

## Colorado Life Zone Scavenger Hunt



Below are worksheets created for all the habitats or life zones. They were designed with the intention of breaking the class up into small groups, and having students research about general information and one life zone. They would then come back and share their information with the rest of the class in the form of an oral presentation, poster, or powerpoint slideshow.

The many pictures and links in the web page can make it very distracting for the kids, and the kids may skip reading the paragraphs. Most of the questions come directly from the text and encourage the kids to read the information in the paragraphs.

For an assessment at the end, I have had kids get in small groups for a whole class trivia game activity. The group or groups that got the most questions correct received a small reward or prize. The trivia game motivated them to stay more focused while researching the questions on the worksheets and listening to their classmates present their information.

I realize there is no answer key provided. It would be very easy for the kids to just click on the answer key link and get the answers without doing the work.

If you see any incorrect information in the website, please e-mail me at [sgregers@mesa.k12.co.us](mailto:sgregers@mesa.k12.co.us) , and I will correct it as quick as possible.

### General Information

What are the three major landforms in Colorado and what part of the state are they located (ex: eastern part of state)?

Landform 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Landform 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Landform 3: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Define Life Zones: \_\_\_\_\_

### Elevation and Climate

Define elevation: \_\_\_\_\_

Define climate: \_\_\_\_\_

The higher in elevation you go, usually the \_\_\_\_\_ the temperature gets.

Name three different forms of precipitation:

a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

The higher in elevation you go, usually the \_\_\_\_\_ precipitation falls there.

As you get higher in elevation there are \_\_\_\_\_ bouncing off one another in the air. This makes it easier to get out of breathe up there because there is \_\_\_\_\_ for you to breathe.

What is altitude sickness?

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What are some symptoms of altitude sickness and how do you get better?

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It is much easier to get sunburnt when you are up in the alpine or subalpine lifezones because there is \_\_\_\_\_ to block the \_\_\_\_\_, plus the snow \_\_\_\_\_ the light back up.

### Seasons

Why is the snow that falls high in the Rocky Mountains so important for Colorado and the rest of the southwestern U.S?

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The changing seasons often force animals to move up or down in elevation in order to find \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ from the weather.

### Adaptations: Plants and Animals

Give an example of a deciduous tree and tell me why it is deciduous?

Name of tree: \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Give an example of a coniferous tree and tell me why it is coniferous?

Name of tree: \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Give an example of succulent plant and tell me why it is a succulent?

Name of plant: \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

List 3 animal and their adaptations to their environment

animal 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Adaptation: \_\_\_\_\_

animal 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Adaptation: \_\_\_\_\_

animal 3: \_\_\_\_\_ Adaptation: \_\_\_\_\_

Look through the website. List at least four animals that are adapted to 3 or more habitats.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

## Semidesert Shrublands & Desert Canyonlands

What is its elevation range? \_\_\_\_\_

The semidesert shrublands are on the \_\_\_\_\_ (Colorado Plateau Region) and \_\_\_\_\_ (San Luis Valley) parts of the state.

Name 4 important rivers that cross the semidesert shrublands:

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

Temperatures may get pretty hot during the day in the summer, \_\_\_\_\_ degrees F and higher. However, at night the desert may cool down by \_\_\_\_\_ degrees F.

It is important to watch for stormy weather when hiking in the desert canyonlands because of the possible danger of \_\_\_\_\_.

Name 3 ways how plants have adapted to living in the semidesert shrublands.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

You will find many reptiles like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ here. For much of the year, it is \_\_\_\_\_ for them to stay active.

In order to stay cool and save water in the summer, most animals in the semidesert shrublands are most active during what parts of the day?

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Animals need to get much of their water from the \_\_\_\_\_ they eat.

The many steep canyons and mesas in the desert canyonlands provide the perfect place for birds of prey. Nests on steep cliffs make difficult for other \_\_\_\_\_ to get to their \_\_\_\_\_, and make it easy to \_\_\_\_\_ from.

One bird of prey who does not live on cliffs is the \_\_\_\_\_. They hide in the burrows and tunnels created by \_\_\_\_\_ colonies. They eat them and \_\_\_\_\_ their homes.

## Great Plains

What is the elevation range of the plains? \_\_\_\_\_

The plains or grasslands take up about \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the land in Colorado.

Early explorers called the Great Plains the \_\_\_\_\_ because of the extreme temperatures, little rainfall, and the lack of trees.

When it does rain or snow on the plains, it is often in the form of large \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. The dangers of the storms include \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and possible \_\_\_\_\_.

Playa lakes form in \_\_\_\_\_ from snowmelt or large rainstorms.

Humans need to irrigate or take water from \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_ in order to survive and farm on the grasslands.

Most of the rolling hills of the plains are covered with short grasses, like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. You will also find \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. In years when it snows more in the winter and rains more in the spring, lots of \_\_\_\_\_ may grow. Only by riparian areas (lakes, ponds, or rivers) will you find \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and other trees and shrubs.

You will find many reptiles like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in the plains. For much of the year, the plains are \_\_\_\_\_ for them to stay active.

Most animals have adapted to the plains by either:

\_\_\_\_\_

Enormous herds of \_\_\_\_\_ used to roam the plains until the invention of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. They were killed for their \_\_\_\_\_ and to prevent \_\_\_\_\_.

## Foothills Woodlands and Shrublands

What is the elevation range of the foothills? \_\_\_\_\_

The lower part of the foothills on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains is the \_\_\_\_\_. The lower part of the foothills on the western and south central parts of the state is the \_\_\_\_\_. Higher in the foothills is the \_\_\_\_\_.

