Georgia’s Atlantic Ocean Habitat
How would you describe the Atlantic Ocean habitat?

The Atlantic Ocean touches the southeast corner of Georgia. The ocean is the home of the Right Whale during its mating season. Loggerhead Sea Turtles come ashore on the barrier islands to lay their eggs. Gray’s Reef is a national marine sanctuary located off the coast of Savannah. The Atlantic Ocean region is rich with wildlife diversity, as it is known as the “armpit of the east coast,” meaning that Georgia’s shoreline is the innermost pocket of water between Maine and Florida. Many different plants and animals funnel into the part of the ocean along the Georgia coast. Some animals in this region include shrimp, crabs, oysters, right whales, dolphins, loggerhead sea turtles, fish, and manatees. Some plants in this region include seaweed, pennyworts, algae, seagrass, sea oats (along coast), and morning glories (along coast).
Why would the Atlantic Ocean habitat be best suited for this animal?

Right Whale – The right whale is a mammal that lives in saltwater oceans. It can get as large at 18m (60ft) in length. It feeds on krill, zooplankton, small crustaceans, and other ocean creatures that can filter into its mouth.
Why would the Atlantic Ocean habitat be best suited for this animal?

**Loggerhead Sea Turtles** - Loggerheads nest regularly on Georgia’s islands such as Jekyll, Sea, Sapelo, Ossabaw and other barrier islands. Like all sea turtles, the loggerhead is completely adapted to life in the ocean and depends on land only for reproduction. Only the female returns to the beach. When female turtles reach maturity (15-30 years), they leave the water and dig a nest in the sand on the beach, deposit the eggs, cover the nest, then return to the water.
Loggerheads nest regularly on Georgia’s islands!
Life Cycle of a Loggerhead Sea Turtle

1. After hatching, baby turtles race towards the sea.
2. Turtle spends several years in passive migration.
3. In between breeding seasons, adults migrate back to adult foraging areas until ready to breed again.
4. Turtle migrates to nearshore waters to mature.
5. Migrates to adult foraging areas until ready to breed.
6. Turtle returns to the original birth site to breed.

The cycle then repeats.
Why would this habitat be suited for specific plants?

Seaweed – Seaweed is a plant that attaches itself to underwater rocks, coral, or shells. It requires a saltwater environment, and water which is clear enough to allow light through for photosynthesis.
What are the features of animals that allow them to live and thrive in this region of Georgia?

- Have **gills** to breathe under water or can hold their breath for a long time.
- Can survive in **salt** water.
- Can move quickly underwater to capture **food** or escape from **predators** (fins, flippers, etc.)
- **Webbed** feet for moving in water.
- Animals **communicate** underwater with sounds and movements.
- Animals **camouflage** to avoid detection from predators or prey.
What are the features of plants that allow them to live and thrive in this region of Georgia?

- Deep roots attach to underwater rocks.
- Plants can grow in ocean’s salt water.
- Some plants have air spaces in their stems to help hold the plant up in the water.
- Plants that can survive totally in water.
- Flexible stems that can withstand water movement.