



THE PARK PRESS

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Bugging Out!



Monarch Butterfly (Winter Migrator)

Staff Photo

With the approach of winter comes the disappearance of bugs, but where do they go for those long, cold months? The Insect family is a large and varied group and their adaptations for winter survival are no exception.

One approach is to migrate like some birds do. The Monarch Butterfly is a well-known example, but some others like Leafhoppers and Milkweed bugs also use this technique.

Another option is to hibernate like some mammals do. Ladybugs, Wasps, Bees and some butterflies spend the winter as inactive adults. This is often called diapause. Most cluster together to share body heat and many of them replace the water in their bodies with glycerol that acts like antifreeze. Honeybees cluster together in the hive and the interior bees move their wings to release body heat, while the exterior bees remain still to act as insulation. They rotate positions, except for the Queen, who remains in the warm center.

Another method is to spend winter in an egg, immature larval or pupal stage. Often they are buried in the ground or under the leaf litter where snow provides insulation against the cold. Sometimes they are under the bark of trees or even in our houses between the walls. The Woolly Bear Caterpillar is an example of a larva that buries itself in the leaf litter, while Silkworms form cocoons to pupate through the winter. Praying Mantis and Corn Rootworms spend winter deep in the soil as eggs.

Some larva attach to plants and the plants then form a gall, or growth, around the insect to protect the plant from the invader. The insect then spends winter safe inside the plant. The Goldenrod Gall Moth Caterpillar is a prime example of this technique.

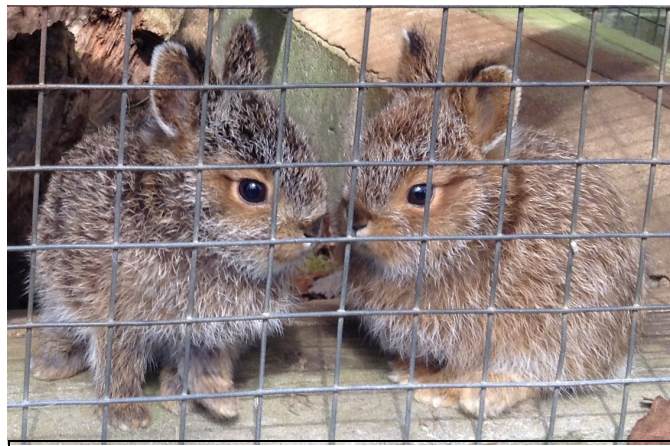
A final method is to spend the winter as immature aquatic nymphs (juveniles) except that they stay active all winter under the ice. Dragonflies, Damselflies, Mayflies, Stoneflies and Caddisflies all spend winter feeding and growing under the ice of lakes, ponds and streams to emerge as flies in the summer.



Adult Dragonfly (nymphs winter under the ice)

Staff Photo

Featured Park Friend: Snowshoe Hare



Young Snowshoe Hares (Leverets)

Staff Photo

Name: Snowshoe Hare

Scientific Name:

Lepus americanus

Size:

Body Length – 40-50 cm (16-20 inches)

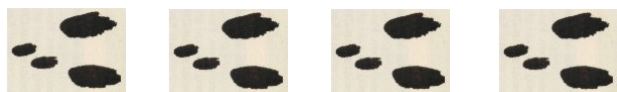
Weight – 1.2-1.6 kg (2.6-3.5 pounds)

Colour: mottled grey-brown in summer, their fur changes to pure white in the winter for camouflage. It takes about 10 weeks for their coat to fully change colour.

Lifespan: 1-2 years (in the wild)

Habitat: found only in the boreal forest, preferring areas with thick undergrowth to hide in

Range: only found in northern North America, they can be found in every province and territory in Canada as well as the northern States and down both the Rocky and the Appalachian mountain ranges.



Feeding: Herbivores, eating green plants (grasses and shrubs) in the summer and twigs, buds and bark in the winter. They particularly enjoy vetch, strawberry, lupine, bluebell and fireweed.

