Highlands-Cashiers LAND TRUST
"Saving Special Places since 1909"

Nocturnal Animals

How do nocturnal animals search for food, find one another, and protect themselves in the darkness? Animals that are awake at night have special ways of surviving with very little light.

Background:

- Animals that sleep at night and awake during the day are called *Diurnal*.
- Animals that are awake at night and sleep during the day are called *Nocturnal*.
- Nocturnal animals have special *adaptations* that help them survive at night. An adaptation is a special feature or skill that makes it unique in surviving.

Nocturnal Animal Adaptations

Animals that are awake at night have special adaptations that help them to navigate in the dark including heightened senses.

Large Eyes

Some nocturnal animals have very large eyes for better vision with limited light.

Flying Squirrel

Owl

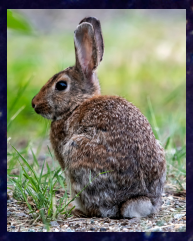
Bobcat

Many nocturnal animals use their long *whiskers*, which are very sensitive hairs on the face, to help them navigate and find food.

Exceptional hearing

Some have large or specialized ears for exceptional hearing abilities so they can hear mates calling, locate prey, and hear when predators are coming.

Rabbits are actually considered *crepuscular* which means they are most active at dawn and dusk.



Rabbit

Fox

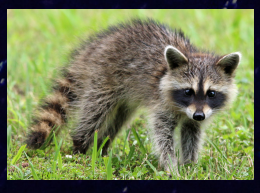
Mouse

Amazing sense of smell

Many nocturnal animals have a keen sense of smell so they can find food and communicate with others by marking where they have been with scents.

Bear

Opossom



Raccoon

More Nocturnal Animals:

Insects

Many insects are nocturnal and have unique adaptations for suvriving night life.

Fireflies

Fireflies are actually a type of beetle. They have an ability to light up their abdomen and use flashes to signal to mates

Moths

Moths use antennae to "smell" so they can detect odors of other moths and nectar from night blooming flowers.

Crickets

Crickets make chirping sounds to communicate with other crickets. Males create this sound by rubbing combs on their wings together like playing an instrument.

Spiders

Spiders use webs as a tool to catch prey. They also have special hairs on their bodies that detect vibrations and can alert the spider if something is caught in their web.

Bats

Bats have a special sensory ability called *ecolocation* to navigate and locate food (moths, mosquitoes and other flying insects). They emit high-pitched sounds that bounce off nearby objects. Bats can use echoes of the sounds to determine where the objects are.

Frogs/Toads

Male frogs and toads use vocal calls to let females know where they are that they are worthy mates. Different frogs make different sounds - anywhere from a "peep" of a spring peeper to the wood frog's call that some say sounds like a turkey's gobble.

Moonlight Walk

Directions:

With an adult's help, use this guide to explore outside at night. You do not have to go far, simply step outside your front door and use your senses to observe your surroundings.

***Tip: Keep a porch light on to help you see and to attract moths and other insects.**

What you will need:

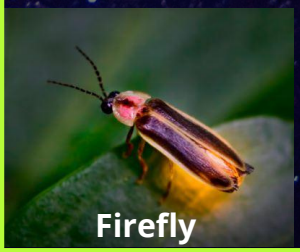
Flashlight: Use this to help you see.

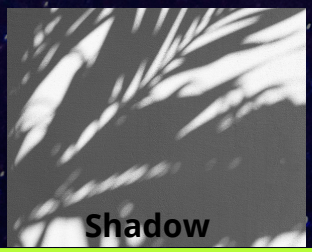
Bug jar: use this jar to collect an interesting insect. Only collect ONE at a time. Remember to be gentle! and let your bug go after you get a good look.

Glow stick: Put this around your wrist so other people can find you in the dark.

What to search for:

Look for:





Listen for