

# Écrins National Park: the home for animals and plants Worksheet

## Guidelines for educators

- **Context and the area of cultural heritage:** Natural cultural heritage: Fauna and flora of the Écrins National Park in France (endangered species)

- **Description and justification:**

In France, between the Northern Alps and the Southern Alps, the Ecrins massif is a vast group of high mountains (150 peaks over 3000 m and some 10,000 hectares of glaciers), vast expanses of mountain pastures and coniferous forests.

This park includes more than 2,500 plant species, more than 350 species of vertebrates and hundreds of other small animals including many butterflies. Some of them are protected.

The park offers a lot of resources that can be used for pedagogical content. One of them is Biodiv'Ecrins, the atlas of the flora and fauna of the Ecrins National Park, which provides fauna and flora data on its territory for over 40 years. These data are used to gain a better understanding of biodiversity, to monitor the evolution of certain fragile or heritage species.

- **Duration:** 45 minutes

- **Language level:** A2 - B1

- **Prior knowledge:**

knowledge of basic adjectives like long/short, big/small etc., basic tenses (present simple, present continuous), basic animal and plant names.

- **Thematic area, grammatical and syntactical phenomena (learning objectives):**

In this worksheet, students will learn about animals and plants that live in the Écrins National Park in France. They will know more about the diversified climate of this

place as well as typical mountain sports and some more advanced sport/nature vocabulary.

- **Skills developed (or benefits for students):**

At the end of this worksheet, students will be able to talk about animal body parts as well as the animals that can be seen in the Écrins National Park. They will also be able to talk about plants in this park. They will develop their vocabulary regarding nature and sports. They will know what an idiomatic expression is and how to use it. They will also know three of these expressions.

- **Material needed:**

a printer, pens/pencils, internet connection, copies of the worksheets

### **References and resources:**

*Animal body parts 1.* (2020, août 29). LearnEnglish Kids | British Council. Consulted on the 24 November 2021, <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/word-games/animal-body-parts-1>

*Environment and nature.* (s. d.). LearnEnglish. Consulted on the 24 November 2021, <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/category/topics/environment-and-nature>

*Fauna and Flora | AlpinePlayground.* (s. d.). Fauna and Flora | AlpinePlayground. Consulted on the 20 November 2021, <http://alpineplayground.com/activities/all-activities/fauna-and-flora/>

*La haute montagne, témoin du changement climatique mais pas que. . .* (2021, 6 juillet). Parc national des Ecrins. Consulted on the 24 November 2021, <https://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/haute-montagne-temoin-changement-climatique>

*Snow on the mountain.* (s. d.). TheFreeDictionary.com. Consulted on the 26 November 2021, <https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/mountain>

Web, A. D. (s. d.). *BioKIDS - Kids' Inquiry of Diverse Species, Welcome.* Copyright (c) 2002–2021, The Regents of the University of Michigan. All Rights Reserved. Consulted on the 25 November 2021, <http://www.biokids.umich.edu>

# Worksheet for the student

## EXERCISE 1

(Duration: 20 minutes)

Created in the 70s, The Écrins National Park is a home for an important number of plants and animals, or flora and fauna, as scientists like to call it. There are a lot of different species characteristic for different climates: we can meet the southern species like an ocellated lizard that likes to spend its time in the scorching sun, but also alpine ptarmigan, a beautiful bird that loves low temperatures and snow! There are more than 350 vertebrates! For the invertebrates, it's a bit more mysterious - we just know some of the species, the rest stays unknown, which is weird and awesome!

### Task 1 Read the text below

(Duration: 5 min)

A stoat, also called ermine or a short-tailed weasel, is one of the animals that we can meet in the Écrins National Park. A stoat is not very big, but very, very sweet. Don't be fooled by its appearance though! He was nominated as one of the world's top 100 "worst invaders", mainly because of its attacking and eating birds. Throughout the year, we can see ermine in two coats, depending on the season: white for winter, and brown for summer. Just look at him!



Very swift, ermine likes to hunt and eat all kinds of voles: meadow vole, prairie vole or woodland vole. They also eat birds, eggs, frogs, fish and insects. Ermine must be very careful: it can be a snack for other, bigger animals like red or grey fox, badger or hawk and eagle.

## Task 2

(Duration: 10 min)

As ermines are very fast, it's hard to get a good look at them. Could you help us complete their description? Looking at the pictures, choose the words from the list to fill in the blanks with.

