

Night Life

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As the sun sets in the jungle, some animals go to sleep.

The jungle gets very dark at night.

Chapter One **Sunset in the Jungle**

The sunset paints the jungle sky orange, gold, and red. Before long, the sky turns inky black, and the sounds of the jungle animals get louder. Then it gets very quiet as some of the creatures fall asleep. The jungle is still.

The quiet is only a short lull between day and night, however. Soon, the **nocturnal** animals wake. Nocturnal animals sleep during the day and are very busy at night. Their most important task is finding food. Nocturnal animals cannot behave like **diurnal** animals. Diurnal animals are ones that are awake and active during the day. Nocturnal animals use their senses and body parts to **survive** in the dark forest. The jungle is very dark at night.

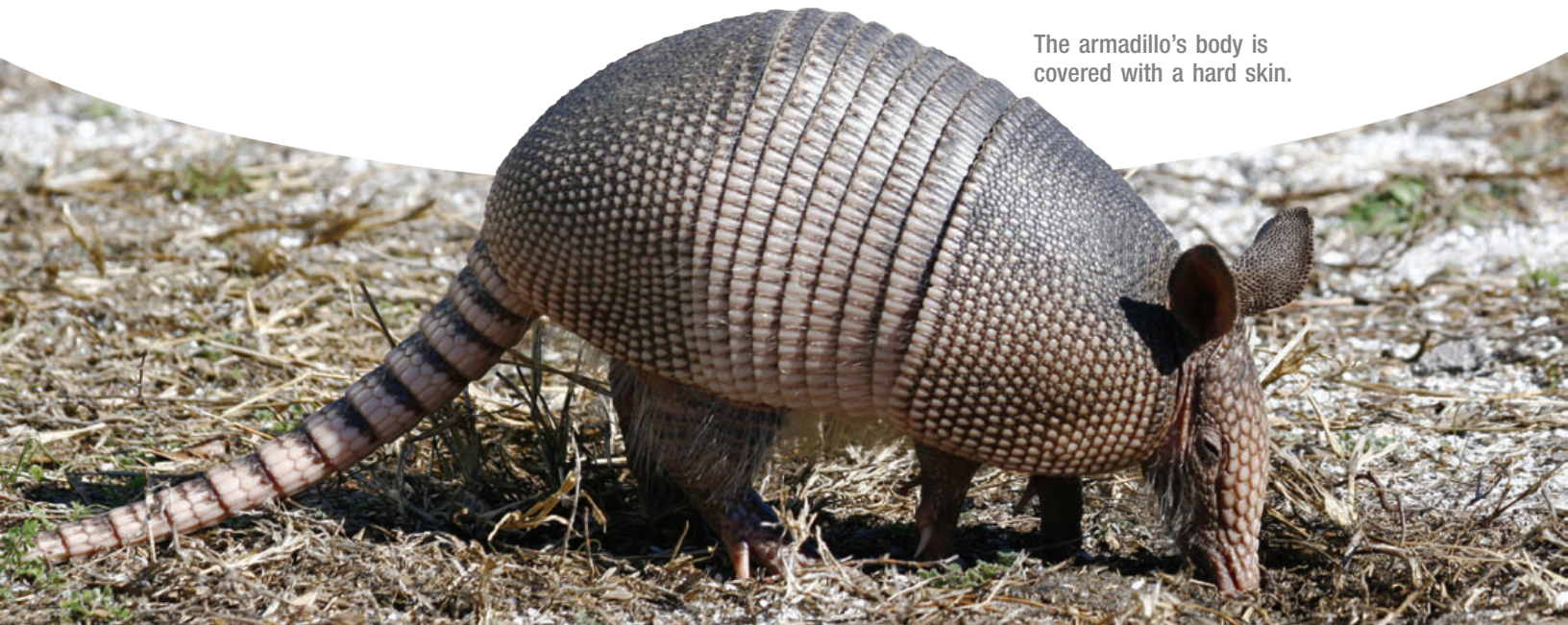
Chapter Two Little Armored One

Armadillos are nocturnal jungle animals and spend up to 16 hours a day snoozing. They rest in tall grass or hollow logs. Some dig **burrows**. Jungle animals need cool sleeping places in the heat of the day.

They wake at night and go out to hunt for food. Armadillos look for beetles, ants, worms, snakes, and frogs. Finding food in the dark is a challenge for these small-eyed animals. Armadillos may have poor eyesight, but they have a strong sense of smell. Their noses lead them to food in the blanket of darkness. Armadillos also use the tiny, coarse hairs they have on their bellies to help them feel what is around them, which helps them find their way in the dark.



Armadillos use their long snouts to find insects.



The armadillo's body is covered with a hard skin.

Armadillos are surprisingly fast animals.



Long claws help armadillos dig into the earth to find insects. Most armadillos have pointy **snouts**, which they stick into holes. When they find tasty ants or termites, armadillos draw them out with their long, sticky tongues.

Armadillos cannot spend all of their time finding food. They must also look out so they don't become the **prey** for enemies that lurk in the night. Wildcats, cougars, and hawks can attack busy armadillos. The armadillo's body is covered with plates of hard, armor-like skin. In fact, this animal's name means "little armored one" in Spanish. The tough outer shell protects armadillos against these **predators**.

The cougar is one of the nocturnal animals that hunt for armadillos.



Chapter Three Batting About in the Dark

Think about a bat cave, and imagine it as a big cabin. Up to 1,000 bats can gather there to sleep. Unlike a cabin where you would sleep in a bed, bats all hang upside down from the ceiling.

