

# Seasonal Activity Trail Series - Winter

**DO NOT  
DISTURB!**

**HIBERNATION  
IN  
PROGRESS**

**Ssssssssssssssh!**

It's winter and often animals are sleeping or hibernating - it's the best way to avoid the cold weather.

Tip toe through the museum and try to find the answers on this trail, and whatever you do - **DO NOT DISTURB THE ANIMALS!**

**FACT**

Hibernation is a special deep sleep, where the animal's body temperature drops, and its heartbeat and breathing slow down. By hibernating the animal is saving its energy, so they don't have to go out in the cold to look for food.

**museum**

National Museum of Ireland  
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

Natural History

# START

AT THE HEDGEHOGS  
AND SQUIRRELS  
(past the eagles and owls  
on the left-hand side)

Q. 1

How many squirrels are in the case?

A: \_\_\_\_\_

Squirrels are not true hibernators- they store food in the Autumn and then will wake up during the winter to eat it. Squirrels don't want other animals stealing their food while they sleep, so they hide it carefully.



Grey Squirrels hide their food in many places, so if another squirrel or animal were to find it, the entire year's supply would not be lost. This is called "scatter hoarding".

FACT

There are two types of hibernation- true hibernation, or temporary hibernation (called torpor). The difference is that if you are a true hibernator, you never wake up over the winter. Animals that spend the winter in torpor will wake up every now and again for food, or if there's a warm spell of weather.

The Red Squirrel has another way of hiding its food - it will dig a shallow pit called a midden, place its food there and then cover it with leaves and twigs to hide it. This is known as "larder hoarding".

Q. 2

If you were a squirrel and hiding food, which type of hoarding would you choose? (Circle your answer)

Scatter Hoarding      Larder Hoarding

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Have a look at the Hedgehogs at the bottom of the case. When Hedgehogs wake up to feed in the winter they have to go out and hunt for snails, slugs and other insects. You can help by leaving out cat or dog food for hedgehogs, but you should never feed them bread or milk, as they can't digest it and if they eat it they might die.

Q. 3

One hedgehog is rolled up in a ball - why do you think that's so? (Circle your answer)

To keep it warm & protect itself

To touch its toes

To stop other hedgehogs tickling it

Now make your way down to the Discovery Zone at the back of the Irish room and find the case with the **Garden Snails** in it.

The Garden Snail's scientific name is *Helix aspersa*.



Did you know the Snails in your garden hibernate? They usually group together under a stone or in a tree hollow and sleep during the cold days of winter.

Q. 4

Can you find the snails hibernating in this case? How many are huddled together?

A: \_\_\_\_\_



Find the Frog in the top drawer of The Life Aquatic cart- Frogs escape the cold winter by sleeping in the warm mud at the bottom of ponds.



Q. 5

What is a young Frog called?  
(Circle your answer)

Kitten

Tadpole

Larvae

Caterpillar



FACT

The Arctic and Antarctica are known as Polar Regions as they surround the North and South Poles.

Now make your way upstairs to continue the trail - first stop is the **Reindeer** (behind the hippo!)

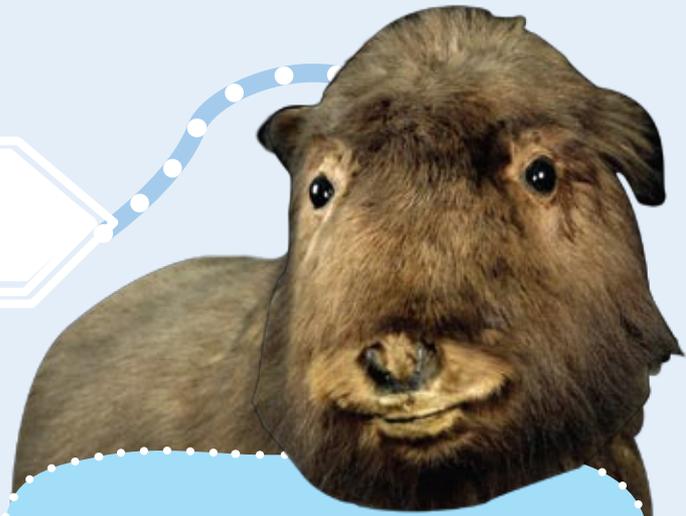
Reindeer don't hibernate as they are well adapted for their cold habitat in the Arctic. Their coat is made up of hollow hairs which help trap heat close to the body. It also makes them more buoyant- handy when you need to cross a river to get to your grazing ground!

Q. 6

What is another name for a Reindeer? (hint: it's on the label)

A: \_\_\_\_\_

Now move on to the **Musk Ox** - there is a calf and a female in the case behind the Giraffe and Bison.



The Musk Ox isn't an ox at all - it's a member of the sheep and goat family. They are found in the Polar regions of Canada, Greenland, and Alaska. This animal is called a Musk Ox as the males produce a smell known as musk, which is quite smelly - this smell is used to attract females during the mating season!

