

LEVELED Book • M

# Hibernation

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Written by Kira Freed

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A deer eats bark.

## Food Is Scarce

Many places have cold winters. Some animals in these places have trouble finding food in the winter. Food is **scarce** during this time. Some animals **migrate** to warmer places to find food and return in the spring. Other animals hibernate to **survive** the winter months.

Hedgehogs must gain weight to hibernate.



## What Is Hibernating?

Hibernation is like a very **sound** sleep. Not even loud noises can wake the animals up. Hibernating animals sleep for days or weeks at a time. Hibernating animals breathe very slowly. Their hearts beat slower, they are using little energy, and they do not need to eat.

Groundhogs are warm-blooded animals.



Snakes are cold-blooded animals.



When a warm-blooded animal hibernates, its body temperature drops until it is almost as cold as the temperature outside. A cold-blooded animal's body temperature always matches the temperature outside. When a cold-blooded animal gets too cold, it hibernates.

Raccoons collect food.



## How Do They Stay Alive?

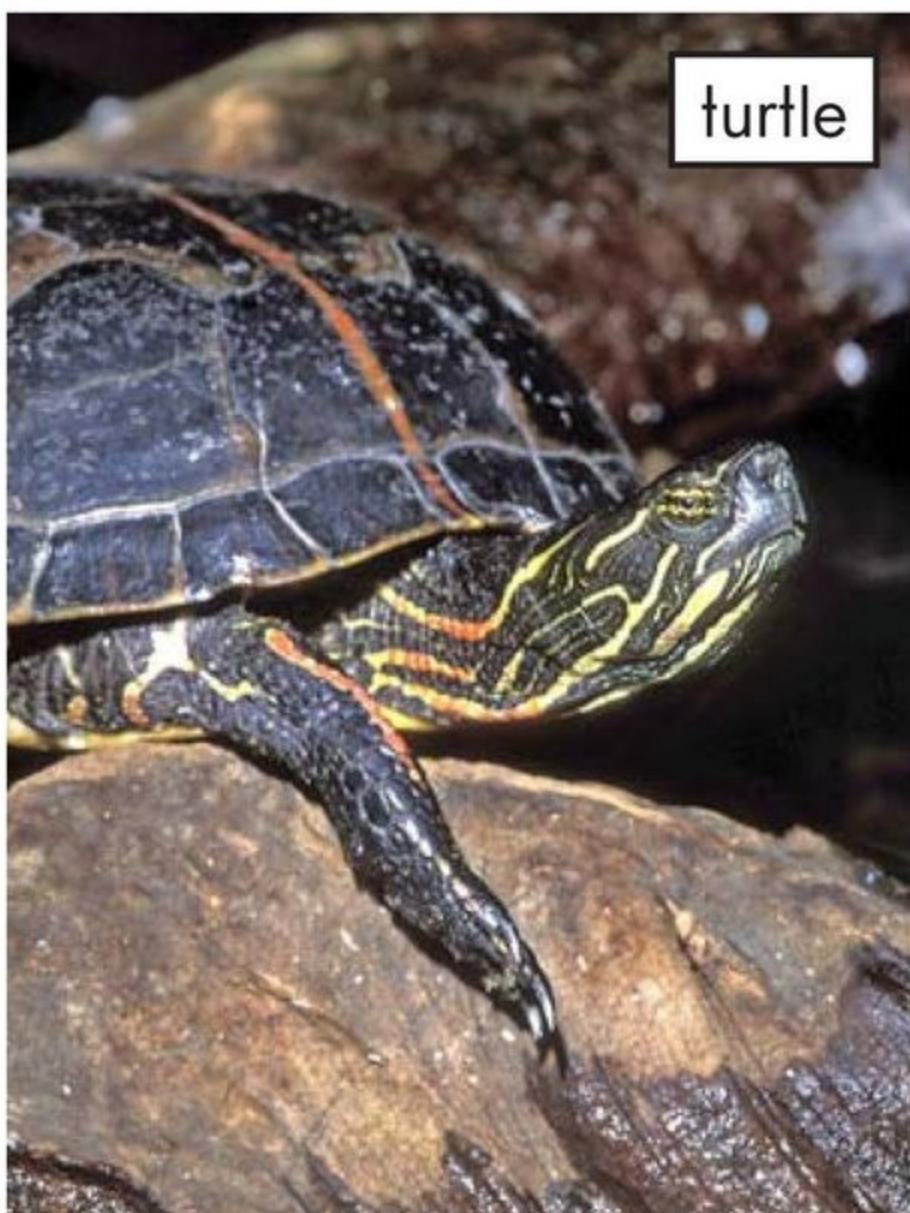
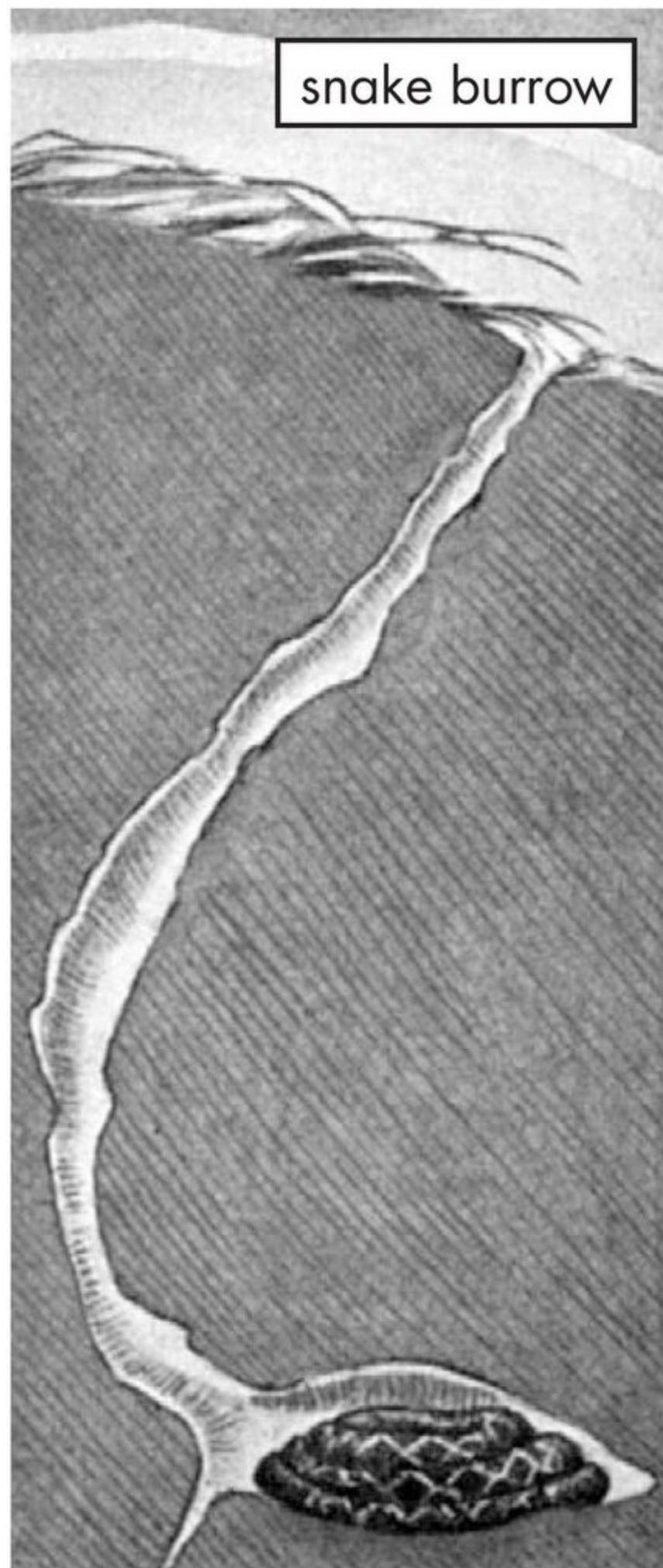
Hibernating animals eat lots of food before winter. They store the food in their bodies as fat. Their bodies live off this fat while they sleep. It takes very little energy to keep hibernating animals alive.



