction?

- Clearing the land for farming or to build new houses
- Too many weeds taking over the native plants
- Pests invading the area and eating all the food the native animal would usually eat
- Storm damage can destroy habitats
- Fires can destroy habitats as well

How big can a habitat be?

- Very small like a rock pool
- Very big like a lion's territory

A habitat can be under the ground, in the mountains, in a river or ocean; even the bacteria on your skin are living in a habitat!

Sometimes different animals share the same habitat but they will usually have different needs for food, shelter etc.

**Bad habitat**



**Good habitat**



## FACTS ABOUT GECKOS AND SKINKS



- I can drop my tail when attacked by a predator
- My regrown tail is never as long as my original tail and is usually a different colour and pattern
- I rely on the environment to warm my body so I can hunt and feed
- I don't lay eggs but give birth to young

### Create a good habitat for lizards and skinks in your garden

- Attract native lizards and skinks to your garden by providing lots of places to hide
  - Grasses and plants
  - Make a layered rock garden with places for them to hide
  - Rotten logs
- Make sure there is plenty of food for them to eat
  - Berry or nectar producing plants
  - Plants that flower close to the ground which will bring insects within reach
- Make sure there is water available, especially in summer
- Lock your cats up at night. You may have to protect your habitat with netting.

This lizard needs to find its way to a pile of rocks so it can be safe and warm.  
Can you help him find the right path to the rocks?