Long – short – round and small – black – brown – fur – white – tail - whiskers

Its tail length is about 35% of the total body length, ranging from 42mm to 120mm.

Ermine has a \_\_\_\_ body, \_\_\_\_ legs, long neck supporting a triangular head, \_\_\_\_ ears, bright \_\_\_\_ eyes, and long \_\_\_\_\_. Its short, fine fur is \_\_\_\_\_ in the winter and the tip of the \_\_\_\_ is black. In the summer, the \_\_\_\_ on the back is chocolate \_\_\_\_\_ while the fur on the belly extending to the upper lip is yellowish white.

## Task 3

(Duration: 5 min)

Ermine likes to eat frogs, hawks like to eat ermines. These different animals have different body parts. Choose the name of the body part from the list! Write the right name on the lines placed next to or below the image.

**Wings – claws – feather – shell – fins – whiskers – fur – beak – tail**



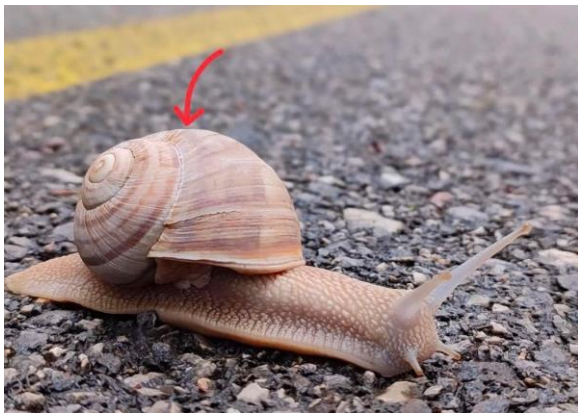
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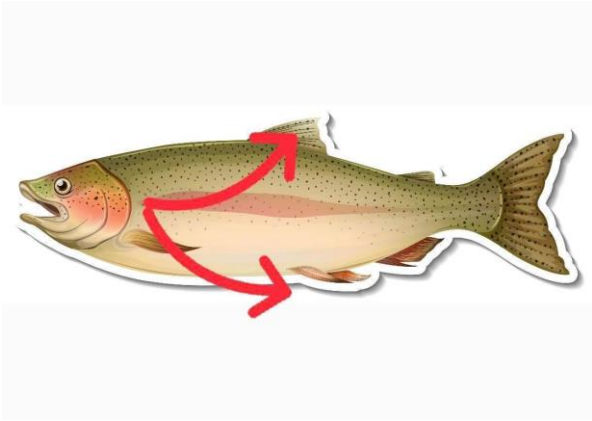
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Pictures taken from freepik.com



## EXERCISE 2: Climate change in the Écrins National Park

(Duration: 25 min)

Climate change can be seen everywhere, also in idyllic places such as national parks. Écrins National Park is a good example of these changes: on its territory, we can find mountain zones along with glaciers that are not only silent spectators of these changes but also their proof.

**Task 1 Read the text below. Then, try to make a sentence with one of the idioms from the list.**

(Duration: 5 min)

### **Snow on the mountain, or English idioms for adventurous people**

Idiomatic expressions are an important part of the English language. An idiom, or an idiomatic expression, is a word or a phrase that has a figurative, deeper meaning that all the speakers of a language understand. When we say something is a “piece of cake”, we mean it is easy – we are not (unfortunately) talking about an actual cake! There are about 25 thousand idioms in English. We chose three that have the word “mountain” in them. Choose your favourite one and try to make a sentence with it.

#### **have a mountain to climb**

To have an extremely difficult task to do.

Ex.: After losing Ohio to his opponent, the president now has a mountain to climb if he wants to hold on to his job.

#### **make a mountain of a molehill**

To make something (for example a problem) bigger than it is or focus too much on a small thing and make it seem like a big one.

Ex.: You got one B and you're acting like you're failing the class. You're making a mountain of a molehill if you ask me. Let's not make a mountain of a molehill.

#### **snow on the mountain**

Silver, grey, or white hair on one's head, as due to ageing.

Ex.: Sure, there's a bit of snow on the mountain, but I still lead as adventurous a life as I ever have!

