

## WHAT ARE THESE ANIMALS DOING ON A WINTER DAY?

I step outside my front door, breathing in the cold winter air. I scan my snow-covered front yard as the wind blows through my hair. The scene is peaceful and quiet. As a squirrel dashes into sight, I start to think about what the wildlife is doing around me.

My mind trails off after the little grey squirrel. It may be now scurrying up a nearby pine-tree, dusting off snow from the branches along the way. It crawls into a hole inside the bark, where another squirrel awaits him. Together, they cuddle together and fall into a well-deserved nap.

Now I'm noticing this little house sparrow. Its brown wings remind me of hot cocoa. My mind pictures this little bird flying briskly to a dense tree, where many other of its kind perch. The brown sparrow's friends scoot over on the branch, making room for it. This flock of sparrows huddle together to find warmth on this freezing winter day.

Tiny white snowflakes start to fall down. Huh? What's that in the snow? It has ears. It has a furry little face. There's a little rabbit hiding beneath the snow! The white snowflakes blend in perfectly with its fur. I picture this little creature joining its family underground, where their home is. The rabbit's den is covered with foliage, mainly grasses and leaves.

Speaking of being underground, what other animals are hibernating right now? Perhaps a hedgehog! Maybe there are some of them in a deep sleep underground right now! Hibernation is when animals, including these prickly friends, go into a deep sleep through winter. They don't eat during this period, so I have a feeling these hedgehogs will be scavenging for food when they wake up!

There is more wildlife around you than you think. When you see an animal on your morning stroll, or patrolling your deck, what do you picture it doing?