



Habitat Loss

Many habitats around the world are threatened. Living things rely on their habitats. This means that animals living in threatened habitats will also be threatened themselves. Loss of habitats can cause other problems such as flooding or climate change.

Deforestation is when forests are destroyed. Trees are cut down so that the wood (called timber) can be sold. Trees are cut down so roads or houses can be built. Many forests are destroyed for grazing cattle or growing crops. There are many people on the planet to feed so more farmland is needed.

The UK used to be covered in forests. Most are now gone. The Amazon Rainforest in South America is also disappearing. It is home to many precious animals and plants. Jaguars prowl among the trees. Harpy eagles soar above. Insects and snakes hide under the leaves. Some living things haven't even been discovered. If the Amazon is destroyed we may never know them.

Wetlands are areas where the land is covered by water. Marshes, ponds or floodplains are all wetlands. They are important habitats. They help fight global warming and they are home to important species. Wetlands are being destroyed by pollution. Some are also being drained so they can be built on. Cities are growing and people need homes.

Coral reefs are ancient habitats under the sea. Coral is a living thing. Lots of fish and other sea creatures live among the coral. Plants can grow there too. Coral reefs are in danger. They are sensitive to pollution and climate change. Coral is very delicate and can be killed by boats or fishing nets. It can even be harmed if people touch it. Coral takes a long time to recover and it is being destroyed too quickly. This is terrible news for all the living things who make the reefs their home.

Closer to home, hedgerows are strips of shrubs and trees. They used to be very



common. They provide an important habitat. Birds nest in them and eat the seeds and berries. Insects like bees, flies and butterflies live in them. Mammals like hedgehogs shelter under them. However, many hedges have been removed. Hedges between fields have been removed to make bigger fields. It means more land for farming. The farm machines that are used are too big to navigate between hedges too. Removing hedges means fewer hedgehogs, birds and insects. It can also increase flooding. Now, old or important hedges are protected to try to stop them being lost. Is it too little too late though?

VOCABULARY FOCUS

1. What does 'prowl' suggest about the jaguars?
2. What does delicate mean?
3. Which word tells us that there used to be a lot of hedges?
4. What does navigate mean?
5. What does increase mean?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

R

Where is the Amazon Rainforest?

E

How can we tell the writer cares about the Amazon animals and plants?

P

What advice might be given to someone going to swim near a coral reef?

R

Why were hedges removed?

E

What does the writer mean by the last sentence?