



HUMBER ARBORETUM ECO CENTRE

URBAN WILDLIFE



INTERESTING FACTS

- ★ Have you ever seen a squirrel running around with half of its fur missing? Don't worry the squirrel is not sick or diseased, it is actually an example of amazing animal husbandry. Female squirrels when expecting babies will actually rip the fur off of its back and line its nest with it to ensure the babies are nice and warm.
- ★ The name 'raccoon' comes from the Algonquin word 'arakun' which means "one who scratches with his hands".



- ★ Skunks can spray up to 4-7m (13-23 ft) in a favourable wind—although they are usually only accurate for up to about 2m (6.5ft). The skunk's scent glands are mature at less than one month of age.
- ★ Canada geese usually start migrating south when the ground begins to freeze in the fall. The trip to the wintering grounds is a quick one—scientists have tracked geese that have flown up to 1,000 km in one day!

COOL ACTIVITIES

CANADA GEESE TAG

- ★ A really cool adaptation to a classic game. Choose two students to be "it" and have them form a small "v" shape (have them hold their hands straight out from their side facing each other and then join one set of hands). The students who are "it" then run around keeping their "V" formation as best they can while trying to add other Canada Geese to the "flying V" so that they can migrate south. When a student is touched they join hands with someone in the flying "V" until everyone is touched. Now when everyone is holding hands and in the "V" formation have them guess what direction south is and start flying in that direction.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What has to be present in an animal's habitat for it to be considered "urban." (ANS: "Urban" basically means city or town so one would expect to find Buildings (schools, homes, offices etc...), paved roads, vehicles, and people.
2. In an urban habitat where would a raccoon make a home? (ANS: The raccoon usually makes a home in a hollowed out tree, however in urban areas where safety is a concern trees are removed well before they get to this point. Therefore raccoons will usually look to make a home in abandoned buildings or attics as these provide shelter, warmth, and protection from predators.
3. Does urban wildlife hibernate in the Winter? (ANS: It depends on what type of animal you are talking about, most mammals are active during the winter while some like skunks go dormant which means they only come out during warmer periods. Birds migrate south if it gets too cold for them. Reptiles like snakes tend to hibernate together in large ball like formations underground, whereas reptiles such as turtles hibernate under water like most amphibians, this is known as brumation.