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Introduction

Wherever you go on Earth, you'll find living things. From sweltering rainforests to icy Antarctica, from dusty deserts to the depths of the ocean, our planet teems with life: mammals, reptiles, birds, fish, insects and plants. In this book, you can read about some interesting animals that live in



different environments. Notice how the way they live their lives is perfectly suited to their surroundings. A penguin's thick feathers keep it warm as it goes hunting for fish in freezing polar waters—but it would quickly overheat in the jungle.



A lazy sloth would struggle to find a branch to hang upside down from in the tree-less desert. And how would an elephant find living in the ocean?

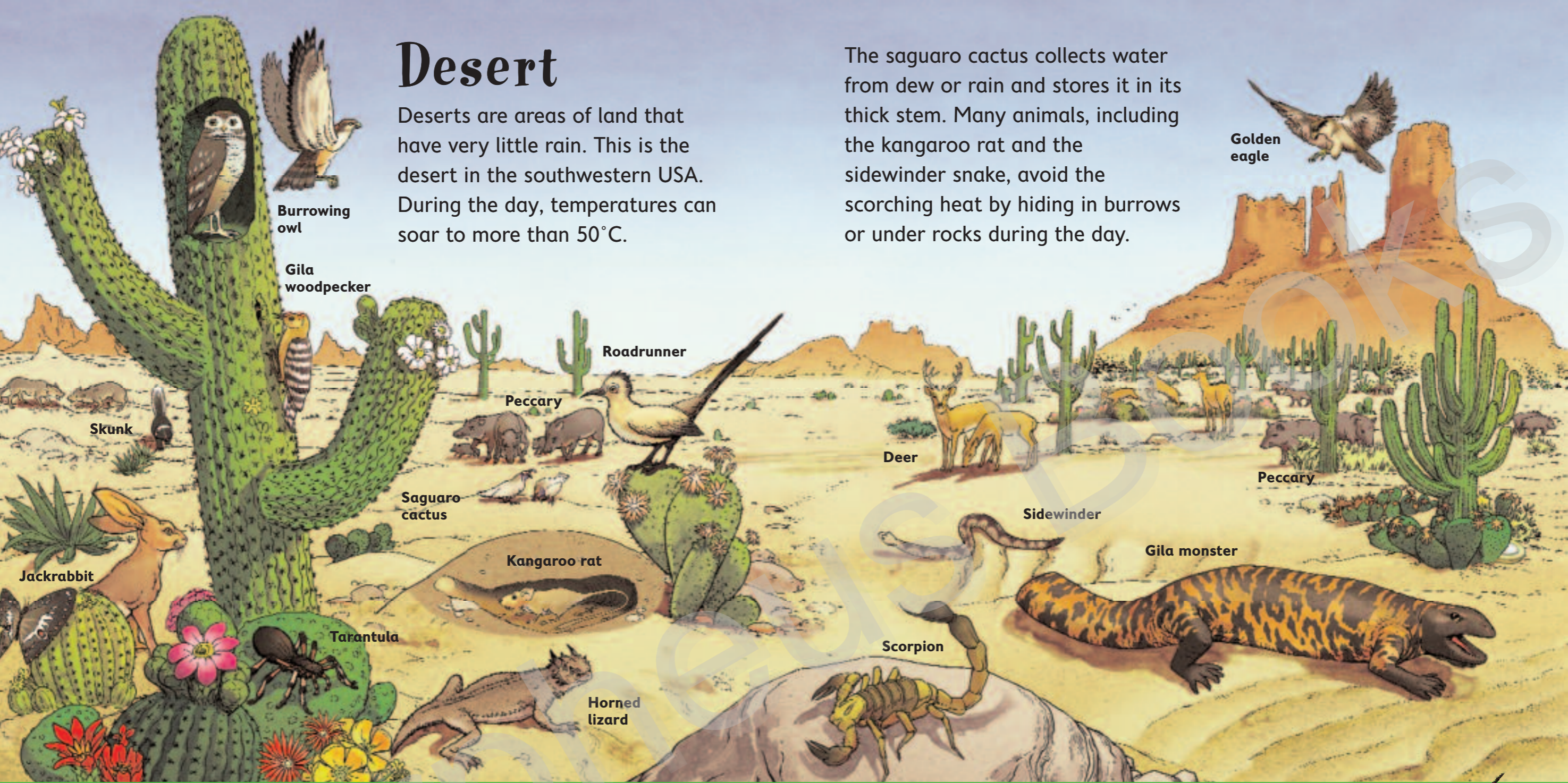
Look out for the gold coins. One is hidden in each scene ...



