For Creative Minds

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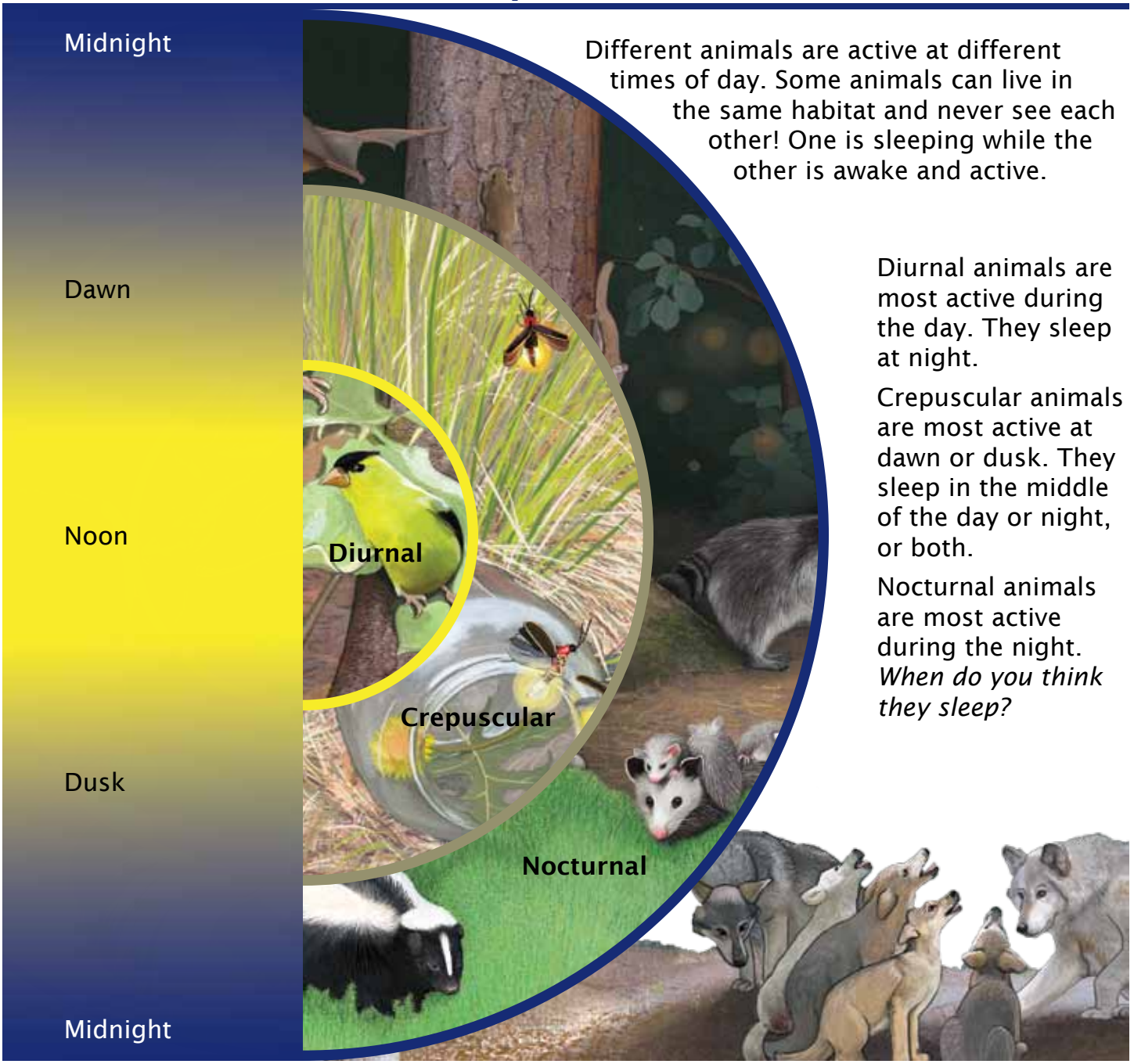
When They're Most Active



Different animals are active at different times of day. Some animals can live in the same habitat and never see each other! One is sleeping while the other is awake and active.

Diurnal animals are most active during the day. They sleep at night.

Crepuscular animals are most active at dawn or dusk. They sleep in the middle of the day or night, or both.

Nocturnal animals are most active during the night. *When do you think they sleep?*

Sorting

Sort the following animals into three groups: nocturnal, diurnal, and crepuscular. Read the animal fun facts for clues. Answers are below.

The barn owl only hunts at night.

People are mostly active during daytime hours.