Sometimes, it can be difficult to figure out what habitat or life zone you are in. As you go up in elevation, the plants and trees of two different habitats or life zones may \_\_\_\_\_.

In the montane shrublands, thick patches of \_\_\_\_\_ take over the hillsides.

Pinyon trees, ponderosa trees, and oak brush make \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ in order to reproduce. They are also important food sources for animals.

Most species of reptiles and amphibians live at or below the \_\_\_\_\_ life zone.

Many larger grazing animals like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ migrate down to the foothills in the winter and go to the higher life zones from late spring to fall. The lower parts of the foothills may be quite \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ during the summer.

Name three smaller animals that commonly stay in the foothills even during the hottest parts of the summer. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Birds, like the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, have adapted to eat berries, seeds, and insects. They can stay in the foothills all year round.

Name three different birds of prey that live in the foothills.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

## Montane Forests

What is the elevation range of the montane forests? \_\_\_\_\_

When the plains and deserts are roasting with temperatures above 100 degrees F, the high temperatures in the montane can be in the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Enough rain and snow falls here to support large forests of \_\_\_\_\_ trees and \_\_\_\_\_ trees.

It is possible to find \_\_\_\_\_ in the shadows of trees on northern facing slopes well into the summer.

\_\_\_\_\_ plays an important role in clearing dense older forests, allowing new healthy forests to grow.

The deep winter snows, shorter montane summers, and cooler temperatures can make it difficult for \_\_\_\_\_ creatures to survive. So, few species of reptiles and amphibians live there.

All animals must put on a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in the summer to survive the cold snowy winter.

How have these animals adapted to the snowy montane forests, subalpine, and alpine winters

Mule Deer: \_\_\_\_\_

Canada Lynx: \_\_\_\_\_

Snowshoe Hare: \_\_\_\_\_

American bear: \_\_\_\_\_

Pine Squirrel: \_\_\_\_\_

The montane forests can be an important habitat for birds \_\_\_\_\_ north and south through the seasons.

Why does the gray wolf have a ? by its name? (Check out CO Div of wildlife link to find the answer.) \_\_\_\_\_

## Subalpine

What is the elevation range of the subalpine? \_\_\_\_\_

As you climb up from the montane to the subalpine, \_\_\_\_\_ trees from the montane forests disappear and you get in scattered forests of large \_\_\_\_\_ trees.

The upper edge of the subalpine is the \_\_\_\_\_.

The pine trees produce \_\_\_\_\_ to create new trees. They are also an important food source for many birds and mammals.

Odds are people and animals die of \_\_\_\_\_ before they die of \_\_\_\_\_ when trapped in an avalanche.

Snow blindness is where the vast amounts of bright white \_\_\_\_\_ causes your eyes to \_\_\_\_\_. Soon it is hard to tell \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. It makes it easy to \_\_\_\_\_ and/or \_\_\_\_\_.

In the summer, the open meadows fill in quickly with \_\_\_\_\_ and bright beautiful \_\_\_\_\_.

The bristlecone pine is one of the \_\_\_\_\_ trees on the planet. Some may be \_\_\_\_\_ of years old.

What are 3 ways that mammals have adapted to the subalpine winter?

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

The \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are so secretive and the subalpine is so high and rugged that we don't know if they exist in Colorado today.

When the snow and cold weather returns to the subalpine, most birds fly \_\_\_\_\_ or to a \_\_\_\_\_. Yet, some birds have adapted to living through the winter, name 3 of them: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_



## Alpine

What is the elevation range of the alpine life zone? \_\_\_\_\_

The alpine life zone is so cold and windy that it is above tree line. What does “above tree line” mean?

\_\_\_\_\_

The major landform here is the \_\_\_\_\_ (a series of tall mountains that zigzags north-south through central part of Colorado). It splits the way water flows in the United States. Everything east of the tall chain of mountains flows to the \_\_\_\_\_ and everything west flows \_\_\_\_\_.

Weather up here is really \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. The weather can change from \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ **really fast!**

In the alpine, you have a lot higher chance of getting struck by \_\_\_\_\_ since you may be the tallest object and you are so close to the clouds.

List at least 4 other dangers when hiking in the alpine:

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Only \_\_\_\_\_ grow in the alpine during very short summer (early July to early September).

The summer is so short and the temperatures stay cold enough so that no cold-blooded \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ can usually live there.

Most animals in the alpine only live in the alpine during the \_\_\_\_\_.

There are only a few animals that can live there most of the year. Name at least three mammals and one bird:

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

## Riparian

Colorado's greatest natural resource is not gold, silver, coal, or natural gas. It is \_\_\_\_\_.

Without the snow melt from the Rocky Mountains, many different \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ could not live here, including \_\_\_\_\_.

What are the 4 different types of riparian habitats?

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

In the lower elevations, like the semidesert shrublands and plains, \_\_\_\_\_ create important green stretches of land or corridors across an often dry landscape.

What two non-native trees were planted by the rivers that are now wrecking many riparian habitats? \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

What animal helps provide important habitats for moose and other animals, helps keep the streams clear, and prevents too much erosion? \_\_\_\_\_

In the alpine, snow melt often pools into crystal clear \_\_\_\_\_, and then forms into \_\_\_\_\_ that flow down the mountainside.

Beavers, muskrats, and other animals create a \_\_\_\_\_ to rub on their fur to keep it waterproof and the animal warm while swimming.

Name at least 4 other animals that live by the waters edge eating plants, insects, or other animals: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

How have these birds adapted to living in or by the water

Whooping crane: \_\_\_\_\_

Sandpiper: \_\_\_\_\_

Canada geese: \_\_\_\_\_

Bald Eagle: \_\_\_\_\_

American Dipper: \_\_\_\_\_