

REGIONAL DRILLING CENTER ACTIVITY

ARCTIC

This area is the region around the Earth's North Pole, opposite the Antarctic region around the South Pole. The Arctic area includes the Arctic Ocean and parts of Canada, Greenland, Russia, Alaska, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. More than 80% of Greenland is always hidden by a thick ice cap.

The Arctic region consists of a vast ice-covered ocean surrounded by treeless, frozen ground. Life in the Arctic region includes organisms living in the ice, fish and marine mammals, birds, land animals, and human societies.

The Arctic climate is characterized by cold winters and cool summers. Precipitation mostly comes in the form of snow. Average winter temperatures can be as low as 35 degrees below zero. In some areas of the Arctic, the sun does not set during the height of summer, nor rise during the depths of winter.

Trees cannot grow in the Arctic climate, however small plants and shrubs can grow close to the ground forming the tundra.



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WHICH REGION IS THIS?



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DESERT

Deserts represent one-fifth (20%) of the land surface of the world. Desert regions are found in the Africa, Asia, Australia, North America and South America. The largest desert is the Sahara, in North Africa, covering 3.5 million square miles.

A desert is an arid region, usually partly covered by sand, having scanty vegetation or sometimes almost none, and capable of supporting only a limited and specially adapted animal population. An area with less than 10 inches of annual rainfall is considered to be a desert. Some deserts go for years with no rain. Other factors contributing to the formation of deserts include the amount of sunshine, rate of evaporation of water, and range of temperature. Temperature ranges in deserts are often extreme. Deserts often get names, like “Death Valley,” because of the extreme conditions.

Plants and animals of the desert have adapted to the harsh conditions in order to survive. Among the animals living in deserts are species of snakes, squirrels, rabbits, rats, owls, a number of birds, gila monsters, and many other lizards. Animals normally spend most of the day underground, but come out at night to eat and hunt.



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OCEAN

Oceans are large bodies of saltwater connected together, covering 70% of the Earth's surface. Until the year 2000, there were four recognized oceans: the Pacific, Atlantic, Indian and Arctic. In the spring of 2000, a new ocean was added, the Southern Ocean. It surround Antarctica. The Pacific is the largest ocean, covering about one-third of the Earth's surface, which is more area than all the continents combined.

Seas are the smaller bodies of salt water connecting the oceans and can be partially or almost totally surrounded by land. The largest seas are the South China Sea, the Caribbean Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea.

The oceans serve many functions, especially affecting the weather and temperature. They moderate the Earth's temperature by absorbing incoming solar radiation (stored as heat energy). The always moving ocean currents distribute this heat energy around the globe. This heats the land and air during winter and cools it during summer.



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TROPICS

The tropics are the geographic region of the Earth centered around the equator. Tropical ecosystems may consist of rainforests, dry deciduous forests, spiny forests, desert and other habitat types. Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Madagascar are examples of tropical areas.

The average annual temperature is higher and the seasonal change of temperature is less than in other regions.

The lush rain forest regions (Amazon and Congo basins) have immense vegetation growth attributed to monsoon rains. They are known for a wide variety of flora and fauna. High temperatures and rainfall make rubber, tea, coffee, cocoa, spices, bananas, pineapples, nuts and lumber the leading agricultural exports for countries in the tropical region. Animals in tropical areas might include elephants, tapirs, rhinoceroses, gorillas, and a variety of snakes.

Central Africa is an example of a tropical area that has extreme heat but low humidity. However, depending on altitude of the area, some may include snow-capped mountain peaks, such as in the Andes Mountain of South America.



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