

THE THREE “D”S OF FALL PREP

As days get shorter and temps get colder, you begin to pull out your sweatshirts, turn up the heat, and eat more food. Wildlife have their own tricks for dealing with the changing seasons. **They ditch, doze, or deal, depending on their adaptations.***



WE'RE OUTTA HERE

Some birds, such as ruby-throated hummingbirds and Baltimore orioles, ditch winter by migrating in the fall. They often fly hundreds of miles away to a place where the weather is warm and there's plenty of food and water.

THE BIG SNOOZE

You've probably heard that some animals sleep (or doze) through winter. This is called hibernation and it happens when an animal's body temperature cools and its heart rate slows waaaaay down. True hibernators, including groundhogs (a.k.a. woodchucks) and some species of bats, hit the sack in late fall and sleep until spring. Deep sleepers, such as bears and chipmunks, will wake up on warm winter days. Snakes, frogs, and other cold-blooded animals slow down and wait out the cold either blanketed under a layer of fallen leaves, underwater, or buried below the ground's "frost line," where temperatures stay just above freezing.

DEAL WITH IT

Rather than ditch or doze, many animals deal with cold weather by adapting. Mammals grow thicker winter coats and get fatter. Birds may fluff up their feathers for warmth. One challenge for "dealing" is finding food. You can help birds that stick around by putting out a bird feeder.

***ad-ap-ta-tion** is a body part, feature, or behavior that helps a living thing survive in its environment. It can be something physical like feathers or fur, or behavioral like ditching, dozing, or dealing.

TRY THIS!

BREATHE LIKE A GROUNDHOG

When a groundhog is active it breathes 100 to 200 times a minute, but when it hibernates it breathes just once every five minutes.

Can you imagine?

How many breaths do you take in one minute?

_____ *per minute*

Now try it again, and do it even slower.
How many breaths did you take?

_____ *per minute*



Want more? Read *Bear Has a Story to Tell* by Philip and Erin Stead to learn how all kinds of animals prepare in the fall. Available in the Audubon Shop and at shop.massaudubon.org.

