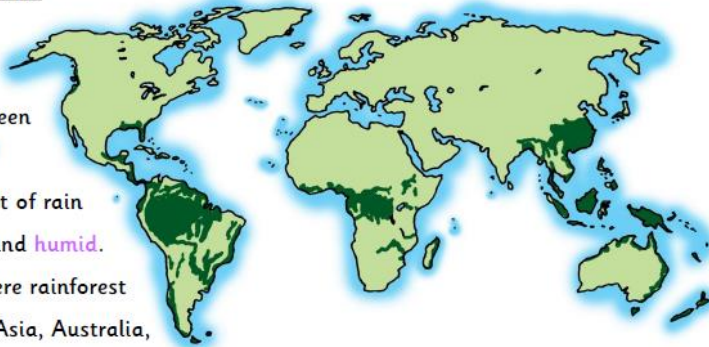


Rainforest Wildlife

Where are the tropical rainforests?

Almost all of the world's tropical rainforests or jungles are close to the Equator, between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. Rainforests get a lot of rain and they are very hot, damp and **humid**. There are five main places where rainforest **habitats** are located – Africa, Asia, Australia, Central America and South America.



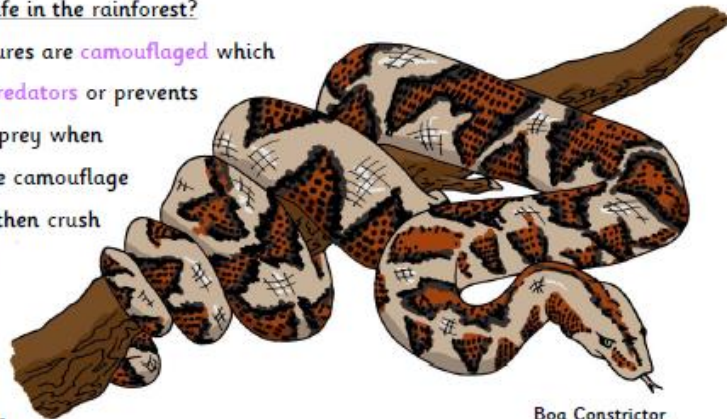
The largest rainforest habitat in the world is the Amazon rainforest in South America. Most of the Amazon rainforest is in Brazil.

Why do so many creatures live in the rainforests?

Tropical rainforests are **teeming** with all kinds of wildlife including mammals, **reptiles** and birds. In fact, it is estimated that around half of all the animal **species** in the world live in the rainforest. So many creatures live there because conditions are **optimal** for their survival. All the wildlife is able to find plenty of food and water, there is also shade from the heat and shelter from the rain. Trees grow very tall and the **vegetation** is very **dense**. There are so many animals living in the rainforests that scientists think that there may be more species that have not yet been discovered!

How do creatures adapt to life in the rainforest?

In the rainforest many creatures are **camouflaged** which either helps them to avoid **predators** or prevents them being spotted by their prey when hunting. Boa constrictors use camouflage to lie in wait for prey. They then crush it to death before eating it.



Boa Constrictor

Do all the creatures live in the same part of the forest?

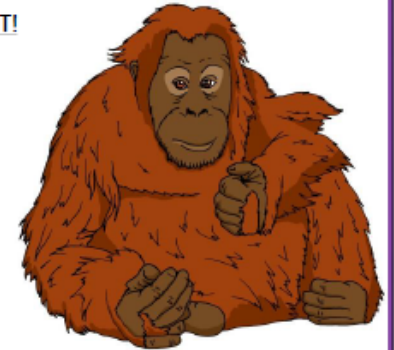
There are different layers of vegetation in the rainforest. Some creatures like tigers, tapirs, anteaters and sloths live primarily on the forest floor. This zone gets very little light. Creatures such as howler monkeys, sloths, spider monkeys and toucans live higher up in the forest canopy. Many tangled branches and leaves still block most of the sunlight, but this layer is the most densely **populated** zone of the forests.

Did you know?

Sloths move very slowly feeding on fruit and leaves in the forest. As their **digestive** systems work really slowly, they may only need to come down to the ground one a week to go to the toilet!



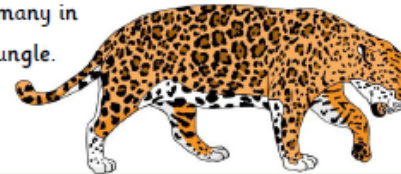
FACT!



Many of the wonderful creatures of the rainforest are becoming endangered because of the destruction of their habitat by people. Orangutans are becoming very rare and conservation work needs to take place to help them and many other creatures before they become **extinct**. **Deforestation** by people living near the forests to make money from the wood needs to be cut back to help the wildlife. It should also be remembered that the rainforests produce around one fifth of the oxygen that we all need to breathe.

JUNGLE CATS

Jaguars have become endangered animals and are now mainly found in the Amazon basin in South America. Ocelots live in the rainforests of Central and South America while tigers live in Asia, some in cold places and many in the jungle.



Anacondas live in the rainforest. The green anaconda is the world's heaviest snake. It grows up to nine metres long and can weigh the same as seven children! Its diet consists of wild pigs, deer, birds, turtles, capybara, caimans, and even jaguars. The anaconda crushes its prey and then swallows it whole, whatever its size. Its jaws are specially adapted to enable it to do this.



Anaconda