

# The Taiga

The Taiga is the largest land biome. It is also known as the Northern Coniferous or Boreal Forest and is only found in the Northern Hemisphere below the Tundra Biome. In the Taiga, the winters are very long and very cold.

**Location:** The Taiga is found in Canada, Europe and Asia. The largest Taiga forest covers much of northern Russia and Siberia and the next largest covers much of northern Canada and Alaska. The smallest Taiga forest is found in Scandinavia.

**Weather:** Precipitation is usually in the form of snow and the Taiga averages about 254 cm or 100 in annually. The average temperature is below freezing for six months of the year. The Taiga's temperatures can fall below  $-60^{\circ}\text{C}$  or  $76^{\circ}\text{F}$ . In the summer months, the temperatures can rise above  $40^{\circ}\text{C}$  or  $104^{\circ}\text{F}$ .

**Seasons:** The Taiga has four seasons. The winters are very cold and the summers are warm. The spring and fall seasons are extremely short.

**Animals:** The animals of the Taiga typically have thick, warm coats, large paws, feathers, some have the ability to change colors and many will hibernate or they will burrow. The Taiga is inhabited by millions of insects. Typical animals of the Taiga include: lynx, bears, weasels, ermine, mink, squirrels, hares and lemmings.

**Plants:** The Taiga is a forest, primarily consisting of Coniferous (needle bearing) trees like pine, spruce, and larches. Low sunlight and acidic soil prevent plants from growing. The growing season is quite short, lasting only about three months. The soil in the Taiga is low in nutrients, very thin and very acidic. Due to the extreme difference in seasonal temperature, Taiga plants and animals must be able to adapt to these extreme changes in temperatures.