

Notes - Tundra

A) Climate

less than 25cm (9in) of annual precipitation, usually as snow

average temperatures less than 10degrees Celcius

B) Soil

Permafrost - deeper zone of constantly frozen ground

Active zone - area at the surface that freezes in winter, thaws in summer

- the permafrost prevents water from infiltrating down, so it is often boggy with shallow ponds

C) Organisms

1. Plants - limited growing season and permafrost prevents deep root growth

- dominated by mosses, short grasses, wildflowers
- Lichens (fungi with symbiotic algae) found on rocks

2. Animals

Physical

- short limbs and ears
- thick fur with subcutaneous fat

Behavioral

- hibernation - go into a dormant state through the winter
- Migratory herbivores - form large herds that move to fresh food sources, often followed by carnivores - move into taiga in winter
- Migratory birds - use tundra for mating/nesting, lots of insects in boggy environment

Human effects- highly sensitive to damage and climate change, as they melt it disrupts the environment and releases large amounts of methane (a greenhouse gas) into the atmosphere.