

# Snow Much Fun

## A Pathway Winter Workshop for Educators

### Sensory Winter (Landmarks 4,6,7,8,9,11,12)

#### Owl Eyes

Introduce this activity by talking about owls – what do students already know about owls? Owls have great vision, they have the ability to turn their heads around to see behind them, eat mice, can see food far away, good night vision, etc. Show pictures of owls and see how big their eyes are. If humans were owls, our eyes would take up most of our faces!



#### Vision Games

##### **Camouflage trail (LM 4,6,9,11)**

Equipment: 10 plastic animals or pictures of animals

Instructions: Hide about 10 animals along a section of trail. Place them right and left, up high and down low. Make sure that some of your animals are well camouflaged and others easier to see.

Students walk one by one down the trail counting the objects, not leaving the trail or pointing or collecting objects, just counting and trying to remember each item. Have them whisper in your ear to tell you how many they found. Ask which animals they found.

Let them know how many animals you put out and let them try again in groups this time.

Which animals were easy to see, which were hard? Why?

If you were an animal, why would you want to be camouflaged?

##### **Picture Frames/Nature Cameras (4,6,7,8,9,11)**

Equipment: Frames (could be cut out of cardboard or made by gluing 4 popsicle sticks together)

Time: 10-20 minutes

Instructions: Give each of the students a camera and demonstrate (theatrically) how the camera works by making a click sound every time you take a picture. Make sure the students know that the cameras only work for things in nature. Ask them for some examples of things that will work and won't work. Go for a walk and ask the students to

look for big things in nature to take a picture of and small things. At the end of the walk, ask the students to share their pictures. It is fun to ask whether or not we can take pictures of each other. Are we part of nature? This is a new idea to many young children.

### **Animal Signs Bingo (LM 4,9,12)**

Equipment: [Bingo sheet](#) for older students, [Bingo sheet](#) for younger students, clipboard, marker

Time: 20 minutes or as long as it takes

Instructions: This activity is to get students looking around for signs of animals in the area. Designate a boundary and off they go with their sheets, marking things that they have seen along the way. They can do this in groups or by themselves or with the help of older students.

### **Deer Ears**

Show a picture of a deer, paying particular attention to the ears. Do they remind you of anything? A satellite dish perhaps? Deer have huge ears that can turn to focus on different sounds. To imitate deer ears, have the students cup their hands behind their ears and turn their hands and head to focus on different sounds. Place your cupped hands in front of your ears and find out if you can now hear what's behind you better.



### **Sound Game (LM 4,7,9)**

**Joseph Cornell's sound game** (focus attention)

Equipment: none

Time: 5 minutes

Instructions: Students stand in a circle, or lie down on their backs, in the snow, hands in fists inside their mittens, close eyes, try to be silent, putting up one finger for every sound heard. Discuss sounds and the direction that the sounds came from. Snow often muffles sound, did they notice this?

## **Raccoon Touch**

Raccoons feel their way through the world. They can't see or hear very well but they have long sensitive fingers. A picture of a raccoon will demonstrate this feature. They feel with their skin, ask the students what they feel on their skin, the wind? The sun? The clothes on their bodies? Their feet on the ground? Their heart beating?



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## **Touch, or texture, games**

### **Winter Bouquets (LM 4,8,9,11,12)**

Equipment: clay

Time: 15 minutes

Instructions: Have warm clay available for students once they have collected beautiful objects from the schoolyard, field or forest. Students are looking for seed heads, flowers that have dried up or any object that would look good in their winter bouquets. Talk about collecting natural objects and that it's ok to pick or collect something if there are lots of it, and if you don't take all of it. Once they have the small ball of clay, they try to stick their natural objects into the clay, creating a bouquet, and feeling the different textures of each object. This could be an activity that you start outdoors and finish indoors. Discuss the objects that were found. Are they fuzzy, prickly, what words would they use to describe the items? Why do flowers dry up in the winter? What's inside the dried up flower heads? Can they find seeds? What would happen to these seeds in the spring? Who might eat these seeds to help get them through the winter?

### **Feely Texture Boxes (for non mitten weather)**

Equipment: texture box for each group (½ egg carton with descriptive words on each opening (e.g., soft, fuzzy, sharp, hard, etc.)

