Study Questions

to “Wild Things in Winter”


Minnesota Conservation Volunteer magazine is your guide to wild things. Every other month, six times a year, the magazine arrives in your school library. Each one has a story for Young Naturalists like you. Are you curious about wild things? Young Naturalists tells true stories that can answer all kinds of questions such as these—

Have you ever heard of a purple wartyback? How about a pink heelsplitter, pimpleback, or monkeyface? All are Minnesota freshwater mussels. Read Young Naturalists stories to learn which species (kinds) of critters live in Minnesota—frogs, salamanders, snakes, wild cats, wild dogs, weasels, mice, and rabbits.

Want to peek inside the den of a red fox and see how the kits grow up? Are you a rock hound searching for agates? Have you ever wondered what’s alive under snow? How animals see? Why is a bluebird blue? How birds fly?

Would you like to hear the true story of giants of the ice age? Young Naturalists also tells you about the underground universe. You can read the story of a tiny owl that went to a hospital with an injured wing. Find out about a boy who worked in a logging camp. Read the story of Ojibwe children today hunting and gathering like their ancestors did.

Learn how to get started camping, snowshoeing, ice fishing, or canoeing.

Find these stories and more online at www.mndnr.gov/young_naturalists.

Your knowledge of wild things helps you explore and enjoy the outdoors. Have fun!
“Wild Things in Winter” Study Questions


1. True or False: Red squirrels are scatter hoarders.

2. Match the animal with a food source mentioned in the story:
   - gray squirrel: snowshoe hares and short-tailed weasels
   - red squirrel: twigs
   - Canada jay: insects, berries, seeds, ticks
   - beaver, snowshoe hare: cones
   - owls: deer
   - coyotes: nuts

3. Why do beavers stick twigs into the mud at the bottom of a pond?
   - a. to make the foundation for a beaver den
   - b. so they can grow into new trees in the spring
   - c. to provide shelter for turtles
   - d. to stash them away for food later in the winter

4. Name three things a beaver does to get ready for winter.

   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________

5. How does white fur help a snowshoe hare survive in winter?

   __________________________________________________
6. The Isabella tiger moths overwinters as a:
   a. caterpillar
   b. hemolymph
   c. cocoon
   d. egg

7. Where do snapping turtles spend the winter? _________________

____________________________________________________________________

8. Name three Minnesota mammals that hibernate. ____________

____________________________________________________________________

9. Name three Minnesota mammals that don’t hibernate. _______

____________________________________________________________________

10. Match the number with the fact from the story:
    Number of times per hour a wintering wood frog’s heart beats  4
    Number of times per minute a hibernating bat might breathe    0
    Number of bat species that hibernate in Minnesota in winter  3,000
    Number of times thicker than its summer coat that a deer’s winter coat is 5
    Number of calories a Canada jay eats in a day                 1
    Length of time a wood frog can stay frozen and still survive 50
    Number of nuts a squirrel might hide to get ready for winter  200

Challenge: The article states the hibernating little brown bat inhales and exhales about once a minute. If a bat hibernates for all of November, December, January, February, and March, how many breaths would the bat have taken in that time? (Extra Challenge: If you take 15 breaths per minute, about how many breaths would you have taken during this same amount of time?)
1. Which animals in this story might you find in January motionless in a pile of dead leaves?  
____________________________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________________________

2. What are three things white-tailed deer do to survive in winter?  
____________________________________________________________________

3. What are three benefits deer get from each other when they gather in deer yards?  
____________________________________________________________________

4. Why does a snowshoe hare eat different food in winter than it does in the summer?  
____________________________________________________________________

5. Migration is one strategy animals use to survive winter. The article described several other strategies animals use. What are they?  
____________________________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________________________

6. Why do “goosebumps” not help humans stay warm, but do actually help some furry animals stay warm?  
____________________________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________________________

7. If you were walking in the forest during the winter, and you came upon a pile of pine cone scales, what type of squirrel might you see nearby, and what is this food stash called?  
____________________________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________________________
### Student Study Guide: Vocabulary cards

*Cut along horizontal lines, fold in the middle and tape or staple. Blanks are provided to allow you or your students to add new words or phrases.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A substance that makes a liquid harder to freeze is</th>
<th><strong>Antifreeze</strong> is a substance that</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Droppings</strong> are another name for</td>
<td><strong>Poop</strong> is also known as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When something is very cold, it is</td>
<td>Something that is frigid is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you store things, you might be called a</td>
<td><strong>A hoarder</strong> is something that tends to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To separate something from something else is to</td>
<td>To insulate something from something else is to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You might <strong>store food</strong> in a</td>
<td><strong>A larder</strong> is a place to</td>
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<tr>
<td>When objects <strong>plummet</strong>, they</td>
<td>When objects <strong>drop quickly</strong>, they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Animals that kill and eat other animals</strong> are</td>
<td><strong>Predators</strong> are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A stash</strong> is a</td>
<td><strong>A hidden supply</strong> is a</td>
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