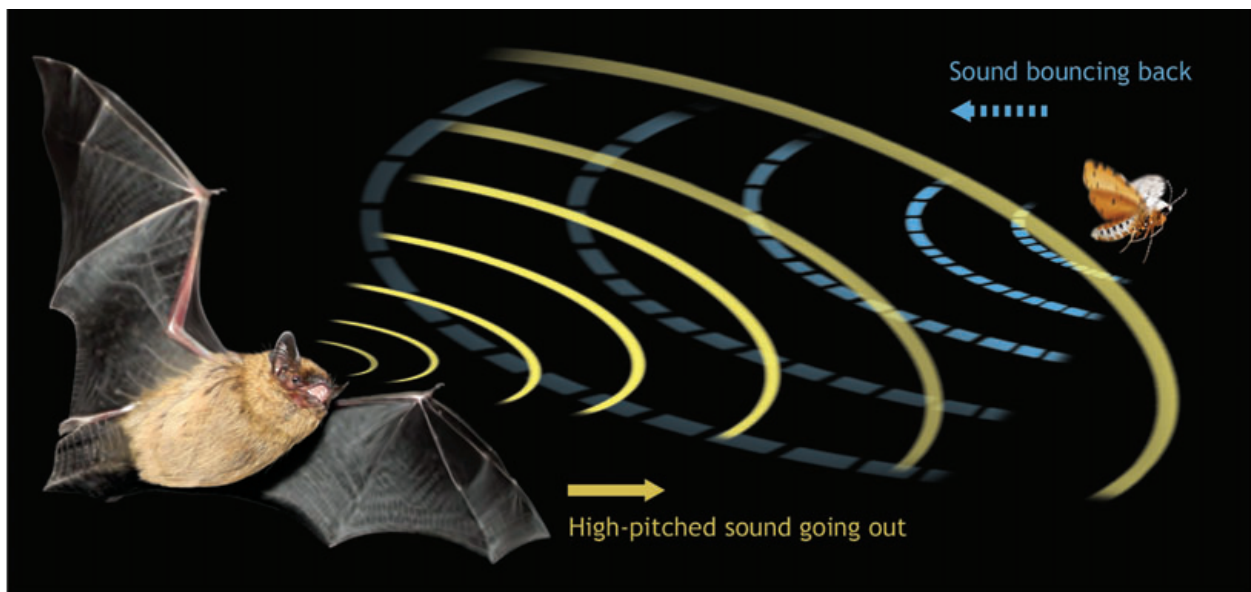
Bats, like armadillos, are nocturnal animals. They sleep during the day. When night falls, they zoom out of the cave to begin their hunt for food. In fact, bats are the only mammals that can fly.

You've heard the phrase "blind as a bat," but most bats actually have superb sight. It helps them move about in the dark jungle. Most also have a good sense of smell. This helps them find fruit and other food.

Bats also have a superpower. It is called **echolocation**. Bats send out a high-pitched sound. The sound hits an object, such as an insect, that the bat would like to eat. The sound bounces back. This lets the bat know where it can find its tasty dinner. Echolocation is helpful on a dark night.



Bats sleep in caves during the day.



Bats also hunt for insects, frogs, and **nectar**. Nectar-eating bats have long snouts and tongues. They use these to get the sweet juice out of flowers.

Bats have to watch out for eagles, owls, and snakes as they hunt in the dark. Fortunately, the bat's keen senses help it detect and avoid predators.



A bat eating an insect



A predator going after a bat

Many people fear these nocturnal animals. In fact, we should be grateful for bats. They **pollinate** plants and scatter seeds. They also get rid of insects. In fact, a bat can eat half its weight in insects a night.

Chapter Four

The Kinkajou and the Lion, Too

Another nocturnal animal that roams the jungle is less familiar than armadillos and bats. It is the kinkajou. Kinkajous sleep high in hollowed out trees. They put their paws over their eyes, so the sunlight won't disturb them. Then they curl their long tails around their bodies like cozy blankets.

When kinkajous wake, they rarely leave the high branches of the jungle trees. To help them find their way from tree to tree in the dark night, they leave a trail of their scent.

Kinkajous' long tails help them move among the trees. The tails are strong enough to grab branches. They also allow the animals to hang upside down.

Sharp claws help kinkajous pick and hold fruit, a favorite food. Kinkajous also eat insects, flowers, and nectar. They use their long tongues to lick sweet juices from flowers. They also lap up honey from beehives. Like bats, they spread seeds and pollinate plants.



The kinkajou has a very long tail.



The kinkajou high in the trees of the jungle

The enemies kinkajous must deal with during their nightly activities are foxes, jaguars, and birds of prey. Their speed and agility help them escape from these predators.

The words of a song say, “In the jungle, the mighty jungle, the lion sleeps tonight.” However, the lion, which is also a nocturnal animal, along with many others, doesn’t sleep at night. The truth is, the jungle is a lively place after dark.



Lions are quite active at night.



The jungle is alive at night.

Glossary

burrow: hole or tunnel that is used to live in.

diurnal: active during the day.

echolocation: way to locate objects by putting out a sound wave that bounces back.

nectar: the sweet juice in flowers that attracts bees and birds.

nocturnal: active at night.

pollinate: to move a powder called pollen from one plant to another.

predator: animal that eats other animals.

prey: an animal that is hunted and eaten by another animal.

snout: long nose.

survive: to stay alive.