



Objective: Animals need to find ways to survive the winter, just like people do. Animals choose one of three main ways to survive – hibernate, migrate, or tolerate (stay active). Student will learn about these three survival strategies, the Minnesota animals who use these strategies, and how to find signs of winter animal survival around where they live and go to school.

Outdoor U Video – watch some of our Student Naturalists make ‘winter buddies’ to see what animals are surviving the winter near where they live and go to school.

[Outdoor U Winter Animal Survival Video](#)

Outdoor U Activities – short and quick lessons from us that are designed to help students get to know how animals are surviving the winter.

[Winter Buddies](#) - This activity will encourage students to look for animal signs while building their own winter buddy.

[Go for the Gold](#) - Students will learn about winter survival strategies of Minnesota animals and vote to decide on the most unique survival strategy

Outdoor U Art Connections – activities from us that serve to strengthen the connection between art and science.

[Art Extension - Winter Buddies](#) - This art activity will help students imagine what kind of animals might visit their winter buddies.

[Mini Winter Home](#) - Students will create their own survival home, just as if they were an animal trying to survive in the winter!

Other Suggested Activities – additional ideas for activities from other organizations to further your student’s learning about animal tracks.

Keep Your Creature Warm from [Learning for a Sustainable Future](#)

Students will conduct an experiment to determine the best ways to keep warm during the winter.

Honk, Hiss, Ribbit: What’s Migrating? From the [Jeffers Foundation](#)

This is a short intro activity in which students will imitate animal calls to greet one another.

Migration Racin’ from the [Jeffers Foundation](#)

This Red Rover-style game helps students learn which animals migrate and how they move.

Winter Survival Tag from the [Canadian Wildlife Federation](#)

In this game, students play the part of animals and winter “threats” through role-play.

Websites – background information for teachers and fun activities for students to extend everyone’s learning.

Teachers

[How Animals Prepare for Winter and Survive the Cold](#)

Learn about hibernation, migration, food storage, and adaptation with this neat nature video! Watch as a variety of mammals, insects, and birds get ready for winter.

[Animal Adaptations Lesson Guide](#)

This teacher resource guide provides you with everything you need to know about hibernation, migration, and adaptation to feel like an animal winter survival expert. Additional resource links are provided at the bottom of the document as well.

[Teacher Guide to MN Conservation Volunteer Article – ‘Wild Things in Winter’](#)

This resource provides questions and extension activities to guide your students in learning how animals change their bodies and their behavior to survive the winter.

Students

How Minnesota Animals Prepare for Winter – For Kids from [MN DNR](#)

Explore Jay Cook State Park with Naturalist Carly to how animals survive the winter in Minnesota!

Animals with Winter Coats from [SciShow Kids](#)

Animals don’t have blankets, hot chocolate, and grocery stores to keep them warm and fed throughout the winter, so how do they survive the cold? Watch this video to find out!

Migration Game - Wanda the Wood Thrush from [Smithsonian’s National Zoo](#)

Answer questions about migration to help Wanda the Wood Thrush migrate from Costa Rica to Maryland after a long winter!

Hibernation and Migration Quiz from [Turtle Diary](#)

Put your naturalist skills to the test with this quiz about hibernation and migration!

‘Wild Things in Winter’ from [MN Conservation Volunteer Young Naturalists](#)

Some animals store food in special hiding places, others store up fat for energy, and some even stop breathing and nearly freeze solid to survive the long winter months! Read this article to learn which animals use these survival strategies.

Suggested Reading – a curated list of books we recommend reading with your students about animal tracks.

Fiction

[Stranger in the Woods](#) by Carl R. Sams II and Jean Stoick

Beautiful photographs compliment the story of animals in the forest trying to figure out where the “stranger in the woods” has come from. Perhaps even inspiring children to make snow creatures of their own.

[Bear Snores On](#) by Karma Wilson and Jane Chapman

Cute winter critters stay warm and have fun while the bear continues to sleep, unable to be woken while deep in its hibernation, then delights in their company.

[The Hat](#) by Jan Brett

Scandinavian-style drawings bring to life the story of Hedgie the Hedgehog who learns that the ways humans stay warm in winter aren’t necessarily the way for animals on the farm.

Realistic Fiction

[Goose Moon](#) by Carolyn Arden and Jim Postier

A young girl and her grandpa look for a sign in nature, inspired by Indigenous teachings, that show that the geese will return to their home in the North. The story is complete with illustrations by a Minnesota artist and perfect for the end of winter time where the return of migratory animals is anticipated.

[Time to Sleep](#) by Denise Fleming

Minnesota animals warn one another of the approaching winter, including the signs that clue them in and the things they must do to prepare.

[When it Starts to Snow](#) by Phillis Gershtator and Martin Matje

In this rhythmic picture book, a young boy embraces the power of asking questions, wondering what happens when the snow falls. Animals on the farm and in the forest answer with the ways they survive the winter. A true celebration of snow story!

[Not a Buzz to Be Found: Insects in Winter](#) by Linda Glaser and Jaime Zollars

Children play outdoors in the winter while each page delightfully describes what different insects do during this time. This book answers questions about creatures we often forget about during winter, yet are doing fascinating things.

[Under the Snow](#) by Melissa Stewart and Constance Bergum

Covering many people's favorite mammals, insects, fish, and reptiles, this picture book describes the behaviors of creatures who spend their winters in a unique place—under the snow, offering a unique perspective on animal winter survival.

[Animals in Winter](#) by Henrietta Bancroft

Detailing adaptations for different animals that hibernate, migrate, and tolerate in winter, this book offers comprehensive detail on just what characteristics and behaviors allow for animals to succeed through and after harsh winters.

[Over and Under the Snow](#) by Kate Messner

As a girl explores the delights of winter, we learn of the adaptations and behaviors of animals above snow, below snow, and the special in-between layer known as the subnivean zone.

[Winter Dance](#) by Marion Dane Bauer and Richard Jones

With beautiful drawings, a young red fox asks its neighbor animals what it should do now that winter is coming. Along the way, we learn with the fox what other northern animals do to survive.

[Going Home: The Mystery of Animal Migration](#) by Marianne Collins Berkes and Jennifer DiRubio

The how, why, and where of migratory animals' return are answered in this book. Each page is complete with a specific animal, poetic verse, and vivid drawings as well as additional information on the animal and related classroom activities and learning.

Nonfiction

[Hibernation/Hibernar](#) by Margaret Hall/Dr. Martin Luis Guzmán Ferrer

Available in a bilingual (English/Spanish) form and complete with vivid photography, this book provides the basic knowledge for understanding hibernation and is written at an early-elementary independent reading level. Additional resources, vocabulary words, and graphics are also included.

[How Do Birds Find Their Way](#) by Roma Gans and Paul Mirocha

Information and pictures of over 15 different birds is shared alongside bird behaviors and adaptations, historical theories of what birds do in winter, and the many methods and mysteries surrounding the incredible ability birds have to find their way during migration.

[Why Do Geese Fly South in Winter: A Book about Migration](#) by Kathy Allen

Packed with pictures, graphics, vocabulary, and more, wonder and questions guide the book in answering questions about migration in its many forms.