

Whistling Woodchucks

DID YOU KNOW?



Woodchucks or groundhogs (*Marmota monax*) are also known as whistle-pigs. When feeling threatened, their alarm signal is a shrill whistle.

They are always on the lookout for danger and will stand on their hind legs for a better view, or even climb a tree. Foxes, hawks, and bobcats are a few of the animals that prey on them.

Members of a group of large ground squirrels known as marmots, the vocal woodchucks also bark, squeal, chatter their teeth, and warble.

GET OUTDOORS!

Listen for the sounds made by the animals in your yard or neighborhood. Can you hear birds singing? Squirrels chattering? Are the animals giving an alarm signal? How do you know?

Play Whistle Walk! Draw 2 parallel lines. Whistle-pig stands on the home line; all others stand on the start line. Facing away, the woodchuck whistles to the others in turn, who try to reach the home line. The length and number of whistles determine the length and number of steps forward.

*What's that I hear? Something to fear?
Lurking in the bushes near?
Stand up tall; give the whistle call;
Race to your burrows, one and all!*



Flocking Frugivores

DID YOU KNOW?



Cedar waxwings (*Bombicilla cedrorum*) are frugivores (**froo-ji-vors**)—fruit-eating birds.

Flying in flocks, they descend on berry-bearing trees and shrubs and quickly devour the fruit—seeds and all. These sleek birds are important to plants for seed dispersal. However, if the fruit is overripe and fermented, it can intoxicate the birds and cause injury or death.

Cedar waxwings are named for their favorite treat, the fruit of the cedar tree and for the red wax-like tips on some of their wing feathers.

GET OUTDOORS!

What are the birds in your yard or neighborhood eating? Can you spot frugivores? How do you know? Can you find birds eating nuts? Seeds? Insects? Are any of the birds eating more than one type of food? In your nature journal, note what you see.

Gather berries and seeds and make piles of treats for your feathered friends. Which are their favorites? Play A Flock of Friends. Hold hands with some of your pals and run together like a flock of birds!

*Ripened fruit on the cedar tree brings
Beautiful birds with red-tipped wings;
And when the tree has filled their needs,
The flock flies aloft dispersing seeds.*



Turtle Tempo

DID YOU KNOW?



Painted turtles (*Chrysemys picta*) are able to stay under water without oxygen for up to five months—longer than any other vertebrate.

During winter hibernation these small turtles change their tempo to very, very slow. They don't move or eat, their metabolism drops over 90 percent, their heart rate slows to as little as one beat every five minutes, and they supply energy to their cells with a type of respiration that requires some of their own bones and shell to dissolve!

GET OUTDOORS!

Watch the tempos of the animals in your yard and neighborhood. Can you find some that are moving very slowly or not at all? Others with even, steady movements? Others that move quickly? Is there a purpose for their slow or fast movements? How do you know? Note what you see.

Gather some friends and play Turtle Tempo! Run and jump, pretending to swim and climb on logs like turtles in summer. When someone yells "Turtle Tempo!" everyone moves in slow motion. Now, have a race!

*In winter's time of ice and snow,
Turtle's tempo is very slow;
He barely moves or eats a thing
Until the bright warm days of spring!*



Drum Duet

DID YOU KNOW?



Stoneflies (suborder Arctoperlaria) communicate by drumming. These aquatic insects spend most of their life as nymphs among the stones and rocks of fast-moving streams. When they emerge and become adults, it's time to make music!

The male plays a complicated riff specific to his species by using his abdomen as a drumstick on the ground. The female stays in one place and replies with a simple beat while the male moves closer. The drum duet continues until they meet and mate.

GET OUTDOORS!

What are the animals in your yard and neighborhood doing to attract mates? Can you see birds dancing? Squirrels chasing? Lizards strutting? Are they drawing the attention of females? How do you know?

Play Drum Duet! Take turns tapping a simple tune on the ground with your foot and see if your friends can reply with the same tune. Make the riff increasingly complicated, and see if they can follow!

*I hear a rousing drumbeat riff,
Tap my answer and wonder if
You'll find me and be glad we met,
Playing our own sweet drum duet!*





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- Swim in a healthy lake
- Build a sandcastle or outdoor fort
- Camp out under the stars
- Climb a tree
- Catch a fish
- Hike a path
- Watch a bird
- Listen to a cricket, bird or frog
- Smell a wildflower
- Explore nature
- Volunteer to help wildlife
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