

Herts and
MiddlesexWildlife
Watch

Hibernation Game!

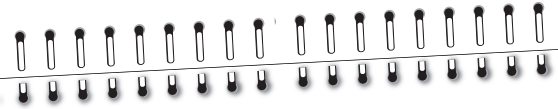
Background information

Only three animals in the UK truly hibernate: hedgehogs, bats and dormice. Other animals, such as reptiles, amphibians and some insects are often described as hibernating, but they are in a dormant state, like a very deep sleep, rather than in true hibernation. During hibernation the animal's heart rate, body temperature and metabolic rate drops significantly. This allows them to conserve energy and live longer off their fat reserves during the winter months when there is little food available. They may also hibernate in the summer if there is insufficient food – a process known as aestivation.

In order to survive hibernation, animals need to put on extra fat in the autumn in order to have enough energy reserves to see them through the winter. They also need to find somewhere dry and well insulated in which to hibernate. If they don't find a good place they might get too cold and wake up (which uses up a lot of energy) or freeze!

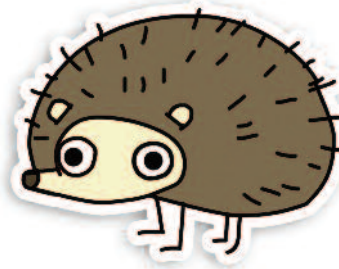
Activity objectives

This game aims to teach children about hibernation and that all animals need food, shelter and water to survive, especially during the winter months. It also aims to highlight how animals need to be on the lookout for predators at all times!



What you will need

1. A large area in which to hide the tokens – preferably a woodland, although this could be played in school grounds.
2. A number of tokens (cut out and laminated from the accompanying sheets)
 - Acorns = food (substitute with real acorns/hazelnuts/pinecones if available)
 - Rippling pond = water
 - House = shelter
3. Clothes pegs (for the predator)



Now turn over...



and play the game!





Herts and Middlesex



wildlife watch

Hibernation Game!

How to play

1. Prior to the game, hide the tokens in various places around a central point.
2. Discuss with the group why some animals find it difficult to survive the winter.
3. Explain that they need to try and find enough "food" (acorn tokens) to survive the winter. Tell them how many they need to collect in order to survive.
4. Give them a time limit and then let them go off to find the "food".
5. When the time is up, gather the group together and see who has collected enough food to survive.

Extensions of the game

1. Add shelter tokens. Children have to collect one of these along with enough food to survive. (You could hide less shelter tokens so that there will not be enough for everyone!).
2. Add water tokens. Children have to collect one or more of these along with the food and shelter tokens.
3. Add in a predator. Chose one child to act as a predator. Their job is to sneak up on their "prey" and attach a clothes peg to their clothes. This means that they have been caught and are out of the game. (You could mark out a circle around the central point to be safe zone from the predator.)

Useful Links

Hedgehogs

www.sttiggywinkles.org.uk/images/PDF/PDF%20Fact%20Sheets/Hedgehog%20Hibernation%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf

Bats

www.bats.org.uk/pages/bat_roosts.html

Dormice

www.ptes.org/files/122_dormouse_fact_sheet_and_information_small.pdf



Follow up

1. Research where different animals hibernate.
2. Discuss what happens to them when they hibernate.
3. Discuss how other animals that don't hibernate survive the winter. E.g. squirrels collect lots of nuts in autumn and store them in caches.
4. Make a hedgehog hibernation house! www.bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces/hedgehog_home/

Information for Teachers

National Curriculum Links

Y2 POS Describe how different habitats provide for the basic needs of animals.

Y4 POS Recognise that environments can change and this can sometimes pose dangers to living things.

Y6 POS Identify how animals are adapted to suit their environment in different ways and that adaptation may lead to evolution.

