

A **habitat** is where an animal or plant lives. The habitat has the food, water, shelter, and space that a living thing needs to survive.

There are habitats all around you. Whether you live in the country (a **rural** area) or in a city or town (an **urban** area) you can find many different habitats. Look under a rock to find a sowbug. Find a sparrow in a shrub. Spot a cattail in a marsh. Animals and plants live in those places because those are their habitats.



A muskrat in its habitat

A small habitat can be part of a larger habitat. Imagine a rock in a meadow. Sowbugs live under the rock, which is their habitat. Grass plants grow around the rock. Mice live among the grass plants. An owl lives in the nearby forest and uses

the meadow as a place to hunt mice. The owl has a much larger habitat than the sowbug, grass plant, or mouse, but all three are connected.

You never find just one kind of animal or plant living in a habitat. For example, mosquitoes are not the only animals that live in Ontario towns and cities. Maple trees are not the only kind of plant that grows. When you look out your classroom window, you might see squirrels, birds, people, trees, bushes, grass, and flowers. There are always many different animals and plants living together in one place. A group of plants and animals of the same species is called a **population**. When different animals and plants live together in one place, they make up a **community**.

Animals that **migrate** have two habitats. When birds fly south in the fall, they travel to their winter feeding grounds. There it is easier for them to find the food they need to survive.

Guess what? Your body provides a habitat for some living things! You have **bacteria** in you and on you. Your body provides them with an **environment** where they can get the food, water, shelter, and space they need. But don't worry. Many of the bacteria actually help you. The bacteria in your intestines help you break down your food so that your body can absorb **nutrients** and get rid of waste. Have a nice day!



An owl preying on a deer mouse.