Time: 20 minutes

Instructions: Each group goes out into the designated area and finds small samples of each texture and puts it into the appropriately labeled opening in the box. Talk about findings, discussing "why" certain things feel the way they do (e.g., seeds are fluffy so they can float away in the wind).

## **Dog Smell**

When a human comes into a house we take a big sniff and say “wow, something smells good in here”. Dinner may be some homemade macaroni but we couldn’t quite place the smell. However, when a dog comes into a house and takes a big sniff it thinks “wow, homemade macaroni, with that delicious parmesan, a hint of garlic, two pinches of salt, 1 tsp of mustard etc. Their sniffer is so precise and powerful.

Taking time to “smell the roses” outside and slow down enough to do so allows them to notice things that may have gone unnoticed before.



## **Smell Game:**

Equipment: Cups

Time:15 minutes

Activity: Using the cups, ask the students to collect different items in nature. Ask them to smell each item before putting them in their cup and also encourage the students to rub items to release the smell (such as with cedar). When the items are in the cup, the students can use a stick to stir the “perfume” or “tea” or “smelly sundae” and share the smell with their friends.

## **Animal Form Games**

**Fox Walk** (learning to tread lightly on the ground and how to sneak up on wildlife).

Demonstrate how to fox walk:

Bend the knees a little, gently step forward with one foot, with your toes first. If a sound is made as your toe touches the ground, move it slightly so that no sound is heard. Once this happens, put the rest of your weight on this foot and repeat with the other foot. Have the students try it out by walking in a circle single file, this will slow them down. Remind them to look up and not at their feet. The purpose of fox walking is so that they can see more things, so they must be looking up with their heads held steady, not bobbing up and down. Now try it on the trail. A natural extension is to play some “stealth games” or fox walk to their “sit spots”

## **Fox and rabbit (hawks and mice) (any predator and prey) Stealth game! (LM 6,7)**

You are a rabbit, the students are foxes! The rabbit has its back to the rest of the group and is pretending to be feeding, head down and nervously looking up occasionally. The rest of the group wants to have rabbit for dinner. They start in a line about 15 metres away and try to stalk the rabbit, using their fox walk. If a rabbit hears a fox, he/she looks up and as they do so the fox must stop walking. If a fox is caught moving, they return to the start line to try again. The first fox to reach the rabbit wins.

## **Migration Headache (from Project Wild) (LM 6,7,11)**

Equipment: rope to delineate the flight pathway, hoola hoops, obstacle signs (if you want)

Time: 15 minutes

Instructions: Each student will become a hummingbird, trying to get from Peterborough to Costa Rica! Explain that there are flight pathways that each species of bird travels in order to find food. What do hummingbirds eat? Nectar from flowers. Look around. Are there any flowers? The hummingbirds have to go south to find flowers so that they can eat.

It's an amazing journey that these tiny birds have to take, but not easy. There are many obstacles along the way.

Towers, like the CN Tower, hurt many migrating birds

Lack of Food along the flight pathway can cause little birds to starve. Maybe a past meadow is now a housing subdivision

High Winds can blow a little bird off of the flight pathway

Houses built on the beachfront reduce stop over rest areas.

#### Variation 1:

Peterborough at one end, Costa Rica at the other, 4 people planted along narrow flight pathway who represent the obstacles. Delineate the flight pathway with rope or markers of some sort. All hummingbirds start on the Peterborough side of the pathway. Start them down the pathway one at a time, they are trying to make it to Costa Rica without being tagged. If tagged, they must go to the hummingbird graveyard. The obstacles, who are trying to tag the birds, must have one foot firmly planted on the ground.

Once all of the living birds make it to Costa Rica, enjoy the warmth and all of the flowers for the winter, but as spring approaches, it's too hot to stay here. You want to be back in Peterborough for nesting season, Peterborough is where the babies are born. Empty the graveyard by inviting them to Costa Rica and then start the migration north. Quietly ask the obstacles to try to tag half of the birds this time. At the end of this round, have the students look at the graveyard vs the birds who made it alive. Draw their attention to the fact that an equal number of birds made it vs those who did not (or shift a few students around to make it equal). In real life, half of all hummingbirds who leave Peterborough will return. Migration is amazing, but not easy.

