

# Life Science

## Level 2



### Why Do Animals Hibernate?



By Bonnie Rose Hudson

SAMPLE

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**Bats** are very unique mammals, and most bats do a very important job. Bats are the only mammals that can fly. Their job is to eat insects all day long. While that may sound gross, can you imagine how many bugs there would be if animals like bats didn't help keep their numbers down? Just one mosquito can lay between 50 and 200 eggs at one time. During her lifetime, a mother mosquito can lay up to 1,000 eggs. If everyone of those mosquitos lived and went on to lay 1,000 eggs of its own, we would very quickly find ourselves in big trouble! One bat can eat a lot of insects. Some can eat enough insects to equal the entire weight of the bat! That means if a bat weights 1 pound (453 grams), it can eat 1 pound (453 grams) of insects every single day!

A bat needs a lot of energy to fly. It rests during the day, often hanging upside down in a place like a cave, and flies during the night. When the weather gets too cold, some bats migrate and move to warmer places for the winter. Other bats hibernate because when it gets colder, there aren't enough insects around to eat. Bats aren't able to store food for the winter, and it takes a lot of energy for them to wake up. They try to eat enough during the warmer months to store up energy in their body fat so they can hibernate all winter long. If something happens and they have to wake up when they should be hibernating, it can be very dangerous for them. They may run out of energy before it's time to be done hibernating.



What are some problems we could have if bats didn't eat insects?

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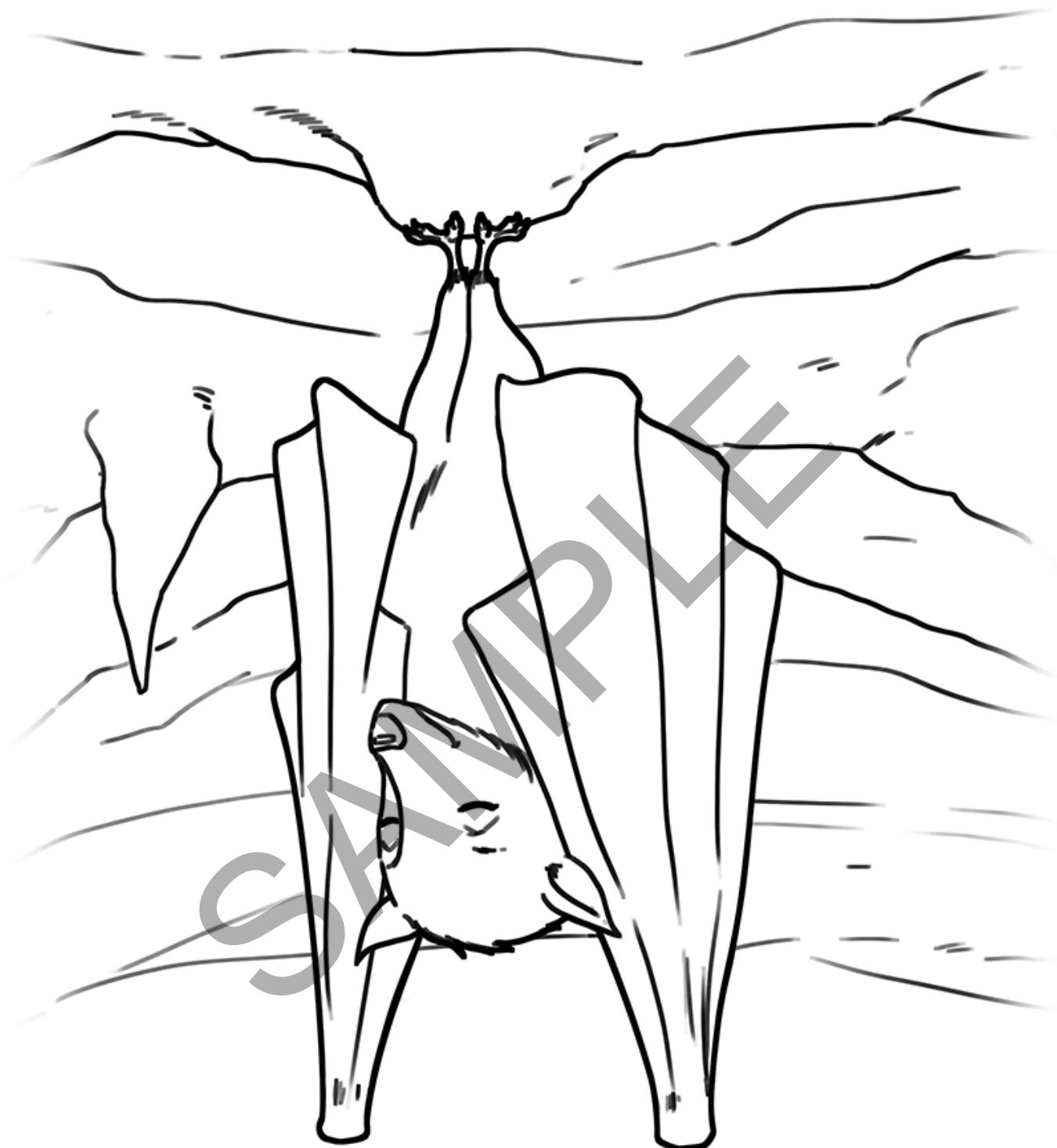
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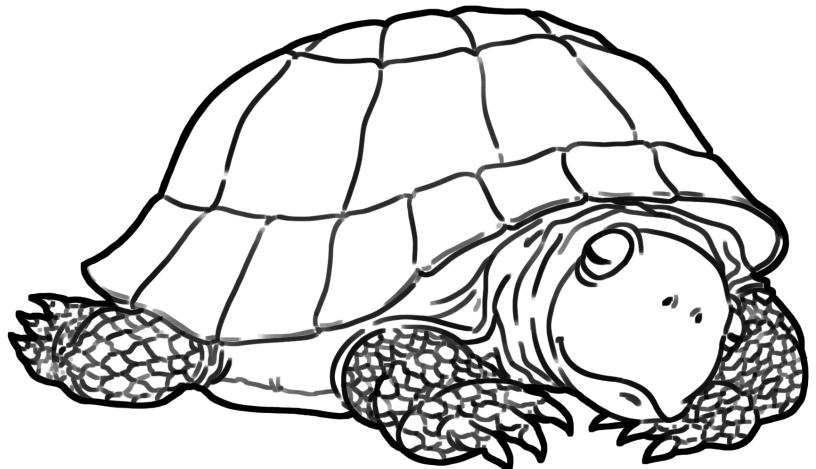
Bat

