

Temperate Grassland Fact Sheet



Elephants in the grasslands of Africa

Location: Temperate grasslands cover large parts of the earth's land surface. They are found on every continent except Antarctica. As the name suggests, temperate grasslands are dominated by grass plant species. They are found in the middle latitudes, in the interiors of most continents. In North America, they are called prairies. In South America, they are called pampas. In Africa, they are known as savanna.

Climate: Annual temperatures typically range from -20°C to 30°C and rainfall from 500 mm to 900 mm. There are, however, two different types of grasslands that we can identify. Each has their climatic characteristics. Tall grasslands are found in humid and very wet parts of the world. Short grasslands are found in those areas with dry, hot summers and colder winters.

Plants: The plants found in a temperate grassland is adapted to the dry climate and thin layers of soil. In these conditions, you won't find many trees and shrubs, as the soil is too thin for them to grow in. While you won't find many trees in the temperate grasslands you will find different types of grasses and wildflowers.

Animals: Temperate grasslands provide a habitat for many different species of insects, reptiles, birds and mammals. The range of animals present will, however, depending on where the grasslands are found. The animals of the African savanna include both herbivores (plant eaters) and carnivores (meat eaters). The herbivores include the wildebeest, plains zebra, rhinos, giraffes, elephants and warthogs. The carnivore's lions, leopards, cheetahs, jackals, wild dogs and hyenas. A balance between herbivores and carnivores is an important feature of the savanna environment.