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# Extreme Zone Fact Sheet

Extreme areas, like deserts, poles, deep sea vents, and rocky shores, are good places to explore the process of adaptation. Travel from the desert to the poles and from the depths of the ocean to the rocky shores, and learn how species have adapted to these ecosystems that are considered extreme for human habitation. Explore the patterns of life in the desert, tour the secret life of a tide-pool, see what lives at the bottom of the sea, or hang out at the icy poles.

**Exhibit Highlights:**

**Desert**

- Immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of a desert environment, complete with live chuck wallas, tortoises, scorpions and other creatures.
- Use an infrared camera to see how a reptile's body temperature changes in response to the environment.
- Discover how such desert species are adapted to their surroundings and how scientists study them.
- Keep an eye out—before you leave, you just might witness a flash flood, a powerful reminder of the role water plays in desert ecosystems.

(*****For a description of Desert plants and animals, see fact sheets for **Plants** and **Animals**.)

**Poles**

- Enter a polar research station and find out how species survive at the ends of the Earth.
- Feel the chill of an ice wall, test out various forms of natural insulation and use tree rings to piece together a climate time-line.
- See why the poles are crucial sites for scientific research.

**Deep Sea Vents**

- Come aboard a research vessel and take on the role of a deep-sea vent researcher.
- Prepare a remote operated vehicle (ROV) for a dive to the bottom of the ocean, and see what scientists have been able to learn about underwater geysers and the specially adapted creatures that live near them.

**Rocky Shore**

- Step outside and explore a tide pool filled with marine organisms that spend half of their lives covered by water and the other half exposed to air.
- See what it takes to live in this extreme location: find out how organisms use different strategies to withstand the pounding surf, then try to snag a meal as a barnacle does, and be a filter-feeder for a day.

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