Like snakes, **turtles** are reptiles. There are about 300 different types of turtles in the world. They mostly live in places that are not terribly cold because they are cold-blooded. Turtles who do live in places that have cold winters must hibernate.

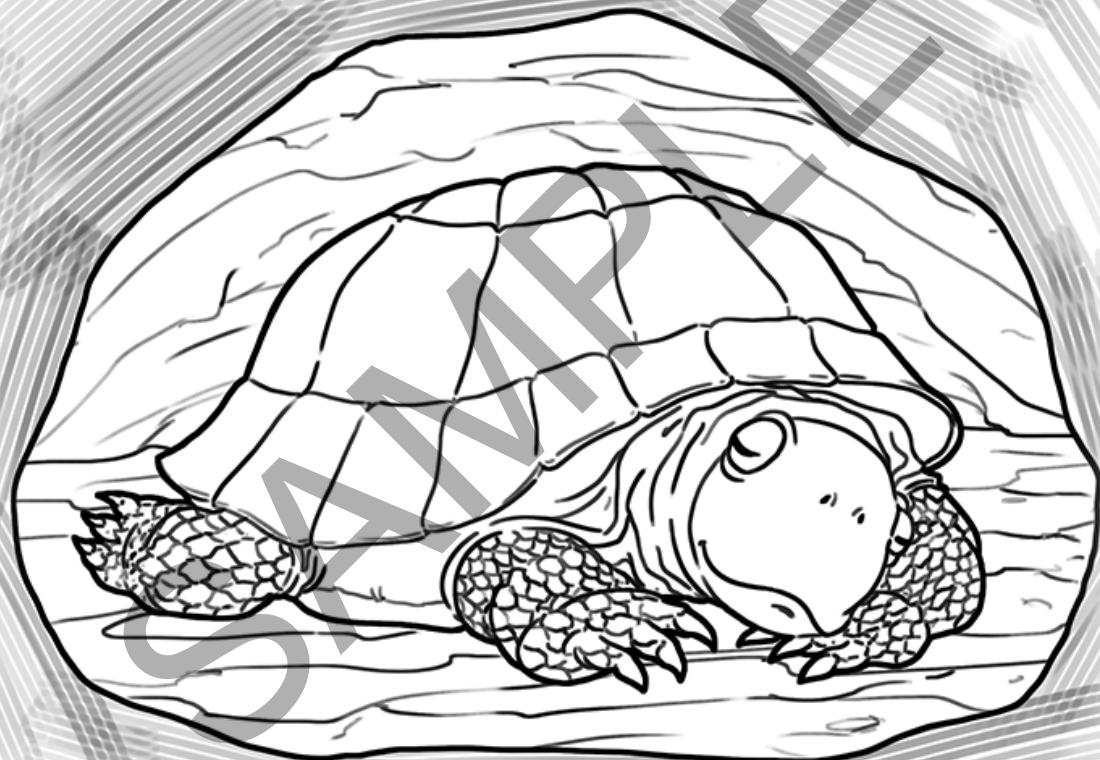
Like snakes, turtles come in all sizes. Common bog turtles are only about 4 inches (10 centimeters) long and weigh only 4 ounces (110 grams). The largest type of turtle, a turtle called a leatherback, lives in the sea and can be up to 4-8 feet (1.2-2.4 meters) long and weigh up to 2,000 pounds (900 kilograms).

