



## LIFE IN THE

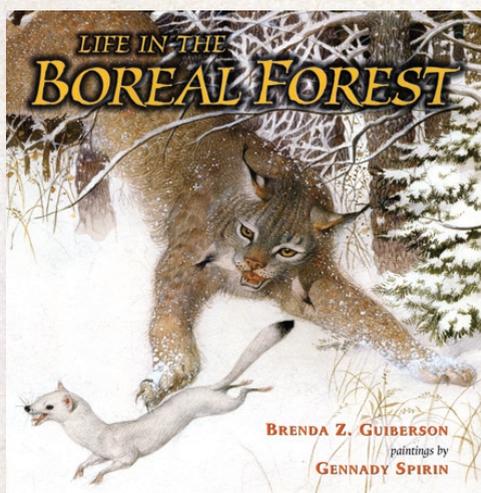


## Teacher's and Discussion Guide

### OVERVIEW

The great northern forest—the boreal forest—is home to a unique ecosystem of animals and plants. It covers one-third of the Earth's total forest area and is home to so many birds that it is known as North America's bird nursery. In this vast northern area, hares scrounge for a meal, beavers build their dams to keep themselves warm and safe under the ice, and evergreen trees spread their needle-covered branches.

The forest is a treasure trove of riches, but it's threatened by increased human development and climate changes. This gorgeous book teaches readers about the boreal forest and reminds them that it's up to us to make sure the beauty and bounty survive.



## PRE-READING ACTIVITY

You will read about many animals in *Life in the Boreal Forest*. Some of them are listed below. Complete the chart with the scientific name of the boreal forest animals and note the source of your information. A few are completed for you.

ANIMAL COMMON NAME	ANIMAL SCIENTIFIC NAME	SOURCE
Tennessee warbler		
budworm		
loon		
minnow		
leech		
white pelican		
whooping crane		
beaver	<i>Castor canadensis</i>	
snowshoe hare		
moose	<i>Alces alces</i>	
bear		
lynx	<i>Felis lynx</i>	
crossbill		
wolf		
vole		
raven		
red fox		
horned owl		
ermine		
ptarmigan		
caribou		
mosquito		
fly		
ant		
grasshopper		
frog		

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- 1 A biome is an area on the Earth's surface that has a certain set of characteristics. Locate a map showing biomes and identify the boreal forests.
- 2 Why is the boreal forest important?
- 3 What's green and growing in the boreal forest?
- 4 How does the boreal forest affect people?
- 5 How do people affect the boreal forest?
- 6 Compile a list of animal names from the book. Using these names, make a food chain for the boreal forest. Identify each animal as a primary, secondary, or tertiary consumer.
- 7 Locate and print an article on the boreal forest that has been in the news in the past year.



8 Some animals are able to survive winter by growing winter coats, but their coats are not the kind that people wear. Animals' coats are the result of growing thicker fur. How do the winter coats of the arctic fox, wolf, and caribou protect them?



9 The animals in the boreal forest are specially adapted to live in extremely harsh winters and moderate summers. Some animals have structural adaptations that help them survive in the boreal forest. How do the lynx, wolf, and bear adapt?

10 The ways that different human societies view the boreal forest and exploit it varies enormously from one part of the forest to another. How do Americans and Canadians regard the boreal forest? How do their views compare to those of the Russians and Swedes?

11 Why are conifers the dominant trees of the taiga? What are some common diseases of the conifer? Which ones can be prevented? Which ones can be deadly?

12 “Beavers haul branches underwater to eat when thick ice traps them for months in their frozen lodge and pond.” What do the beavers eat from the logs? How do their bodies process this nutrient?

13 What is the future of the boreal forest?

### POST-READING ACTIVITIES

Use your school library to learn about industrial activities within the boreal such as mining, peat extraction, forestry, non-timber forest products, petroleum, tourism, hydroelectricity generation, and agriculture. Discuss how these activities are affecting the boreal forest.

Produce an original piece of art in Gennady Spirin's style of one of the animals in the boreal forest.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**BRENDA Z. GUIBERSON** has enjoyed walks through boreal trees and bogs, which inspired her to write about this incredible forest. She is the author of many books for children, including the bestselling titles *Cactus Hotel* and *Spoonbill Swamp*. She lives near Seattle, Washington.

**GENNADY SPIRIN** has been awarded five gold medals from the Society of Illustrators, the first prize in both the Bologna and Barcelona international book fairs, and has been chosen four times for the *New York Times* Best Illustrated Books list. He lives in Princeton, New Jersey.

{ For a complete *Life in the Boreal Forest* lesson plan, visit [us.macmillan.com/lifeintheborealforest](http://us.macmillan.com/lifeintheborealforest). }

*This guide was prepared by Terry Young, media specialist, New Orleans, Louisiana.*

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