#### Variation 2: ([https://migration.pwnet.org/pdf/Migration\\_Headache.pdf](https://migration.pwnet.org/pdf/Migration_Headache.pdf)):

Nesting habitat on one end of a field and wintering habitat on the other, with stopover habitat in the middle. The stopover habitats are bases or hoops (one hoop for each two or three students). Each round has a scenario where bases are added or taken away. Students try to get from one end to the other, but they must stop at one of the rest areas, which is easy in a good year (lots of rain to fill wetlands) or hard in a bad year (stopover area is now farm land). Birds who cannot get one foot into a stopover hoop are dead birds and must leave the game. They will return when conditions are favourable again.

## Winter Books and Related Activities

### **Over and Under the Snow by Kate Messner (LM 7, 11)**

Equipment: book or story board. If you want to listen to the book inside and then venture outside for an activity, [Vooks has a lovely version of this book](#), small containers, warm water, thermometers, or liquid jello

Time: 20-30 minutes

Background information: Under the snow is called the subnivean zone, to find out more, go to: <https://www.ealt.ca/blog/fun-facts-subnivean-layer>

If you are able to, set up a story trail and the story is spread out along a trail or in the school yard. As you finish each page, have the children move to the next page as one of the animals in the story. This helps to reduce the competition of getting to the next page first.

Activity: Let's find out if the subnivean layer does keep animals warmer than the surface of the snow! Fill small containers with warm water or liquid jello.

Have students imagine that each container is an animal. Choose animals from the story that live under the snow in winter. If you have thermometers, measure the temperature of the "animal" now. Then have the students find a nice spot under the snow to leave their animal. Mark the spot so that they can find it again later. Leave one animal above the snow so that you can compare heat loss. Leave the animals there for at least an hour. When you return, dig up the animals and take their temperature again. Was it warmer under the snow?

Extensions:

Use this activity to explore hibernation. There are many [story books and songs about hibernating](#) and [cameras in the dens of bears](#) and other hibernating creatures.

There are actually different levels of hibernation, which include: true hibernators like Little Brown Bats and Groundhogs. Brumation is what cold blooded animals do, like Leopard Frogs and Blanding's Turtles. Torpor is a light hibernation, where animals wake up during warmer winter days to eat. Animals such as Grizzly Bears, Chipmunks, Squirrels and Skunks are all light hibernators.

### Activity

Fill small containers with warm water or liquid jello.

Have students imagine that each container is a hibernating animal. Students are going to try to keep these animals warm by using natural materials to build a little home or den for their creature. Leave the creature in the den while you do other activities and check back to see if the water has frozen or the jello has solidified. If so, their animal didn't make it through the winter. If you have thermometers, you could find out which creatures were kept the warmest and try to figure out why.

You can alter this activity by using large and small containers and discovering which freezes first. You can wrap containers in different materials to see which material keeps it warmer longer.

### **Stranger in the Woods by Carl R. Sams and Jean Stoick (LM 4,5,7,8)**

Equipment: Book or there are many read aloud versions on YouTube, even a movie! Hat, mitts and a scarf, carrots, nuts, bird seeds,

Time: 45 minutes

Instructions:

Read the book inside or outside. Students build a snowman or any type of snow creature if the snow is not right for a snowman. They then decorate their creatures with food for the animals. Return to your creatures after a while and see if there are any signs that animals have been eating! At Warsaw, we even left a trail cam out overnight and captured footage of birds, foxes, deer and racoons!

### **The Mitten by Jan Brett (LM7, 11)**

Equipment: Small toy animals from the book (mole, snowshoe hare, hedgehog, barred owl, badger, fox, bear and mouse) or pictures of these animals. A large Mitten (that could fit all the creatures inside it). The mitten could be wool or paper or cardboard.

Time: 20 Minutes

Instructions:

Start the book inside and when you get to the point where Nikki goes out to explore then everyone gets their stuff on to go outside. Once there, continue the story. The story talks about animals that find Nikki's mitten and climb in. Beforehand, place the pictures/toy animals along the path and as you tell the story have the students look for each animal. When one of the animals slides into the mitten then put the animal that the children have found into your mitten.



Activities: After the story the mitten will be full. Ask the children if they know how each of these animals likes to spend their winter. What does a bear do vs. a fox? Why are foxes so good at surviving in the winter?

Another extension if you are in an area with fresh snow is to go tracking looking for evidence of animals in your area.