

Animal Adaptation Answer Key



Gopher Tortoise

These hard shelled reptiles live in the Southeastern United States in grasslands and other regions that have frequent fires. They are not fast. Instead of running from fire they dig deep tunnels under the ground where the heat of a fire can not harm them.



Pronghorn

This long-legged grazing mammal lives in the grasslands and steppes of the Western United States. They depend on fires to burn dry grass and shrubs and allow new, green grass to grow. They are fast, running at speeds up to 60 miles per hour. They can usually outrun fires that burn through their habitat.



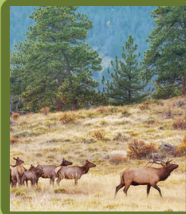
Australian Black Kite

This bird of prey from the southern hemisphere uses fire as a tool. It will pick up a branch from a campfire and will carry the branch to an area of dry fuel. It drops the branch to start a fire. As small animals try to escape the fire, the bird swoops down and collects its prey for dinner.



Prairie Dog

These small mammals live underground in burrows that protect them from grassland fires. They eat the grasses near their burrows, which prevents fires from approaching. A group of these burrows is called a "town." These animals are often found in open grassy areas in the Western United States.



Elk

These large grazing mammals live in the mountains and high elevation grasslands of North America. They are usually able to outrun fires. They return to burned areas as the land recovers. These mammals like to eat the grasses and plants that sprout as plants regrow.



Fire Chaser Beetle

These insects from the genus *Melanophila* fly towards fires. They can travel over 50 miles. Unlike most animals that try to escape fire, they depend on burned trees for habitat. When they arrive they lay their eggs under the bark of fire damaged trees. The insect can sense heat using infrared sensors in their thorax.



Karner Blue Butterfly

This endangered insect with blue wings is found in a small area in North America near the Great Lakes. They only lay their eggs on wild blue lupines, which is the food for their caterpillars. Wild blue lupines grow best in areas that have been cleared by wildland fires. Without fires these insects don't have food.



Western Fence Lizard

These reptiles are commonly found across the Western United States. They are often found in recently burned areas. Scientists think that they are able to sense fires coming and are able to find safe places to hide. They eat insects and change color depending on temperature.