



Kids Newsletter Autumn 2023

Kids what to know.....

Where do insects and animals go for the winter?



Let's start with bears

Bears **hibernate** during winter, but aren't sleeping the whole time. Hibernation for bears simply means they don't need to eat. The actual name for this is **torpor** which is a period of time in which an animal is less active and has a slow rate of breathing and body temperature. They make their dens in hollow trees or logs, under the root mass of a tree, and rock crevices. Other species that enter this state are chipmunks, raccoons, snakes and hedgehogs.

Now onto birds



Many of New Jersey's summer songbirds migrate. This means they fly south to spend their winters where insects and nectar are plentiful. They fly as far Central and South America. Among the New Jersey migratory birds wintering in the south are **sparrows, warblers, hummingbirds** and **thrushes**. Birds that remain in New Jersey for the winter are those that eat mostly seeds, insect larvae and dried berries. Our year-round birds

include **American goldfinches, cardinals, chickadees, blue jays, titmice, woodpeckers** and many species of **sparrows and finches**.

Year-Round Residents

 This state we're in has many mammals – like **deer, foxes, coyotes** and **squirrels** – that stay active all year round. They survive the cold by increasing their body fat during warm weather and growing a thick coat of fur.



Squirrels spend most of the fall collecting acorns and pinecones and stashing them away. On especially cold days in winter, they'll huddle together in nests for shared warmth.

 **Deer** also gather together for warmth in winter, often seeking out sheltered areas like groves of pine trees. They conserve energy by not moving as much. When snow prevents them from reaching grass and plants, they'll eat twigs and bark.

Foxes and coyotes, which feed largely on small rodents, don't change their behavior much in winter. Their thick winter coats allow them to hunt and sleep in comfort.



Where are the Insects??

In New Jersey, insects are most active in the summer, and many people tend to think of insects as a strictly summer pest. Many insects, such as **wasps** and most **bee** species, do die out when winter's cold winds start to blow. But quite a few insects have devised fascinating plans for surviving the cold. Some insect species like **ants** and **termites** remain active throughout the winter. Termites and certain ant species build their nests deep underground below the freezing level of the ground. Other insects, such as **stink bugs, lady bugs, and flies and mosquitos** go into a type of hibernation called diapause.  During this stage their body systems slow dramatically, allowing these insects to conserve energy and survive colder temperatures.

Monarch butterflies are unique among insects in that they also migrate long distances, from New Jersey to central Mexico.

Every fall – in early October, huge clouds of monarch butterflies make the 2,500-mile trek south where millions gather and live in hibernation in the pine forests for six to eight months. Then, in February or March, the entire cycle starts all over again.



What is a minibeast?



Minibeasts are very small creatures, such as **worms, snails, insects or spiders**. Also called invertebrates as they have no backbone or skeleton.

They survive the winter in a variety of ways. Some minibeasts such as ladybugs and snails hibernate in a sheltered location while others find shelter under rocks and leaves.

What about frogs and turtles?



Many of you see **frogs** and **turtles** around Arnold's pond on Goffle Road. They are known as cold blooded creatures as they have no inner heat like humans and mammals. They get through the freezing winter temperatures by hibernating at the bottom of the pond where the temperature remains above freezing. This is called **brumation** which means they become sluggish and inactive.

Create a winter den

To create either one of these winter dens you will need:

- Paper Plate
- Glue
- Cotton balls
- Leaves and twigs
- Construction Paper
- Crayons

