

# HOORAY FOR HABITATS



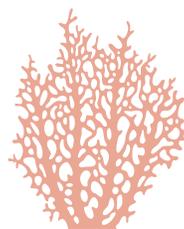
Watch the “Making Mavis’s Rescue Hideaway” video to see our resident sea turtle’s habitat.

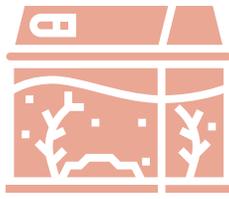
<https://youtu.be/hmEH0LqbkgS>

## What is a Habitat?

A habitat is a home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism. Habitats provide everything an animal needs to survive like food, water, and shelter. The type of habitat and the needs it provides is different for every animal. Clearwater Marine Aquarium’s resident animals cannot be returned to the wild because they would not survive on their own. Still, they require some things they would have in their wild habitat. For example, Winter and the other resident dolphins all need water to swim in and to protect their sensitive skin.

When we build a habitat, like Mavis’s Rescue Hideaway, we make sure that it has all of the things the animals living in it will need at all times, like water. There are also things that we add into the habitat that they only need sometimes, like food and environmental enrichment devices (EEDs). We always compare our habitats to wild habitats when designing new spaces or additions to the habitats we have at CMA.





## Habitat Review

Can you think of three things you saw in the video that are needed by the sea turtles in their habitat? Can you connect these needs with the sea turtles' wild counterparts?

- **Water:** Even though sea turtles breathe air, they live in water their entire lives. The only time they may come out of the water, is to nest. Also, sea turtles are reptiles which means their body temperature is controlled by their surroundings. Humans are the opposite; we can control our body temperature on our own. This is why a pet snake or lizard needs a heat lamp. The temperature of the water in Mavis's Rescue Hideaway is kept at the temperature that best matches what these sea turtles would have in the wild.
- **Rocks:** The rocks that were built into this habitat make the environment more challenging for the sea turtles just like the many different habitats a sea turtle may explore in the wild. Some of these rocks also have ledges that the sea turtles can rest on if they need to take a break from swimming. In the wild, sea turtles often rest in reefs, seagrass beds, and even in sponges.
- **Shelter:** You may have noticed that a roof was put over this habitat. That is so these animals have shelter from dangerous weather, like the thunderstorms common to Florida. In the wild, sea turtles can dive to deeper depths to avoid dangerous weather. Most of the sea turtles in Mavis's Rescue Hideaway float because of injuries they got in the wild. Because of this, the roof over this habitat is essential to keep our residents safe.

## Virtual Habitat Scavenger Hunt

On the Education Station home page, scroll down to see the live webcams streaming from each habitat at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium. Search through each webcam and answer the questions below using the word bank.

**PLATFORM, SCALE, POOL, ROCK BED, WATER, WATERSLIDE, PILINGS, CORAL ROCKS**

1. In the Otter Oasis habitat the \_\_\_\_\_ provides enrichment, or fun, for the otters. They are able to climb and splash, keeping them active and healthy!
2. In Mavis's Rescue Hideaway the \_\_\_\_\_ gives the animals something to rub against, rest on, or swim through, just as they would in their natural habitat.
3. In the Pelican habitat, the \_\_\_\_\_ allow the Pelicans to perch for a comfortable spot to preen their feathers like they would in the wild.
4. Watching the Nick Cam 2, you can see the \_\_\_\_\_ in his habitat that helps the Animal Care team keep Nicholas at a healthy weight.
5. On the Winter Zone Cam 2 the \_\_\_\_\_ is the area of the habitat where the dolphins can receive tactile enrichment like belly rubs, from the Animal Care Specialists. Dolphins are very tactile animals, meaning they seem to enjoy enrichment that involves touch.
6. On the Otter Cam areas like the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ mimic their natural environment. These areas of their habitat allow the otters to explore and play.
7. In the Pelican Habitat the \_\_\_\_\_ provides a place for the birds to take a swim or clean their feathers. Pelicans in the wild spend a lot of time in the water hunting for food or just floating to rest.



## **For an added Challenge: Habitat Connections**

Can you find what is essential to animals right outside your door? Find an animal that uses outdoor space where you live. Examples: bird in a tree, fish in a pond, insect in your yard. You can also use a pet at home as an alternative.

**List 3 things you can find in this animal's habitat that it needs to survive:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Humans can have a big impact on wildlife and their habitats. Can you think of 3 things humans do to wild habitats that could impact your animal?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_