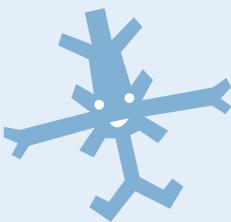
**FACT**

There are several animals that give off musk smells, including the Musk Deer and the Musk Rat. Scientists have managed to copy this smell in a chemical known as muscone, which is used in perfumes and aftershaves!

**Q. 7**

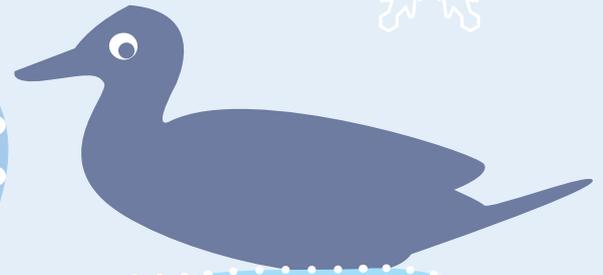
Have a look at the Musk Ox - how do you think they keep warm in the cold Arctic winter?

**A:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





Now look to your left - you'll see lots of birds. This is the Barrington Bird collection. Find the case with two **Pintail Ducks** in it.



**FACT**

The Pintail Duck gets its name from its long narrow tail feather, which looks like a pin.

Some birds come to Ireland in winter as it's warmer than where they live. Pintail Ducks spend the summer in Iceland and the Arctic, then their winters in Ireland. They don't mind the Irish winter weather, but they find the winters in the Arctic much too cold to stay there.

**Q. 8**

Have a look at the male (♂) and female (♀). Why are their feathers so different? (Circle your answer)

So birdwatchers can tell them apart

So the female is camouflaged when she's on her nest

So the ducklings know which one is their mummy



Next go past the Elephants and find the **Beavers** (hint: they are on the bottom shelf of a case opposite the bears).

**Q. 9**

There are two types of Beaver in the case, name both:

A. \_\_\_\_\_ Beaver

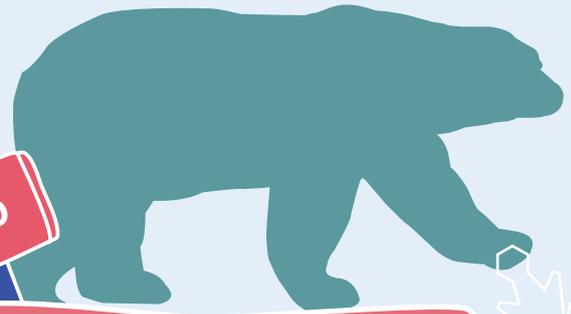
B. \_\_\_\_\_ Beaver

Animals even hibernate in the middle of rivers! Beavers build a special home called a lodge, right in the middle of a river. This is where they'll spend the winter hibernating.



Now look to your right and you'll see a case full of Bears! There are 9 species of Bear known in the world, including one extinct species. They don't all hibernate as some Bears live in tropical forests where it's warm all year round, like the Malayan Sun Bear, or are well adapted to the cold, like the Polar Bear.

**Q. 10**



We have seven species on display in the museum- can you find them all? (hint: don't forget the skeleton on your right!)

**Bears on display that Hibernate:**

1. H \_\_\_ l \_\_\_ y \_\_\_ Bear
2. \_\_\_ z \_\_\_ Bear
3. \_me \_\_\_\_\_ n Black Bear
4. C \_\_\_ Bear

**Bears on display that don't Hibernate:**

1. \_\_\_ l \_\_\_ Bear
2. M \_\_\_ y \_\_\_ S \_\_\_ Bear
3. Sp \_\_\_ ac \_\_\_ d Bear

**WELL DONE!**

YOU HAVE FINISHED OUR WINTER TRAIL "DO NOT DISTURB!"

Remember to survive the cold winter you have to:

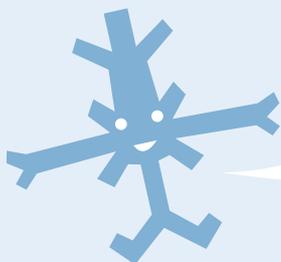
Wrap up warm and eat lots of food - like a Polar Bear or a Reindeer

**OR**

Migrate to a warmer country- like the Pintail Duck

**OR**

Sleep lots- like Bears, Squirrels, Hedgehogs, Frogs and Snails!!





After your visit to the museum, why not draw a picture of your favourite Polar or hibernating animal?



**Answers:**

**1)** 4 squirrels- a Grey, two Red and a young (juvenile) Red; **2)** If you're a scatter hoarder then your stores are safer, but if you're a larder hoarder then you only have to remember one location for your store- the decision is up to you! **3)** A. To keep it warm & protect itself; **4)** 3 Garden snails are huddled together; **5)** Tadpole; **6)** Caribou; **7)** Its heavy coat keeps it warm; **8)** B. So the female is camouflaged when she's on the nest; **9)** Eurasian and American; **10)** 7 bear species on display: Himalayan, Grizzly, American Black; Cave; Polar; Malayan Sun; Spectacled.

For more information on exhibitions and education programmes, contact the Education & Outreach Department of the National Museum of Ireland:

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