This idiomatic expression is often used to say that someone is ageing. Speaking of snow on the mountain: under the snow, we can find real nature gems! Écrins National Park played an important role in the discovery of some new plant species. In 2020, three new species from the Androsace family have been discovered as high as 3500 metres of altitude. We can now observe a beautiful Viso Androsace, with its delicate, white petals, the pinkish Saussure Androsace, and the Androsace of Dauphiné with its fair, round flowers. You can see the Saussure Androsace and the Androsace of Dauphiné in the photos below. Just look at how beautiful they are!



**Task 2 Fill in the blanks. There is one extra word.**

**(Duration: 10 min)**

Nature has its unique vocabulary. Try to fill in the blanks to complete the text about the flora of the Écrins National Park, as well as about mountain activities you can do there. Use the words below:

bloom – fauna – Alps – climates – plant

The Hautes Alpes are situated at the junction of two \_\_\_\_\_, a continental climate and a Mediterranean climate. This combined with different altitudes and the varied geology of the area result in a vast diversity of \_\_\_\_\_ (hint: flora and....). The Écrins National Park for example has 1800 species of \_\_\_\_\_ recorded, that's 80% of the total number of species in the Alps.



Another advantage for those interested in botany in this area is that the range of altitudes means that spring arrives in different places at different times.

In general May and June are the best for flowers in the lower valleys. If you go a bit higher, you can still enjoy the spring bulbs. In the meadows, you should be able to spot globe flowers and several varieties of orchids along with margarites and scabious. In the higher pastures, the gentian will be coming into \_\_\_\_\_.

### Task 3 Fill in the blanks with the names from the list

(Duration: 10 min)

While Écrins National Park is a great place to observe plants and animals, the Alps outside of the park can be a place of fun as well! In the Alps, you can ski during the winter, but also climb. Experienced climbers have their favourite paths that are not only interesting but also beautiful! Read the text below and fill in the blanks using the words from the list.

further – reach – break – routes – view – spot – walking – follow

From Le Pré de Madame Carle, \_\_\_\_\_ the marked trail. You will reach the Glacier Blanc after \_\_\_\_\_ for roughly two hours. Continue alongside the Tuckett lake which offers a beautiful \_\_\_\_\_ of Mont Pelvoux and Le Pré de Madame Carle down below. You will \_\_\_\_\_ the Glacier Blanc refuge for a break and take in the breath-taking view of the glacier.

The Barre is not much \_\_\_\_\_, at the end of this glacial valley created by the Glacier Blanc.

The Barre des Écrins, the Dôme des Écrins or the Roche-Forio and the Montagne aux Agneaux are well-known \_\_\_\_\_ in the Pays des Écrins, which is a top \_\_\_\_\_ of French mountaineering.

## ANSWER KEY

### EXERCISE 1:

#### Task 1

Its tail length is about 35% of the total body length, ranging from 42mm to 120mm. Ermine has a long body, short legs, long neck supporting a triangular head, round and small ears, bright black eyes, and long whiskers. Its short, fine fur is white in the winter and the tip of the tail is black. In the summer, the fur on the back is chocolate brown while the fur on the belly extending to the upper lip is yellowish white.

#### Task 2

In chronological order:

Claws, wings, whiskers, shell, tail, fins, fur, beak, feather

### EXERCISE 2:

#### Task 1

Idioms:

I care too much about things, even if it's not so important. I often make a mountain of a molehill!

#### Task 2

The Hautes Alpes are situated at the junction of two climates, a continental climate and a Mediterranean climate. This combined with different altitudes and the varied geology of the area result in a vast diversity of fauna. The Écrins National Park for example has 1800 species of plants recorded: that's 80% of the total number of species in the Alps.

Another advantage for those interested in botany in this area is that the range of altitudes means that spring arrives in different places at different times.

In general May and June are the best for flowers in the lower valleys. If you go a bit higher, you can still enjoy the spring bulbs. In the meadows, you should be able to spot globe flowers and several varieties of orchids along with margarites and scabious. In the higher pastures, the gentian will be coming into bloom.

### Task 3

From Le Pré de Madame Carle, follow the marked trail. You will reach the Glacier Blanc after walking for roughly two hours. Continue alongside the Tuckett lake which offers a beautiful view of Mont Pelvoux and Le Pré de Madame Carle down below. You will reach the Glacier Blanc refuge for a break and take in the breath-taking view of the glacier.

The Barre is not much further, at the end of this glacial valley created by the Glacier Blanc.

The Barre des Écrins, the Dôme des Écrins or the Roche-Forio and the Montagne aux Agneaux are well-known routes in the Pays des Écrins, which is a top spot of French mountaineering.