

WHY HIBERNATE?

It takes energy to stay active and warm. Energy comes from food, which is often difficult to find in the winter. Some animals have adapted to survive the cold by going through a long period of dormancy. During this special time, their body functions like heart rate and breathing slow way down. By hibernating, they conserve energy and improve their chances for surviving until warmer weather returns in the spring, along with more plentiful food.

MAMMALS are warm-blooded. When they're active, their body temperature stays pretty much the same. When mammals hibernate, their body temperature drops, breathing and heartbeat slow down, and they don't need as much food as when they're active. Depending upon the species, body fat put on in the late summer and fall may be enough to carry them through the winter, or they may wake periodically for a snack from food they've stored in their burrow.



Groundhog
Sue Shafer, DEC

Blue-spotted salamander



Jean Gawalt

REPTILES and AMPHIBIANS

are cold-blooded. Their body temperature goes up and down with the temperature of their surroundings. They will not survive out in the snow and ice. If you know where they hibernate, you'll know where to start looking for them when spring arrives.

INSECTS

Insects can't be active during the deep freeze, but that doesn't mean you won't see them. Depending upon the species, they may spend the winter as eggs, larvae and pupae, and occasionally as adults.



Frost-covered egg case
Dave Spier



Praying mantis

Sue Shafer, DEC

