

Which Animals Hibernate?



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Hibernating Dormouse

Some animals hibernate during the winter. They start their hibernation when the weather turns cold, usually between September and November. Most hibernate all winter long. Hibernating animals aren't just asleep. Their bodies go into a special state that is different from sleeping. Their heartbeats and breathing slow down. They don't eat or even poop or pee during hibernation.

Animals that hibernate must work hard all summer. They must eat a lot in order to fatten up for the winter. These animals also have to prepare their homes for their winter hibernation. They find safe hiding places. They dig dens or make nests. They collect grass and leaves to make their homes warm and comfortable. They make sure they choose safe places to hide.

The dormouse is one animal that hibernates. It looks like a very cute type of mouse and is mostly found in Europe and Africa. The dormouse makes a nest in the ground for its winter hibernation. All summer long it eats nuts, fruits, and bugs.

Which Animals Hibernate?



Bears

Bears hibernate. They dig dens or hide in caves. Bears are very large animals and must work extra hard to eat enough food to last them through the winter. They eat berries, fish, and meat.

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Common Poorwill

The Common Poorwill is the only bird known to hibernate. It spends its hibernation hidden under piles of rocks. The Common Poorwill eats bugs that are mostly active at night. This includes moths and beetles.

By Phil Armitage via Wikimedia Commons



Chipmunk eating seeds

Chipmunks hibernate, which explains why you don't see them all winter. They dig burrows underground. They prepare for hibernation by fattening up on nuts, seeds, fruits, and bugs.

By Phil Armitage via
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Land snail

Snails hibernate, but they don't need a special burrow or nest. They go inside their shells! Their shells are their homes. All summer they eat plants to prepare for hibernation. Some snails can even hibernate for years.

