



ANSWER KEY

Exercise: 1

Instructions: This activity will give you the opportunity to learn by comparing and contrasting snowshoe hares at different times of the year. You will observe and predict why these changes have taken place and how they might help the hares survive at different times of the year. You will also get introduced to the Digital Atlas of Idaho.

1. What happens to the fur color of a snowshoe hare at different times of the year?

Twice a year this animal changes its fur color. Starting in September the brown coat is slowly replaced by white-tipped hairs. In March, brown hairs replace the white colored coat.

2. Explain why you think the snowshoe hare's appearance might have evolved this way.

This adaptation helps the animal survive by being able to blend in with its surroundings. A white colored coat in winter will help this animal blend into the surrounding snow. A dark coat in summer will help the animal blend into the darker background when there is no snow.

3. How does the diet of the snowshoe hare change depending on the time of year?

The snowshoe hare is a herbivore, meaning it consumes plant matter. During the warmer months, it consumes green plants. In the cold months, it consumes small twigs and buds.

4. What is another physical change that happens to the feet of the hare in the colder months? How does this change help the hare?

In the autumn, the hare also grows thick fur pads on its feet. This not only insulates the feet better but also allows the hare to travel on snow better because it will not sink down as much.

Bonus Question:

Visit your library, or use the Internet to explain how the hares are able to change in the ways you described in question one.