Desert

Deserts are areas of land that have very little rain. This is the desert in the southwestern USA. During the day, temperatures can soar to more than 50°C.

The saguaro cactus collects water from dew or rain and stores it in its thick stem. Many animals, including the kangaroo rat and the sidewinder snake, avoid the scorching heat by hiding in burrows or under rocks during the day.



Burrowing owl

Gila woodpecker

Roadrunner

Peccary

Deer

Peccary

Saguaro cactus

Kangaroo rat

Sidewinder

Gila monster

Scorpion

Horned lizard

Tarantula

Skunk

Jackrabbit

The horned lizard can squirt blood from the corner of its eyes to scare away attackers. It can also inflate its spiny body up to twice its size.



Peccaries are related to pigs. They have bristly hair and long, pointy teeth. They give off a strong odour so that other members of their herd can recognize each other. Using their sensitive snouts, they search the ground for grasses and roots.

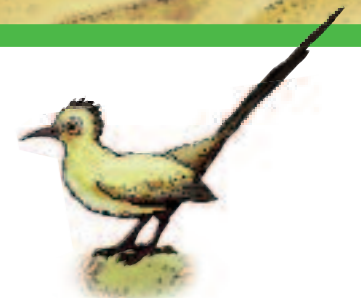


The male burrowing owl prepares the burrow inside a cactus for the female. He stands watch at the entrance to scare away predators.



Tarantulas spend most of the time under the ground. They sit by the entrance to their burrow at night and wait for insects and other small animals to approach before pouncing on them.

The scorpion uses its pincers to grab its prey, an insect or a small mammal. The stinger at the tip of its tail injects poison into it, making its victim unable to move. The scorpion then feasts on it.

