

# ADVENTURES IN ECOTOURISM

Students explore unique climates and organisms of the world’s major biomes while making connections to NC Zoo exhibits.

**Grade Level**  
5-8

**Theme:**  
Biodiversity  
Ecosystems  
Conservation  
Habitat

**Curriculum Connections:**  
S, SS, A

**Materials:**  
Whiteboard  
Projector  
NC Zoo Map

Biomes are major natural communities classified according to predominant vegetation and the adaptations of resident organisms. Within biomes are eco-regions, or distinct areas characterized by climate, topography, soils, and types of plants and animals. Students should have a basic background in biomes and eco-regions before completing this activity.

**Biomes @ the Zoo**

Project the [NC Zoo Map](#) onto your whiteboard and allow students to assign each of the Zoo’s major exhibits to one of five major biomes. (Please note that while Zoo exhibits have been classified into one biome below for your benefit, they are actually designed around eco-regions and therefore may fit into more than one biome category.)

**Ecotourism Adventure**

Biome	Ecoregion/Exhibit Area
Aquatic	Marsh RJR Nabisco Rocky Coast (Polar Bear, Sea-bird and Seal) Mountain Bog (outside of Streamside) Streamside
Desert	Sonoran Desert
Forest	Cypress Swamp Woodlands (Bears) RJ Reynold Forest Aviary Forest Glade & Forest Edge Kitera Forest Cato Lemur Island
Grassland	North American Prairie (Bison, Elk) Watani Grasslands
Tundra	RJR Nabisco Rocky Coast (Arctic Fox)

After the class is satisfied with their exhibit assignments, break the students into five small groups and assign one of the five biomes to each group. Then, inform students that each group represents a business team that has been selected to design custom-made eco-tours.

# ADVENTURES IN ECOTOURISM

Adventures in Ecotourism uses cooperative learning to focus on the unique climates and organisms of the world's major biomes while making connections to NC Zoo exhibits.

**Grade Level**  
5-8

**Theme:**  
Biodiversity  
Ecosystems  
Ecotourism  
Biomes

**Curriculum Connections:**  
S, SS, A

**Materials:**  
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Explain to the class that over the next two weeks students will research and design an eco-tour to a particular region within their assigned biome. They will be asked to give a 10 minute presentation to entice potential tourists (classmates) to purchase tickets for their company's next departing tour.

Each company eco-tour group will consist of:

- **Tour Guide** who will describe the general conditions of the biome, the route the tourists will take, what tourists will do along the way and other details of the trip.
- **Survivalist** who will instruct the tourists on how to find food, drinkable water and shelter within the area and to warn tourists of the region's unique do's and don'ts.
- **Botanist** who will discuss with tourists information about at least three native plants that might be seen and their unique adaptations for the region.
- **Zoologist** who will discuss with tourists information about at least three native animals that might be seen and their unique adaptations for the region.
- **Conservationist** who will instruct tourists on how to leave the region exactly as they found it and to explain special problems or concerns of the biome such as deforestation, desertification, endangered species, etc.

*Note:* For groups with fewer than five members, simply combine roles. For groups with more than five members, split responsibilities.

Encourage your students to have fun and be creative in their presentations! They might dress in appropriate clothing for the biome, display route maps, pictures, or "artifacts" from the region. To incorporate technology, students may choose to film a commercial about tours to their biome.

## @ the Zoo

On your next visit to the NC Zoo, divide students into groups and make sure you have a representative from each biome sub-group. Ask each biome representative to share what they learned about their biome with the group when they visit an appropriate exhibit.