Turtles are known for their strong shells, which act like a coat of armor that protects them. Most can tuck their head, legs, and tail inside their shell, making it extremely difficult for other animals to eat them.

Turtles can't store food for the winter months either, so they have to find a safe place to hibernate and wait for temperatures to grow warm again. Freshwater turtles that need to hibernate often find a nice muddy place where they can squish down in the mud to stay warm.



What do you think it would be like to have to sleep all winter long?

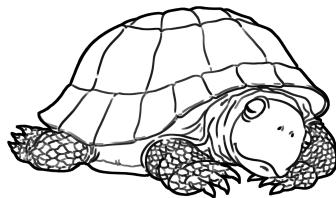
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Turtles  
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## Review

This animal gives birth to cubs while hibernating. Draw a circle around it.



Hedgehog

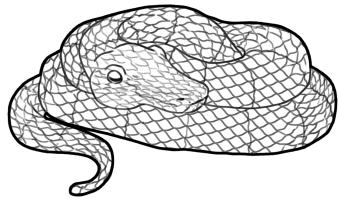


Turtle



Bear

This animal is a small mammal in the rodent family. Draw a circle around it.



Snake



Frog



Chipmunk

This animal likes to dig mazes of burrows that have different rooms and many ways in and out. Draw a circle around it.



Beaver



Bat



Groundhog

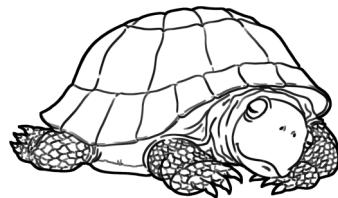
This animal has big eyes but cannot see very well. Draw a circle around it.



Bear



Hedgehog



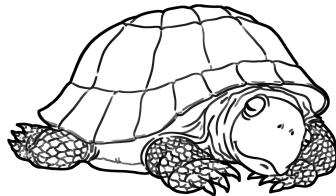
Turtle

## Review Answer Key

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Hedgehog

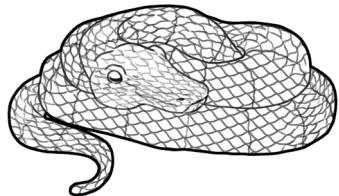


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Beaver



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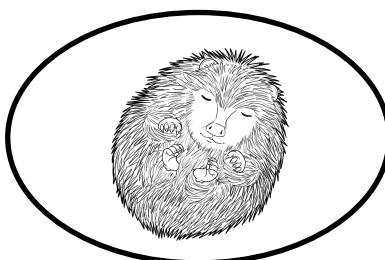


Groundhog

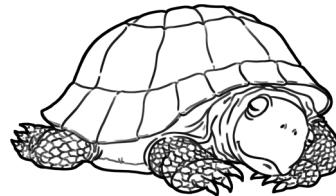
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