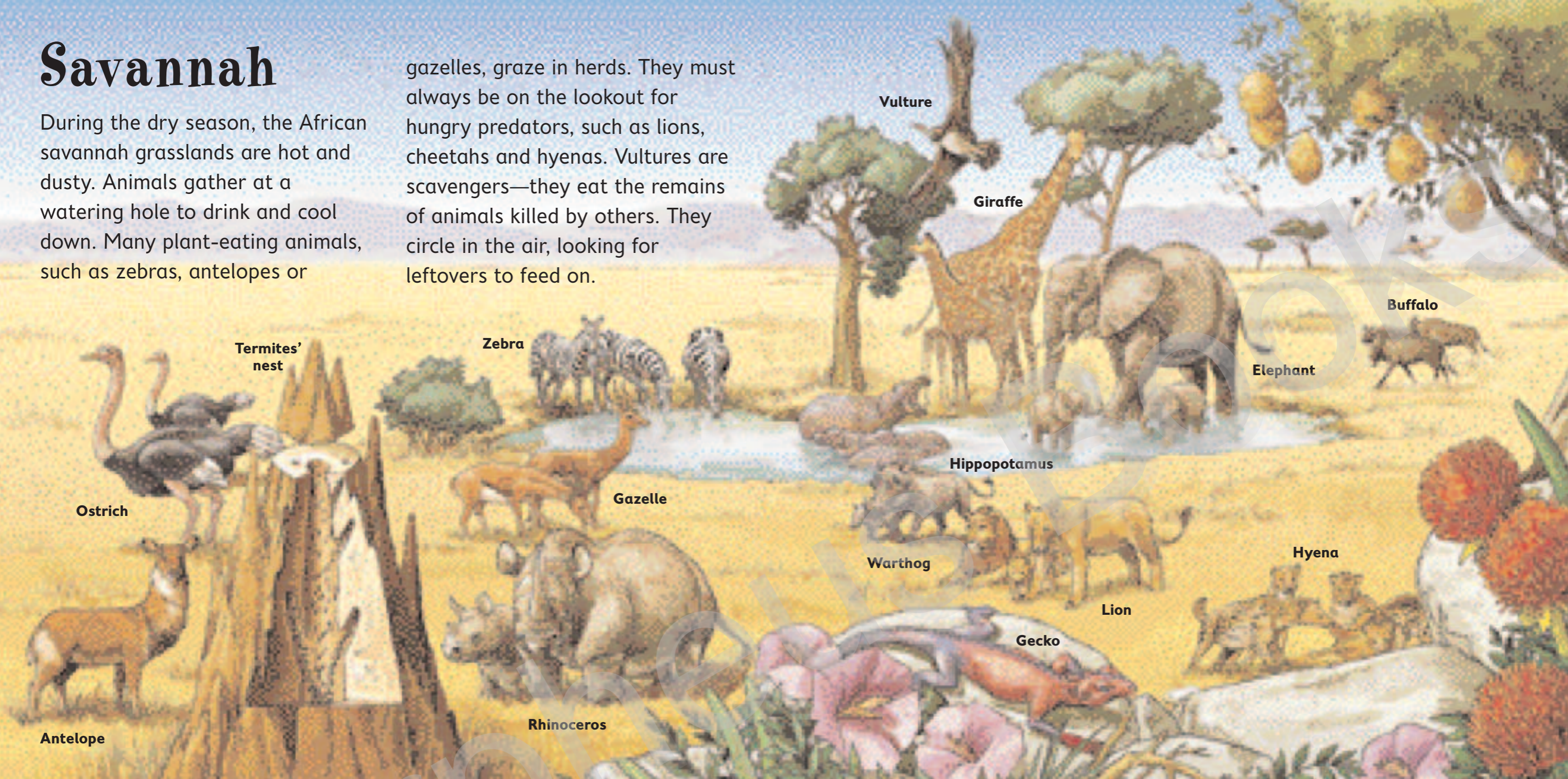


Roadrunners prefer sprinting to flying, although they may take to the air to escape coyotes. They can run at speeds of 25 km/h, fast enough to snatch insects in mid-flight.

Savannah

During the dry season, the African savannah grasslands are hot and dusty. Animals gather at a watering hole to drink and cool down. Many plant-eating animals, such as zebras, antelopes or

gazelles, graze in herds. They must always be on the lookout for hungry predators, such as lions, cheetahs and hyenas. Vultures are scavengers—they eat the remains of animals killed by others. They circle in the air, looking for leftovers to feed on.



Giraffes are the tallest animals in the world. They use their long necks to feed on leaves and shoots from the treetops. They have excellent eyesight and can run at more than 50 km/h.



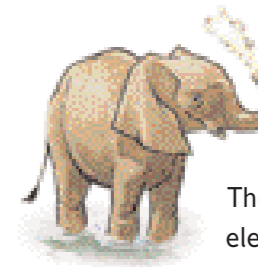
Lions live together in prides of up to three males and 15 females. Lionesses do most of the hunting. They stalk zebra, antelope and gazelle.

The zebra's black and white stripes may be a means of confusing predators. The patterns are unique to each zebra.



The rhinoceros's huge body is covered with very thick skin. Its horns are made of a hard material that is similar to that found in fingernails.

The spotted hyena is a ferocious meat-eater. Its strong jaws can crush even bones and hooves. It may hunt large prey after a long chase, or scavenge kills made by other animals



The African elephant is the largest of all land animals. Its trunk is really a nose and top lip combined. It is used to pick up food such as grass, leaves, branches and fruit. It can also suck up water.