Some snakes hibernate together.

## Where Do Animals Hibernate?

Hibernating animals also need a safe place to sleep. They need to be away from the cold and hidden from hungry predators. Some animals, like bats, hibernate in caves.



Hibernating snakes sleep underground in **burrows**. Frogs and turtles sleep in mud at the bottom of ponds. Some mice hibernate in winter nests. Some animals, like squirrels, store food where they hibernate.

A black bear is safe in its den.



Many people think of bears when they think of hibernation. But a bear is not really a hibernating animal. A bear often wakes up and moves around in winter. Also, a bear's body temperature doesn't get as cold as that of other warm-blooded hibernating animals. The bear's sleep is called a **torpor**. A torpor is a deep sleep, but not as deep as hibernation.

A bear's den is just big enough for the bear.



Like a hibernating animal, though, a bear prepares a place to sleep for winter. It fills its winter den with leaves and tree branches. This bed helps keep the bear's body heat in while it sleeps. Layers of snow on the den also keep the heat inside. This helps keep the bear warm.



Many kinds of insects hibernate, too.

Like birds, some butterflies fly to warmer areas in winter. But many insects hibernate. They need a safe, warm place to sleep just like other hibernating animals. Some hibernate in holes in the ground. Others hibernate under tree bark. Some insects, like many ladybugs, hibernate in buildings, including houses!



## Who Hibernates?

Warm-blooded animals like groundhogs, chipmunks, and prairie dogs hibernate. Cold-blooded animals like snakes, frogs, turtles, insects, and lizards hibernate.



A prairie dog wakes up.

Some animals like bats, some squirrels, and some mice hibernate all winter long. Some animals wake up to eat, as bears do. Raccoons, badgers and skunks might wake up to eat on a warm winter day. In the spring, all the hibernating animals wake up.

## Glossary

<b>burrows</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	holes in the ground dug by animals (p. 9)
<b>migrate</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	to move from one place to another, usually to eat or to breed (p. 4)
<b>predators</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	animals that hunt other animals (p. 8)
<b>scarce</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	hard to find (p. 4)
<b>sound</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	deep; undisturbed (p. 5)
<b>survive</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	to stay alive (p. 4)
<b>torpor</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a deep sleep, when body functions slow down, but not as deep as hibernation (p. 10)

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