



## Nature Detective Hike at Latodami

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Animals need basic things to survive. Can you think of what those things might be? That's right, food, water, shelter and the right amount of space. These things may be different for different animals. Although, both cottontail rabbit and white-tailed deer are herbivores, their requirements for these basic elements may be different. Can you think of how they may be different and why?

Different seasons may be more challenging for wildlife than others. Food, water and shelter may be limited by weather conditions and competition by other wildlife. Can you think of other reasons why it may be hard to find food, water and shelter at different times of year?

Let us be nature detectives on our hike at Latodami today and see how many clues we can find that might be useful for animals in their struggle for survival.

Here are some things, listed below, that we might look for. Maybe you will find other things that are not on the list that might help animals to survive.

Please be respectful to plants and animals on all your outdoor adventures, whether it is here at Latodami or anywhere else that you may be. Please do not pick any plants unless you are told that it is okay to do so. Please do not injure or kill any animals, this would include insects and other small creatures.

- ✓ **Acorn, hickory nut or walnut** that has not been eaten yet. What animals can chew through these nuts? How else can these nuts be eaten?
- ✓ **Animals**. Animals are also a very important factor in our habitats. Vertebrates and invertebrates can be found all year round at Latodami. Can you find any mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, birds, fish, or other animal life? What are some main features of each of these groups of animals?
- ✓ **Cone from an evergreen**. What kind of tree did it come from? How would this tree and cone be useful to an animal? What kinds of animals will benefit from them?
- ✓ **Food for animals**. Let us look for other things that an animal may like to eat. Look for nibbled plants or the remains of an animal. Many plants that animals eat are not good for people to eat. Why?
- ✓ **Footprints**. What kind of animal made this footprint? Was it following an established trail? Which way was it traveling? What do you think it was doing as it moved through this habitat? Why do you think that other animals might want to know what it was doing or where it was going?
- ✓ **Habitats**. What make up a habitat? What are some of the different types of habitats in our area? What are some of the factors that make habitats different from others? Why are some plants found in the forest and not in the field or near the pond?
- ✓ **Hole in a tree**. How was this hole made? How would this hole be used by an animal? What animals might use this hole?
- ✓ **Hole in the ground**. What animal might have made this hole? What is the hole used for? What animals would use it?
- ✓ **Litter**. What was the litter before it was discarded? How did it get here? Why do you think it was discarded? Can this litter be useful or harmful to wildlife? How can we reduce litter in our world?
- ✓ **Manmade nest box**. What animals might use this box? Do you think that any animals are using this box now? If no, why not? Where would these animals live if there were no boxes?
- ✓ **Nest in a tree or shrub**. What materials were used to make the nest? What animal might have made this nest? How was the nest used? Will it be used again?
- ✓ **Pennsylvania State symbols**. What is our state: mammal, bird, tree, flower, insect, fish, cat, fossil, drink, dog?
- ✓ **Plants and animals should we avoid**. There are some plants that protect themselves with thorns or with chemicals that can cause skin irritation. Can you name any? There some plants that can make us sick if we eat them. Can you think of any? Some animals are poisonous or venomous. What is the difference between those two words? Many animals will protect themselves and their young with defensive behaviours if they feel threatened. How does a skunk defend itself? Rabbit, deer, snake, toad, and owl have different ways of defense. Why is it a good thing to never approach a wild animal?

- ✓ **Plants**. Plants are an important factor in habitats. Can you identify any plants on our hike?
- ✓ **Sound of an animal**. Listen for sounds of animals. Birds, squirrels and deer are common throughout Latodami. Why does an animal make sounds? How can that help an animal? How might making sounds be harmful to that animal?
- ✓ **Water**. Why is water important? What animals need water to survive? How often would an animal need to access water? What happens when there is no water available? What are the different ways that an animal might get its water requirements?
- ✓ **Other things of interest**. What else did you find on your hike? What did you think was the most interesting? Did you learn anything new today?