

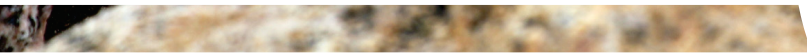


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The American Pika



Climate Heroes

The American Pika

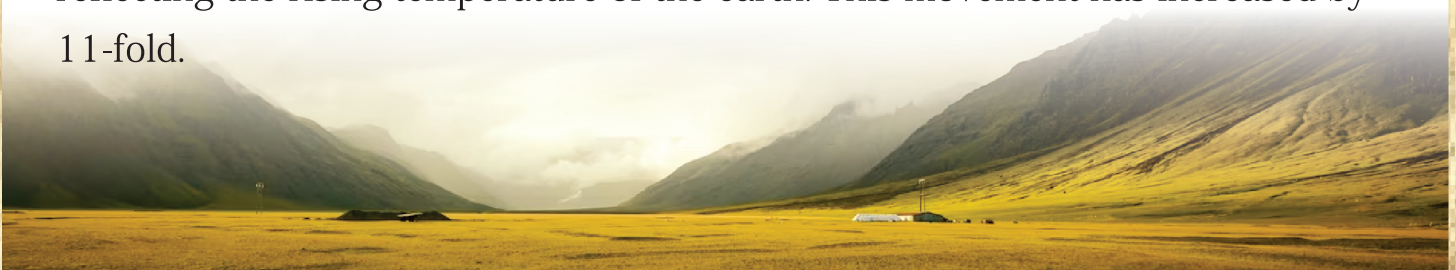
Hi!
I am Tara

Tara dreamed of visiting the USA to explore the pine grasslands and to observe some of the endangered animals. She wondered how certain creatures, such as the gopher frog, could indicate changes in the climate. After researching further, she discovered that the American pika is also a climate indicator. This small animal, which is part of the rabbit/hare family, reflects changes in the surrounding environment, making it



one of the first species to be impacted by climate change. Pikas are typically found in alpine and subalpine mountain regions of Canada and North America.

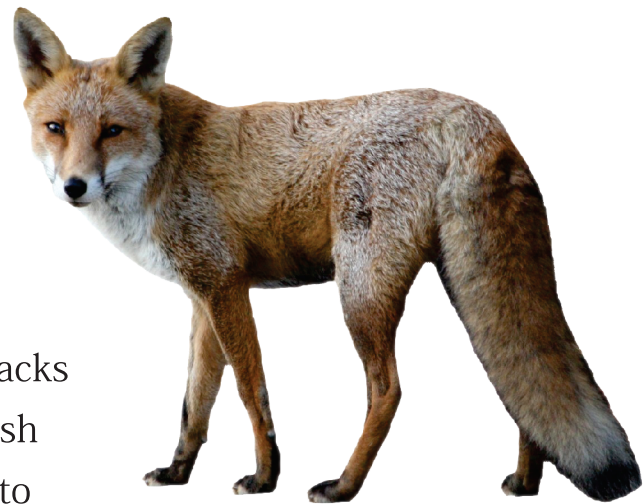
These gentle creatures have similar physical characteristics to rodents from the rat family, but their foraging activities help to distribute various plant species. Pikas thrive in extremely cold climates and are sensitive to heat. If exposed to temperatures above 77 degrees Fahrenheit for more than six hours, they are likely to die. To protect themselves from the cold, they have a thick, furry coat. Due to global warming, pikas are moving up the mountains at an alarming rate, reflecting the rising temperature of the earth. This movement has increased by 11-fold.



Pikas serve as a food source for several predators, including weasels, coyotes, and birds of prey like eagles. During the winter, pikas do not hibernate. Instead, they collect plant



materials and store them in haystacks to feed on during harsh winters. However, due to climate change, the rate of extinction for pikas has increased five-fold over the past ten years.



As Tara envisioned the snowy alpine mountains, the fresh scent of pine in the air, and the weasels chasing pikas while birds soar in the clear blue skies, everything seemed to connect: global warming is making it increasingly difficult for pikas to survive, leading to predator starvation.



New Words:

1. **Alpine**- related to the Alps mountains
2. **Impacted**- strongly affected by
3. **Hibernate**- decrease physical activity or go to sleep during winters

Find other new and interesting words for each other, and write their meanings in your notebooks.

Comprehension:

1. What is the preferred weather for pikas?
2. Where are pikas typically found?
3. Which animal does the pika resemble?
4. To which animal family do pikas belong?
5. Which predators feed on pikas?
6. How do pikas prepare for the winter season?

Take turns to make more questions like these above for each other and answer them.

Prompts Pair up

1. **Pika Haystack Challenge:** Play a game where one person is the pika and the other is the predator. The pika must collect as much hay as possible in a set amount of time and store it in their haystack, while the predator tries to catch the pika. Discuss how climate change affects the pika's ability to collect hay and how this affects the predator population.
2. **Pika Haystack Building:** Using natural materials such as grass and sticks,

build a haystack similar to the ones made by pikas. Discuss the importance of food storage for animals and how it helps them survive during harsh winters.

Watch the video
on the
American Pika
using the
QR code.



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