

# Who Lives Here?

Where do animals stay when they shelter at home?

## Summary:

Animals need a place to call home just like you do. Learn to spot animal homes in nature, and discover what makes a good home for different animals.

## Guiding Questions:

*What do all animals need to survive?*

*What does the animal home look like?*

*What does the animal have around its home to survive?*

*Why do you think the animal made this type of home?*

## Experience Goals:

- Learn what type of homes different animals use.
- Discover different types of animal homes around your area.
- Create an animal home.

## Supplies:

- Animal Homes Info Sheet (Pages 4-5)
- Animal Homes Matching Activity (Pages 6-7)
- Scissors
- Printer
- Binoculars or camera with zoom (Optional)



## **Steps:**

### **1. Learn about the different kinds of homes animals use.**

- a. Investigate the Animal Homes Info Sheet (Pages 4-5).  
Use the guiding questions (above) to explore more about animal homes.
- b. Go out in your yard, or look out your window. How many animal homes can you spot? Don't forget to look under rocks, in trees, and behind plants. Do the animals have everything they need to survive?
- c. If possible, take a walk with a friend or family member to look for animal homes in a park or nature preserve. Look around for the things animals need to survive. Be a tour guide for whoever is with you, pointing out animal homes!

### **2. Play the Animal Homes Matching Game**

- a. Print and cut out the Animal Homes Matching Activity cards from pages 6-7.
- b. Shuffle the cards, then try to match each animal to its home.
- c. Check your answers on page 8. Any surprises?

### **3. Create an animal home!**

- a. Pick an animal from the cards in the matching activity. You can choose one you like, or shuffle them and pick one at random for a challenge.
- b. For younger learners, try to recreate that animal's home in your house! What can you use? Pillows, tables, and blankets all work well. Do you have what you need to survive in your home? Is your home safe and sturdy? Is there a place to sleep? Spend some time hanging out in your home.
- c. For more experienced learners, create a diorama of the animal's home. Use a shoebox or tissue box as a base. Glue or tape different materials collected from around the house or outdoors to create the home. Mold animals from clay or use toys. Draw food and water in the background.



## Variations:

- If you can't print out the matching activity, draw the animals and their homes on cards to match. Label them to help you identify the animal and home.

## Extensions:

- Create a birdhouse for your yard. Google "Milk Carton Birdhouse" to find out how. Birds need nesting materials too! They want a nest that is warm and cozy. To find out how to provide them with materials, follow this link to find out how to make a nesting ball.  
<https://www.pennington.com/all-products/wild-bird/resources/make-a-nesting-ball>
- Create a bug home for your yard. Bugs need homes just like bigger animals do. A home that provides a spot to stay dry and safe from hungry predators is just right for many bugs. You can learn how to make a bug home here:  
<https://supersimple.com/article/bug-hotel/>
- Provide food or water for birds in your yard. Birds might make a home nearby if you provide for those basic needs. Birds will come to a bird feeder for food. A birdbath provides water for both birds and insects. Planting a pollinator garden will provide food for insects as well.
- NOTE: It is important to be careful when feeding birds. Putting out too much food, especially if it collects on the ground, can attract other animals you might not want in your yard. Never hand feed wild animals. For more detailed information on feeding birds in your yard, visit this site:  
<https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/publications/documents/00000227.pdf>



# Animal Homes Info Sheet

Look for animal homes in trees or plants or under a roof...



Robin nest



Squirrel den



Wasp nest

Look for animal homes on the ground...



Canada Goose nest



Mink den



Ant colony

**How do animals get their homes? Some animals:**

- Build their own homes
- Use an existing structure, like a hollow tree or barn
- Use homes already built by other animals
- Will even share their home with other kinds of animals!

**Animals make their home in an environment that meets their basic needs.**

- Access to a nearby food source
- Access to a nearby water source
- For many animals, a habitat to raise their young in safety
- Enough space in the surrounding area to fulfill the needs listed above



**When finding or building the home itself, animals will look for or create certain things.**

- Shelter from the weather- a sturdy outside structure or walls
- Protection from predators- is the home secure, is it out of reach?
- A home with an entrance just the right size for the animal
- A home with an escape tunnel or a way out if in danger
- Insulation against heat or cold- building the home underground, lining it with feathers, moss, fur, or grass



Muskrat den



Muskrat



American Mink

## **Sharing is Caring**

A good example of animals sharing territory and using each others' homes are minks and muskrats. Minks and muskrats both live in Chicago area wetlands. Muskrats are herbivores, while minks are carnivores and prey upon muskrats. Muskrats often live in burrows they create along the water's edge, or build dome-shaped houses of reeds and cattails. Minks will use hollows around tree roots for a place to live, or dig burrows in a pond or stream bank. However, minks will also use abandoned muskrat burrows or lodges as homes.



# Animal Homes Matching Activity: Animals



Badger



Squirrel



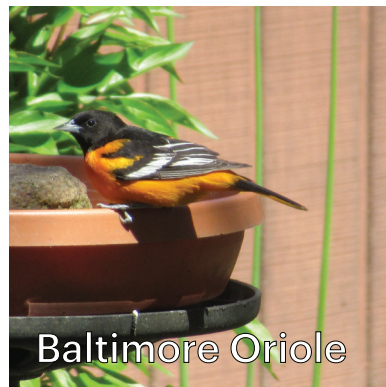
Chipmunk



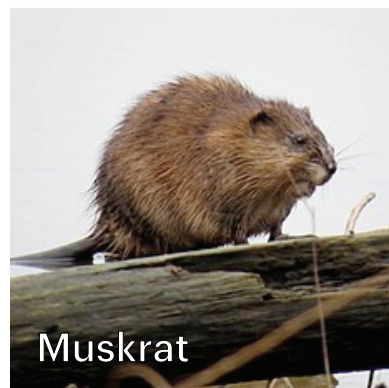
Bald Eagle



Red Bellied  
Woodpecker



Baltimore Oriole



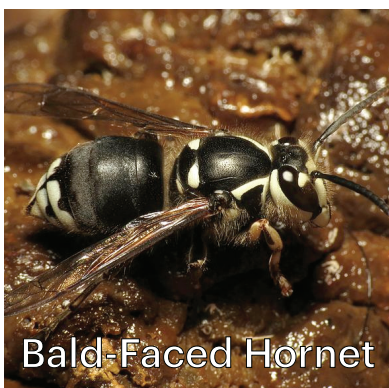
Muskrat



Goldenrod Gall Fly



Crayfish



Bald-Faced Hornet



Ant



Honey Bee



# Animal Homes Matching Activity: Homes





American Badger By Jonathunder - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,  
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Muskrat By USFWSmidwest - Muskrat, Public Domain,  
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Black Ant by Brandon Giannoni

All other photos by Jeff Schroder, Field Museum Staff

### **Answers to Matching Game:**

Badger- Sett

Squirrel-Drey

Chipmunk-Burrow

Bald Eagle-Large Nest

Red-Bellied Woodpecker- Tree Hollow

Baltimore Oriole- Hanging Nest

Muskrat- Mound

Goldenrod Fly- Gall

Crayfish- Mud Burrow

Bald Faced Hornet- Nest

Honey Bee- Hive

Ant- Dirt Hill