Desert Animals

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NGSS: 3-LS4-3

Construct an argument with evidence that in a particular habitat some organisms can survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all.

Clarification Statement:
Examples of evidence could include needs and characteristics of the organisms and habitats involved. The organisms and their habitat make up a system in which the parts depend on each other.

Go here for more information:
http://ngss.nsta.org/DisplayStandard.aspx?view=topic&id=12

Cross Cutting Concepts:

Patterns
Students may notice patterns in animal traits for survival. For example many animals in cold climates have blubber or thick fur coats to keep warm. Many animals that eat meat have sharp teeth.

Structure and Function
Animal's body structure is evolved in such a way to help them maximize survival in their particular habitat.

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There are deserts all over the world

By Emilfaro at English Wikipedia - Transferred from en.wikipedia to Commons by Common Good using CommonsHelper., Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6440133

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What Special Challenges Does the Desert Pose?

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(Have students give answers/discuss)

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What Special Challenges Does the Desert Pose?

- Hot during day
- Cold at night
- Water is scare
- Food is scare

Openclipart.org: Fruits: Frankes; Water: Bibbleycheese; Girl: nlyl; Man in sun: hefedute; Elephants: TatsuoUeda; Warning :kg

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Desert Animals

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These animals all live in the desert. What observations can you make?

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Desert Animal: Camel

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- Hump is filled with fat to help it through lean times.
- -Camel's fur helps keep them **cool** by protecting them from the hot sun rays.
- They have extra eyelashes to protect their eyes from sand

Learn more

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Desert Animal: Thorny Devil

- Covered in spines
- Has a “false head” to trick attacking predators
- Special small grooves in its skin act almost like a collection of straws, allowing the animal to drink water it collects on its body from dew (or rain).

Learn more

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Thorny Devil – false head

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Desert Animal: Sidewinder Snake

- Burrows to stay cool and also to hide from potential prey
- Unique way of moving helps it go across soft, shifting, sand

Learn more

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Desert Animal: Sidewinder Snake

- See a video of the Sidewinder moving here.
- Go to 2:01 in the video for camouflage and borrowing!

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Desert Animal: Sand Cat

By Clément Bardot - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=44903584

- Burrows to avoid extreme temperature (heat during day, cold at night)
- Can go weeks without drinking water (hydrates from food)
- Not well studied! There is more to learn.

Learn more

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Desert (and Brush) Animal: Echidna

By User:benjamint444, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1722895

- Covered in spines
- Digs very fast, digs and burrows to get away from predators
- Also curls up in a ball to deflect predators.

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Desert and Brush Animal: Echidna

- Curls into a ball when threatened by predators.

Learn more

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Desert Animal: Fennec Fox

- Large ears help them listen for underground prey.
- Large ears help them stay cool.
- Fur on feet protects paws from hot sand.
- Nocturnal.
- Burrows underground during day to hide from enemies and stay cools

Learn more

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Notes:

- Deserts are all over the world; not all animals shown here live near each other
- Many animals, including some shown here, live in deserts AND other biomes.
- We have focused on hot deserts but cold deserts also exist

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