



Some animals need to live near water in habitats called riparian habitats. This habitat includes all the lush, green plants that grow near the water's edge. **Muskrats** make their homes along the edges of ponds and streams where they like to eat aquatic plants and sometimes clams, frogs, and fish. Muskrat fur is very thick and dense for keeping warm when swimming in icy water during the winter.

Artwork by Annika Bernhard, *Wetland Plants and Animals*



Raccoons are adaptable animals. They like to live near streams and lakes in wooded areas, but they can also be found in the foothills, prairies, on ranches, and in towns. Raccoons are nocturnal, which means they are most active at night. They are expert climbers and good swimmers, and they like to use their paws to handle their food before they eat it.

Artwork by Elizabeth A. McClelland, *Small Animals of North America*



Prairie dogs build underground burrows where they live and raise their families. Many prairie dogs will live together in “towns” and their scouts sit on the edges of towns to watch for coyotes and hawks. The scouts will bark to warn others when danger is near, giving them time to quickly run for cover into their burrows.



Alpine habitat is very high, situated at the top of the mountains where it is cold and snowy much of the year. Few plants can survive the short growing season. **Pikas** are small, rabbit-like animals with no tail. They live on rocky (talus) slopes in the alpine habitat and are active all year long, cutting and drying grass during the summer and fall to feed on during the winter.

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