



Earth Stewardship

Earth Stewardship means caring for Earth and all her inhabitants. Unitarian Universalists believe it is our responsibility to recognize and value all people, other living things, and resources on our planet.

Brrrr! It Must be Winter

Around here in Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois, our Winter seasons have become less predictable. We'll have heavy snowfall, then above average temperatures, then very clear, cold weather and then heavy fog. For those of you who like to sled or snowshoe, make 'snow angels', or make tracks in the snow, Winter is wonderful...and you'd like more of the cold, white stuff.



Speaking of tracks in the snow . . . can you recognize these tracks?? Answers are below, but DON'T LOOK until you try your skills.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11

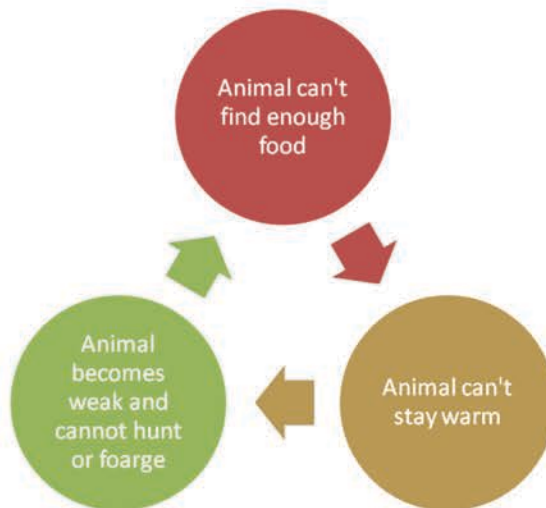
Snow tracks answers: 1 deer, 2 horse, 3 mouse, 4 squirrel, 5 rabbit, 6 eagle, 7 small bird, 8 raccoon, 9 shrew, 10 human, 11 coyote

After going outside checking out animal tracks that you've learned, you probably would come in to warm up. But what about our fellow creatures, other animals that live outdoors all the time? If you were an animal, how would YOU keep warm enough in our Midwest Winters? Here's a list.

Which of these ideas is correct?

- dig a den, away from the rain and snow
- make a 'house' of leaves and sticks, high in the trees
- sneak into someone's house and hope they don't find you
- turn your back to the cold wind and snow
- find a thicket of small trees, and use them for a windbreak
- crawl into your den and sleep through the Winter
- fluff up your feathers and sit in a tree
- move South where it's warmer
- [others?]

Yes! They are ALL correct, depending upon what kind of animal you are. OK, so we know that many animals have to live outdoors all year long, even Winter. They are pretty good at figuring out how to stay as warm as possible, but it takes much more effort and energy when it's cold and food is hard to find. Many animals die during these cold months, and all animals find it harder to get through this beautiful but challenging season. (Studies have told us that nearly HALF of all birds die during winter.) We know that the cold makes it harder to keep bodies warm AND it also makes it harder for animals to find food. If animals don't eat extra food when it's cold, they can't stay warm! See the problem?



FIVE EARTH-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES: CAN YOU.....?

- ... Build or buy bird shelters for them to spend the nights
- ... Leave a brush pile, out of the way, for use as a den
- ... Leave standing dead flowers and grasses for the seeds
- ... Keep bird feeders filled with niger thistle, sunflower seeds, suet
- ... Keep fresh water for animals to drink (much of it is frozen)



OTHER RESOURCES:

Websites about helping animals in winter:

<https://www.discoverwildlife.com/how-to/wildlife-gardening/5-ways-you-can-help-wildlife-this-winter/>

Watch a short video filmed at an animal sanctuary: "[Winter Wonderland at Hillside](#)"

For local library hours and activities



Clinton

563-242-8441

<https://www.clintonpubliclibrary.us/>

Camanche

563-259-1106

<http://www.camanchepubliclibrary.org/>

DeWitt

563-659-5523

<https://dewitt.lib.ia.us/>

Maquoketa

563-652-3874

<https://www.maquoketa.lib.ia.us/>