

# HOW ANIMALS KEEP Warm IN WINTER

by **jacob** rodenburg

**W**hen the temperature drops well below zero and trees are bending under the weight of snow, we love to curl up under a blanket and cradle a hot cup of cocoa. For animals, staying warm in winter isn't a matter of comfort, it's a matter of survival, and many animals find remarkable ways to ward off the cold. A deer might find a hillside away from the prevailing winds and a snowshoe hare might scoop out a hollow under the overhanging branches of an evergreen. Voles weave grasses together to create a cozy nest, a fox uses its warm brush—the word for its tail—to curl around itself, and a chickadee can fluff out its feathers to create an insulating air pocket layer around its body and will often find shelter in a tree.

Holing up in a tree during the coldest months of the year is one of the ways many animals survive. "Snags", or standing dead trees, often provide critical shelter for birds, mammals, insects, reptiles, and amphibians. Lined with feathers, fur, or grass, these cozy holes are windproof, safe from predators, and perfect for using as a nursery, roosting site, or even for food storage!



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Photocopy a Hole Patrol Card (provided on the right) and take it with you on your next walk in the woods. Be on the lookout for snags and use the cards to help you figure out which species might be living in your "NeighbourWood."

Compare the size of your hole with your card. Look for additional clues such as feathers, scat, pellets, chewed cones, tracks, and scratch marks. What did you find? •

- » chickadee
- » flying squirrel
- » downy woodpecker
- » brown creeper
- » house wren
- » little brown bat
- » nuthatch

3 cm (1.5 inches)

- » tree swallow
- » hairy woodpecker
- » great crested fly catcher
- » white-breasted nuthatch
- » saw-whet owl
- » northern flicker
- » red-headed woodpecker

4 cm to 4.5 cm (1.6 to 2 inches)

7 to 12 cm (3 to 4 inches or more)

- » gray and red squirrels
- » American kestrel
- » wood duck
- » screech owl
- » bufflehead duck