Breeding: Mating season begins in mid-March with courtship parades. Gestation lasts 36 days with litters of 1-13 young (commonly 3-6). The day after giving birth the female is once again receptive and can have 2-3 more litters that season. Unlike baby rabbits, baby hares (leverets) are born fully furred with their eyes open. They can hop almost immediately and wean off their mother's milk in one month. They are fully grown in 5 months and ready to mate by the next March.

Fun Facts: Can leap 3 metres (10 feet) in a single bound and can travel up to 45km/hr (28mph) but rarely go underground the way rabbits do.

Their population shows a 10-year cycle of increasing and decreasing that can be traced back over 200 years to the fur records of the Hudson's Bay Company. During the peak there can be 500-600 hares in one square kilometer.



Snowshoe Hare (summer coat)

Staff Photo

Upcoming Events

Snowshoeing at the Park



Come out and try Snowshoeing! We provide the snowshoes if Nature provides us with snow! This event is free and will be offered periodically on weekends from 10:30-1:30. We encourage people of all ages to try this easy and fun recreational activity. To make arrangements or for more information: Email:

legacycentre@novascotia.ca

Call **(902) 758-2040** on the day of the activity to check current weather conditions at the Park.



Groundhog Day!

February 2nd is Groundhog Day and Shubenacadie Sam will be making his prediction at 8am sharp! Don't miss the excitement! Festivities begin at 7am with face painting, hot chocolate and more before the bag piper and town crier start the loud celebration. Dress for the weather!

Follow Shubie Sam on
Twitter
@ShubenacadieSam



Our Webcams are Back!



Reindeer Feeding Time

Still from Webcam

Don't miss all the festive fun - Check out our live webcams!

By mid-December visit

www.novascotiawebcams.com/reindeercam

to watch Santa's Outpost.

Our reindeer are fed twice a day by Santa himself! Visit the Park on weekends to watch the excitement in person too.

Then in mid-January visit

www.novascotiawebcams.com/shubenadiesam

to watch Sam prepare for Groundhog Day. He keeps a busy schedule of grooming, meditating, feeding and visiting with his friends.



Sam enjoying a cuddle

Still from Webcam

Upcoming Events

Guest Speaker Saturdays

Join us for a Free Educational Experience on the Fourth Saturday of the Month from **1:00-2:30pm** at the Greenwing Legacy Interpretive Centre.

Topics ranging from astronomy to marine biology will be presented.

Watch our website for the specifics on each month's presentation

<http://wildlifepark.novascotia.ca/park/event.asp>

For more information e-mail:

legacycentre@novascotia.ca

No registration necessary.

Presentations are geared for mature audiences.

In case of bad weather call **(902) 758-7094** after 10:00am on the day of the presentation for an update.

Be sure to
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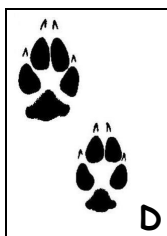
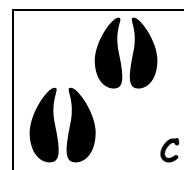
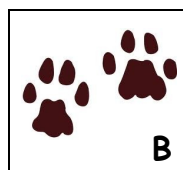


Did you know?

- ♦ **Skunks** bring leaves to their den by placing them under their belly and shuffling along using all four legs to keep the leaves bundled underneath them.
- ♦ **Mistletoe** translates to "dung-on-a-twig" from the Anglo-Saxon word "mistal-tan" because it tends to germinate where birds drop the seeds, as well as feces, onto trees branches.
- ♦ The average **Snowflake** falls as a speed of 5 km/hr (3 mph) and contains 180 billion water molecules.
- ♦ **Chickadees** use their signature "chick-a-dee-dee-dee" call as an alarm call. The more 'dees' the greater the threat.



Can you identify what kind of animal left each of these sets of tracks?



Answers: A: Rodent (Squirrel, Mouse) B: Cat (Bobcat, Domestic)
C: Deer (Moose) D: Dog (Coyote) E: Raccoon
F: Human (Hiker/Sneaker) G: Bear