

John Muir Study Guide
Science Lesson Plan
Grade Three
Diverse Environments

John Muir traveled all over the world learning about the plants and animals that inhabit the various life zones.

Objective:

Students will be able to list examples of the diverse life forms that live in different environments, such as oceans, deserts, tundra, forests, grasslands and wetlands.

California Science Standard Grade Three, Life Sciences:

3b. Students know examples of diverse life forms in different environments, such as oceans, deserts, tundra, forests, grasslands, and wetlands.

Materials:

John Muir on Diverse Environments Reading Handout (also provided below)
Internet/library access
United States map or atlas

Preparation:

Share this information about John Muir with your students:

John Muir was an explorer all of his life, and he traveled to many places around the world. In each place he learned about the plants and animals that live in each region. As a boy growing up on a Wisconsin farm he came to know the prairie and grassland ecosystem with its beautiful wildflowers and singing birds. As a young man he hiked through the swamps and wetlands of Florida where he saw alligators and large numbers of colorful butterflies. In desert regions of Arizona and California he explored the rocky canyons where he found several kinds of cactus and yucca plants and saw bighorn sheep. During his many trips to Alaska he studied the mosses and

stunted plants of the partly frozen tundra regions and also saw eagles, grizzly bears, and arctic foxes. He visited many forest ecosystems around the world but his favorite was the Giant Sequoia forests of California, where the largest trees in the world can be found. Everywhere he traveled he carried a nature journal with him, making notes and drawing pictures of the plants and animals he saw on his journeys. Later in his life he wrote several books describing the many things that he had seen and learned about during his travels.

Explain to the students that there are several different kinds of biomes or large ecosystems within their state. Each biome has its own group of plants and animals that inhabit the region. Help the students make a list of these diverse regions such as deserts, mountains, prairie, woodlands, wetlands, oceans, etc.

Activity:

Divide students into groups of 4 or 5 and assign each group one of these regions on which to do a report. Using the Internet or library for information, have the students research and make a list of up to ten different plant and animal species that live there. Have each student in the group prepare a report on one feature of the region and share their findings in an oral report before the class. The groups can then compare their lists to see if there is any overlap in the kind of species that live in each environment.