



## “Exploring How Animals Survive the Winter” Winter Third Grade Outdoor Activity

**Michigan Science Objectives:** At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. List ways animal senses play an important role in their winter survival (Living Things 4, Evolution 2).
2. Describe how the property of insulation affects living things (Changes in Matter 1).

**Thinking Skills:** Observe and synthesize.

**Overview of Activity:** Students will play (1) a scent tracking game and (2) an animal insulation game in the snow to learn more about animal senses and insulation.

**National Park Connection:** National Parks protect unique animals and their special senses and habitats.

### Procedure:

1. Brainstorm a list of the five senses and ways that animals use these to survive. Elaborate on specific animal examples. Discuss which senses are more important during winter survival.
2. Prepare several spray bottles with different scents (lemon, peppermint, banana, etc.) in a mixture of water and yellow food coloring. Appoint six teams. Three teams receive six cups of snow with one letter written on the side of each cup. Each set of cups spells a word (winter, animal, or tracks). The teams spray their particular “scent” in their six cups, then place the cups into the marked-off playing area. The remaining three teams will carefully follow one of the scents to find all corresponding six letters. These students record their six letters, and then unscramble the letters to form a word. The first team to unscramble one of the correct words is the winner!
3. For the insulation game, have several insulating materials handy (newspaper, plastic and cloth). Give each team a baby food jar full of a hot Jell-O mixture. They can choose one piece of each insulation material or three of one type. The students wrap their jar with the material and duct tape shut. Finally, the students find a good place outside to hide their “animal” from wind and cold. After 5 to 10 minutes, the students uncover or find their animals. Winning teams have animals that have not turned into firm Jell-O! Discuss insulation and the weather.

**Materials needed:** Several scents, spray bottles and yellow food coloring, 18 plastic cups of snow with code letters written on them, thermos with hot gelatin mixture, baby food jars, various insulation materials (pieces of plastic, paper and cloth), pencils and paper.