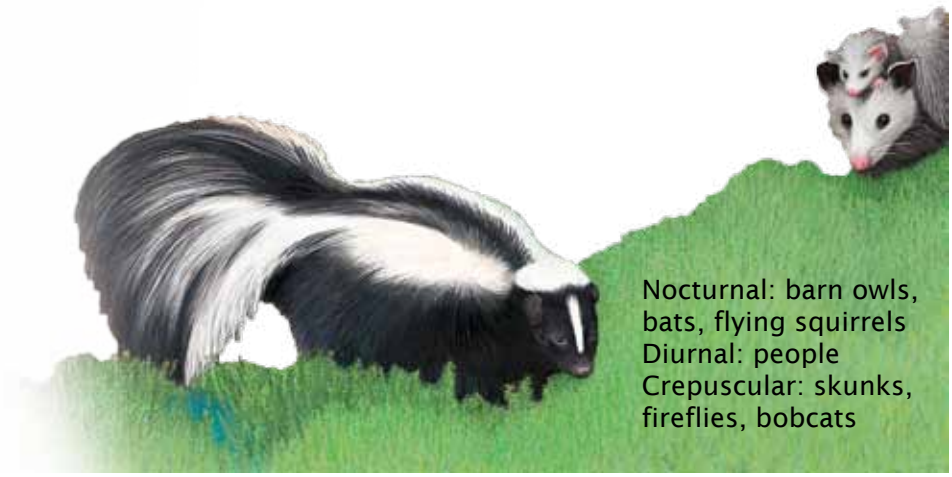
Bats use sound (echolocation) to find their way in the dark.

Skunks scavenge for food primarily in the twilight hours at sunrise and sunset.

Flying squirrels in North America are active while people are sleeping.

Fireflies are normally seen at nightfall.

Like housecats, bobcats are mostly active in the early morning and evening hours.



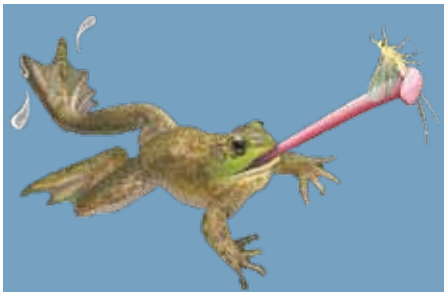
Animal Adaptations

Like many nocturnal animals, flying squirrels have large eyes. The pupil is the dark circle in the center of the eye. In bright light, the pupil shrinks to not let in too much light. When it is dark, the pupil widens. This lets more light enter the eye. Flying squirrels' large eyes help them see in the dark.

Fireflies have a special light organ. They use a chemical reaction inside their bodies to make them light up (bioluminescence). Fireflies use their lights to find and communicate with other fireflies. Fireflies also make chemicals in their bodies that make them taste bad to predators. The light reminds other animals that fireflies are not a good meal.

Barn owls are birds of prey. They hunt other animals for food. Owls' feathers have a soft front edge. These special feathers make almost no noise as the owl flies. An owl's prey usually can't hear the owl swooping overhead.

Bats use their ears to map their surroundings. They squeak and listen for echoes. Some bats have large ears that can move independently of each other. The sound of an echo tells the bat the size and shape of objects nearby. This is a type of echolocation.



Frogs don't have thumbs to pick up their food; they use their tongues instead. The long tongue flicks out, so fast it can be hard to see. When it touches an insect, the bug sticks to the tongue and the frog has a tasty snack.

On this page are two mammals, one bird, one amphibian, and one insect.
Can you tell which is which?

Match the Eyes

In many nocturnal animals, light is not absorbed by the eye. It is reflected by it. This is called **eyeshine**. Light enters the eye and bounces off a special, mirror-like membrane (tapetum). This helps the animal see in the dark. They can see by the light coming into their eyes *and* by the light reflecting out.

Small amounts of light (like starlight and moonlight) or bright lights (like a fire or the headlights of a car) are reflected, making it look like the eyes glow in the dark. Different animals' eyes glow different colors. Match the eyeshine below to the animal it comes from.

1

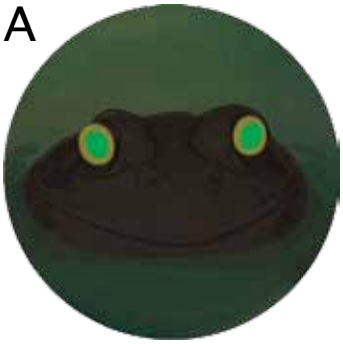
2

3

4

5

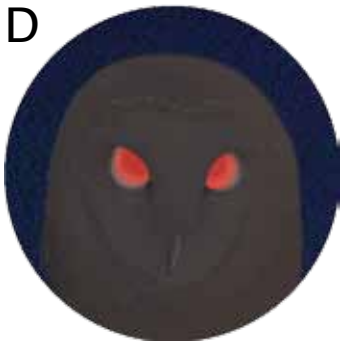
A



B

C

D



E

If you ever see eyes glowing at you from the woods, don't be scared! There are no monsters there, only night creepers.

Answers: 1B - bobcat. 2E - raccoon. 3A - bullfrog. 4D - barn owl. 5C - skunk.