

Seasonal Change in Animals

The following activities are intended to be used as a follow-up to the virtual tour of the Toronto Zoo's Tundra Trek, with a focus on seasonal change in animals.

ACTIVITY ONE - Caribou Song

You have learned how caribou change from one season to the next. Create a short song or poem to remember the features that change (think about their food, antlers, hooves, and hair)!

ACTIVITY TWO - What do Arctic Foxes eat?

You have learned that arctic foxes are opportunistic eaters (they will eat many different things, depending on what they can find). Research the types of foods that they might eat in the wild. Would you like to eat the diet of an arctic fox?

Try to create a menu with your family using only the food that you have available in your house! This would make you an opportunistic eater.

ACTIVITY THREE - Polar Bear Paw

Draw a picture of a polar bear paw. Remember to include all of the adaptations (special features) that it has to allow polar bears to walk around in a snowy environment (think about size, hair, claws, grip). How does a polar bear paw compare to your own hand?

ACTIVITY FOUR - Arctic Wolf Den

You have learned that arctic wolves spend time every year remodeling their den. If you had to design a den for your family, what would it look like? Draw a picture or write a description. How is the den different from your current house?

ACTIVITY FIVE - Mind Map

Create a mind map on a large piece of paper to brainstorm how animals might change their appearance (how they look) or their behaviour (how they act) in order to adjust to the change of seasons! Parents, please see big ideas and prompting questions on the following page.

Big Idea: Some animals have behavioural changes, meaning that they change what they do or how they act in order to adjust to the world around them.

Prompting Questions: What might some animals do to survive living in a cold and snowy setting? Would they change their behaviour in the summertime, when the weather gets warmer? How do we change our activities depending on the season?

Possible Answers:

- Migrate – move somewhere else, especially birds because they can fly south to get away from the cold weather
- Hibernate – animals such as frogs and snakes sleep during the entire winter season to avoid the winter cold
- Torpor – animals sleep in the winter time but do wake up on nice days to scavenge for food. (Animals that torpor includes racoons and skunks.)

Big Idea: Some animals go through physical changes (adaptations, “creature features”, changing how they look) in order to survive the changing seasons in their habitat.

Prompting Question: Can you think of some ways that animals’ bodies might change or look different to help them deal with different seasons?

Possible Answers:

- Different amounts of fur/hair – some animals shed their fur in the warmer months in order to keep cool and grow more fur in the cooler months to keep warm.
- Camouflage – some animals have special colourings that allow them to keep hidden from predators and other danger (arctic fox get a white coat during winter and a grey coat at other times)
- Body Features – Animals have adapted certain body features to help them survive in their environment, e.g. the size of the polar bear paw, to act as snow shoes and their claws to grip the ice.

Check out more arctic animal activities from our friends at Polar Bears International:

<https://polarbearsinternational.org/education-center/units-lessons/polar-bear-tracker-unit-plan/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=fee2cc47-feab-484c-bc21-e1c54af1eb25>