

WEEKDAY WONDERS



Content developed by the
Tennessee Aquarium
Education Department



TENNESSEE
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Nature Detectives: Day 4

This week your young scientist will use his or her amazing observations skills to examine and investigate on a smaller scale. Sharp sleuthing skills will find signs of living things in your backyard. As s/he explores, your young scientist will put together clues to know, while you may not always see a living thing, signs are all around to know it is there.

These curated activities are listed in a suggested sequence but may be done in the order that works best for you and your young scientists. Learn more about this series in the [Introduction to Weekday Wonders](#).



Question of the Day

What has been eating outside my window?



Daily Nature Journal

Ask your young scientist to spend some time outside today completing a daily nature journal entry. Ask him or her to focus on being a nature detective and using the information s/he has learned this week to make new observations. Use the [Guide to Nature Journaling](#) to support them in nature journaling each day.



Nature Journal

Ask your young scientist to make a table in his or her nature journal. The table should have three columns. The first one should be labeled, "Foods I like to eat." Have your scientist write down several of his or her favorite foods in the column.

Ask him or her to label the second column "How I eat." For each of the foods in the first column, have your scientist list if s/he chews the food, cuts it with flatware, bites it, slurps it, or some other method.

For the third column, have the scientist label it, "How animals eat this way." Ask him or her to try to think of animals that eat in the same way (but not necessarily the same food). If your scientist cuts food with a knife and fork, is there an animal that tears food into smaller pieces? Have your scientist list the animal and which body parts help the animal eat that way. For example, a mountain lion might use sharp teeth to tear food.

Challenge your scientist to see how many animals and body parts s/he can think of for each way to eat.



Have a Snack

Tell your scientist that in order to be a nature detective, s/he must be able to look at clues and match them up to information they can find. In this activity, your scientist will use clues to help match animals up with their favorite snacks. Have your scientist read each clue on page 4 then use the information to match them to the picture of the animals on page 5. Your scientist will have to be a careful detective to match the clues with the pictures. Encourage your scientist to look at all the clues, such as seeing the food in the picture or considering how tall an animal would need to be to eat the food listed.

For your information, the answer key to the clues is below.

I am not a bird, but I have a beak. I use it to eat slugs, grubs, mushrooms, and fruit.	Box Turtle
I use my tongue to sense my favorite small mammal and my two sharp teeth to catch it. I swallow my food whole.	Black Rat Snake
As a larva, I only eat milkweed leaves. When I become an adult, I use a tube-like part of my mouth to drink nectar.	Monarch Butterfly
I have a beak like a straw that lets me drink nectar and sap. I also eat small bugs and insects.	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
I sleep during the day and fly at night. I can eat 1,000 insects in an hour!	Little Brown Bat
I have teeth that are too small to be seen (or felt) by humans. They scrape and tear leaves, stems, algae, and mushrooms.	Snail
I have 50 teeth. Because I can be on the ground or in trees, I can use my teeth to eat grass, fruits, berries, nuts, insects, ticks, snakes, lizards, and small mammals.	Opossum
I have a very sticky tongue that I use to catch my food. I may eat insects, spiders, and other small animals that will fit in my mouth.	Barking Tree Frog
I eat twigs and leaves off bushes and trees. I also eat fruit, nuts, lichen, and other types of plants.	White-tailed Deer

Extension

Once your young scientist has matched up the pictures with the animals, have him or her sort the animals by what they eat. Tell them that herbivores only eat plants, carnivores only eat other animals, and omnivores eat both plants and animals. The correct way to sort the animals is as follows. You may need to remind your scientist that insects and slugs are animals!

Omnivores

Box turtle

Ruby throated hummingbird

Opossum

Carnivores

Rat snake

Barking tree frog

Little brown bat

Herbivores

Monarch butterfly

White tail deer

Snail

If you have older scientists, you may wish to also have them add as many more omnivores, carnivores, and herbivores as they can think of to the three lists.



Scavenging for Food Sources

Have your young scientist go on a scavenger hunt to find food sources. Each time your scientist finds one, he or she should move like an animal that would eat the food. Tell your scientist to be sure to look around and see if s/he can find any evidence of an animal having eaten the food.

Having a Snack Clues

I am not a bird, but I have a beak. I use it to eat slugs, grubs, mushrooms, and fruit. I am _____.

I use my tongue to sense my favorite small mammal and my two sharp teeth to catch it. I swallow my food whole. I am _____.

As a larva, I only eat milkweed leaves. When I become an adult, I use a tube-like part of my mouth to drink nectar. I am _____.

I have a beak like a straw that lets me drink nectar and sap. I also eat small bugs and insects. I am _____.

I sleep during the day and fly at night. I can eat 1,000 insects in an hour! I am _____.

I have teeth that are too small to be seen (or felt) by humans. They scrape and tear leaves, stems, algae, and mushrooms. I am _____.

I have 50 teeth. Because I can be on the ground or in trees, I can use my teeth to eat grass, fruits, berries, nuts, insects, ticks, snakes, lizards, and small mammals. I am _____.

I have a very sticky tongue that I use to catch my food. I may eat insects, spiders, and other small animals that will fit in my mouth. I am _____.

I eat twigs and leaves off bushes and trees. I also eat fruit, nuts, lichen, and other types of plants. I am _____.

Having a Snack Pictures



Little Brown Bat



Box Turtle



Snail



White-tailed Deer



Ruby-throated hummingbird



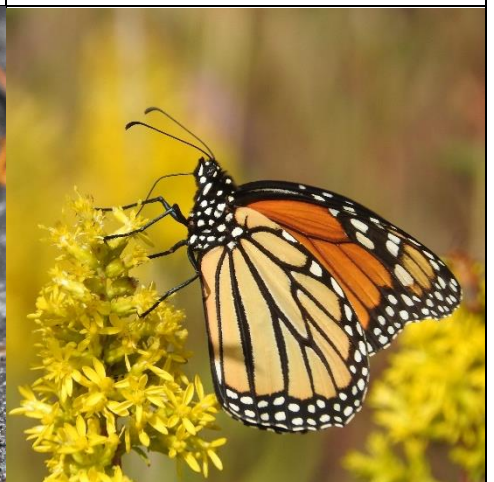
Opossum



Black Rat Snake



Barking Tree Frog



Monarch Butterfly

All photos courtesy of the National Park Service, www.nps.gov