

# What Is an Environment?

An environment is all of the things surrounding you. These things include the air, weather, water supply, type of ground and **organisms**. There are many different types of environments.

Some environments are natural, which means they are formed by nature. They provide a home for living things. Deserts, rainforests and oceans are all examples of natural environments.

Some environments are built, which means they are constructed by people. They provide a setting for people to live and work.

Some environments are social, which means they are made up of the groups and organisations a person lives with and the shared **culture** between these.

This waterhole is a natural environment for these African zebras.



A city is a built environment.



## Why Environments Are Important

Environments are important to animals and people for many reasons. They provide animals and people with a home or **habitat**, where they can live, rest, find food and give birth.

Environments are also important because they can provide connections for people. Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia have important spiritual connections to parts of this land.

## Why Environments Need Protection

Because of their importance to people and animals, environments must be protected and cared for. Resources must be used in a **sustainable** way. This means that we should respect and monitor the use of all of an environment's resources.

There are different ways to protect an environment. It is our responsibility to find the best ways to protect environments to ensure they are preserved for future generations to enjoy.



A family or a community is a social environment.

# The Importance of Environments to Animals

Environments are important to animals because they provide them with a place to live. Animals find food, water and shelter in their environment, as well as the space to thrive and have babies.

## Food and Water

The food that animals find in their environment enables them to live and grow. Each environment contains types of food that are essential to the survival of the different animals living there.

Water also enables an animal to live and grow, so it is important that animals can find water in their environment. Some animals, such as lizards, only need a little water to survive. They can live in desert environments where water is scarce. Other animals, such as penguins, need a lot of water to survive. They live in marine environments.

Echidnas live in environments where they can find ants to eat.



Thorny Devils live in sandy desert environments.



## Shelter and Space

Animals find shelter in their environments, which help protect them from harsh or extreme weather. An animal's shelter also provides it with a place to rest, hide from **predators** and have babies. A shelter may be used by one animal in a **species** or many animals of the same species.

The amount of space that an animal needs to thrive differs from species to species, and between different environments. Some animals only need a small space to live while others need a much larger space. The amount of space they need depends on their size, the amount of food they need and what is available in their environment.

## Reproduction

Animals must **reproduce** in their environment to ensure the survival of their species. To reproduce, an animal needs to find a partner. When a female has mated with her partner, she needs to find a place where she can have her young. Often, parents look after their young until they are old enough to look after themselves.



Common wombats need enough space in their habitat for several burrows. Each burrow can be up to 30 metres long.



Yellow-footed rock wallabies shelter among boulders in their environment.