

Medieval Natural World

Medieval History · Answer Key · 8 Questions

1. Which of the following large European predators, largely eradicated by the end of the medieval period due to hunting and habitat loss, was also historically associated with royal hunting privileges and symbolised power?

- A) European Badger
- B) European Lynx
- C) Brown Bear
- D) Wolf**

2. The 'Great Famine' of 1315-1317, a catastrophic event in medieval Europe, was primarily triggered by what environmental phenomenon?

- A) A prolonged drought followed by intense heatwaves
- B) A series of unusually severe and persistent wet and cold weather patterns**
- C) Widespread volcanic activity causing ash clouds
- D) A rapid influx of invasive insect pests destroying crops

3. During the early medieval period, the management of forests and woodlands often involved a system known as 'coppicing'. What was the primary purpose of this practice?

- A) To cultivate medicinal herbs deep within the forest
- B) To create clearings for large-scale agricultural expansion
- C) To sustainably harvest timber and firewood in rotation**
- D) To encourage the growth of specific game animals

4. The Black Death, which devastated Europe in the mid-14th century, is primarily understood to have been transmitted by fleas carried on which common medieval animal?

- A) Domestic Cats
- B) Wild Boars
- C) Rats**
- D) Feral Dogs

5. Which of these medieval practices was often employed to prevent soil erosion and maintain fertility in arable lands, especially in regions with sloping terrain?

- A) Terracing and contour ploughing**
- B) Extensive deforestation for open fields
- C) Intensive grazing by nomadic herds
- D) Draining of all wetlands for cultivation

6. The decline of the Roman Empire and the subsequent fragmentation of political authority in Europe led to a significant change in landscape management. What was a common environmental consequence of this decentralization and reduced state control over large territories?

A) Widespread reforestation and expansion of wildlands

- B) Increased construction of elaborate irrigation systems
- C) Intensification of mining operations across Europe
- D) Systematic draining and reclamation of coastal marshes

7. In medieval European coastal areas, which natural resource was often extensively harvested and traded, leading to significant localized environmental impact and depletion in some regions?

- A) Coral reefs
- B) Whale blubber
- C) Seabird eggs

D) Salt pans and seaweed

8. The Medieval Warm Period, a phase of relative warming occurring roughly between 950 and 1250, had a notable impact on agriculture. Which of the following was a direct consequence for crop cultivation in northern Europe?

- A) A widespread failure of grain crops due to excessive heat
- B) The ability to cultivate crops like grapes in regions previously too cold**
- C) A severe reduction in the growing season length
- D) Increased susceptibility of crops to frost damage