

ACORNS: A Fall Feast

Acorns, which tumble from oak trees in the autumn, are an important food source for creatures large and small.

How many acorn-loving animals can you spot in this picture?

How many can you find outside?

1. White-breasted Nuthatch

You'll find this bird climbing down trees headfirst. It pushes acorns into bark and pecks (or "hatches") them open with its slender beak.

2. American Crow

The crow's diet is varied and includes fruit, insects, eggs, and fish. In autumn, when these foods may be scarce, it eats more nuts.

3. Blue Jay

You might hear this noisy bird squawking "jay, jay, jay!" or making a sound like a rusty gate. It even mimics the screams of hawks!

4. Northern Bobwhite

The only quail found in Massachusetts, the small but rotund bobwhite hunts for acorns and crabapples on the ground.

5. Wild Turkey

The turkey swallows acorns whole and grinds them with a muscular organ called a gizzard.

6. Raccoon

The raccoon is a great tree climber. It has a diverse diet, but acorns are its preferred food during cold months when its food supply is limited.

7. Tufted Titmouse

Look for a small gray bird with a pointy crest. It's often found in yards and loves to visit feeders.

8. Eastern Chipmunk

The chipmunk stores seeds and nuts in its burrow. During the winter, it wakes up every couple of weeks to eat.

9. White-tailed Deer

Not only does the white-tailed deer eat acorns, it also nibbles on oak leaves and twigs.

10. Eastern Gray Squirrel

This common squirrel often uses oak leaves to build its nest up in the tree canopy.

11. White-footed Mouse

You probably won't see a white-footed mouse eating out in the open; it prefers to dine in a sheltered place, such as under a log.

ready, set,
Go Outside!

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A look back: In our last issue, we gave some pointers for keeping a nature journal. Those interested in learning more may also wish to check out the works of Clare Walker Leslie at clarewalkerleslie.com/books.