

[Home](#) » [Animals](#) » 26 Animals that Are Nocturnal (A to Z List & Pictures)

26 Animals that Are Nocturnal (A to Z List & Pictures)

By Garreth / December 31, 2021



Examples of animals that are nocturnal include bats, cats, opossums, raccoons, coyotes, and owls.

A nocturnal animal is an animal that sleeps during the day and stays awake at night. Nocturnal animals are active anytime from sunset to sunrise, but many of them will sleep for a few hours during the day as well.

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Examples of Animals that Are Nocturnal

Nocturnal animals are known for being active during the night and sleeping during the day.

Nocturnal animals usually have a lot of adaptations to help them stay out of sight from predators, such as eyes with pupils that open wide in low light, or fur that is dark-colored and blends into shadows.

1. Aardvark

Scientific Name *Orycteropus afer*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range Africa

Diet Carnivore

Aardvarks are nocturnal animals found in Africa. They have long tongues which they use to catch
r prey of termites, ants, and insect larvae.

Aardvarks dig holes with their claws that can be up to two feet deep. These burrows serve as a place
for them to sleep during the day when it is too hot.

2. Aye-aye

Scientific Name *Daubentonia madagascariensis*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range Madagascar

Diet Omnivore

The aye-aye is nocturnal and can be found in Madagascar. These creatures are known for their long
thin fingers that they use to find food like grubs, roots, and nuts hidden inside the bark of trees.

They also have extremely large eyes and ears which help them hunt at night when it is harder to see.

3. Badger

Scientific Name *Taxidea taxus*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range North America

Diet Omnivore

There are several different species of badgers, the most common being the Eurasian Badger. They can be found throughout Europe and Asia, as well as in Central America in Mexico.

All members of the Mustelidae family are considered to be nocturnal. This means they are awake during nighttime hours when it is dark outside and sleep during the day.

It is believed that they are nocturnal because of their large eyes and sensitive whiskers, both of which allow them to be more active at night time where there is less light.

4. Bats

Scientific Name *Chiroptera*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range Worldwide

Diet Omnivore

There are over 1400 different species of bats that can be found all around the world except for Antarctica.

Bats are nocturnal animals that sleep during the day. They use echolocation to navigate in their environment and feed at night when it is easy for them to catch insects.

Bats have very good eyesight despite being active at night, which they use to locate food sources.

Most nocturnal bats do not see in full color.

5. Civet

Scientific Name *Civettictis civetta*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range Africa, southern Europe, and Asia

Diet Omnivore

Civets are an interesting group of animals that are nocturnal. They have large eyes, long whiskers, and very strong limbs for climbing trees.

Civets also have a scent gland in the anal region which they use to mark branches as part of their territory marking system.

This smell has some kind of chemical in it that comes from a colorless oil. This is why civets are also sometimes referred to as 'musk cats'.

6. Crab-Eating Fox

Scientific Name *Cerdocyon thous*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range Paraguay, Uruguay and northern Argentina

Diet Omnivore

The fox is a well-known [nocturnal animal](#) that can be found in the wild all over the world. Foxes are omnivores so their diets consist of small mammals like mice or larger animals like deer.

They also eat insects such as beetles, grasshoppers, and crickets when they cannot find larger prey.

7. Deer

Scientific Name *Cervidae*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range United States

Diet Herbivore

At some times of the year, deer are more active at night than during the day. This is especially true of deer in southern states of the USA where deer are active at night to avoid the extreme heat of the daytime.

Furthermore, during winter, deer will often sleep in direct sunlight to keep warm.

Deer move about frequently and walk into the wind at night, both to prevent predators from smelling them, but also to smell predators upwind!

They live in a wide variety of habitats, from the arctic tundra to the tropics, but they all have keen senses for defense against predators. Deer are herbivores who eat plants like grasses and shoots.

8. Dormouse

Scientific Name *Gliridae*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range Africa, Asia, and Europe

Diet Omnivore

The Dormouse is classified as a nocturnal animal because it generally comes out at night.

The Dormouse has eyes that are very large in proportion to their body, which allows them to see better during the day or nighttime hours. They also have a wide range of hearing and smell senses to help them navigate their surroundings and to protect themselves from predators.

They also use these senses as a way of communicating with others of the same species, especially

when it comes time for mating season.

9. Frog

Scientific Name *Anura*

Type of Animal Amphibian

Range Worldwide

Diet Carnivore

Many kinds of frogs are nocturnal and sleep throughout the day. They often live in dark, wet places such as caves or under logs.

In some cases, frogs may even remain in a state of hibernation for weeks or months on end.

However, many species have been known to be more active during the evening hours than their diurnal counterparts which only come out at dawn and dusk.

10. Gecko

Scientific Name *Gekkonidae*

Type of Animal Reptile

Range Worldwide

Diet Carnivore

Geckos are nocturnal animals that sleep during the day and become active at night. Nocturnal geckos find shelter within crevices, under fallen leaves or rocks where they will be protected from predators like birds, snakes, and other reptiles like lizards.

During the daytime hours, this type of gecko usually stays hidden. Nocturnal geckos are very territorial and will defend their homes from other animals that try to take them over.

11. Hamsters

Scientific Name *Cricetinae*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range Worldwide

Diet Omnivore

Since hamsters are nocturnal animals, they sleep during the day. If your hamster is being kept in a room that gets sunlight or has access to bright lights, then it may become more active at night.

However, if you have your pet somehow darken its sleeping space so that it can rest during the time hours when most people are up and about, then your hamster will probably sleep more during the day.

12. Hedgehog

Scientific Name *Erinaceinae*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range Europe, Asia, Africa, and New Zealand

Diet Omnivore

Hedgehogs are mammals that have long snouts with over one thousand sharp spines to protect themselves from predators.

These animals hibernate for about four months of winter and they do not need much food because their metabolism is very slow.

They sleep during the day and become active at night. They are nocturnal animals, which means that they sleep during the day and become active at night. These animals come out in early spring when the weather is cool enough to search for food such as insects, snails, or earthworms.

13. Indian Wolf

Scientific Name *Canis lupus pallipes*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range India

Diet Carnivore

The population of Indian wolves is rapidly decreasing because their natural habitat has been destroyed and they have to compete with [domestic dogs for prey](#).

They eat small mammals, birds, reptiles, and insects. Unfortunately, the Indian wolf is classified as endangered species on the IUCN red list (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources).

14. Kinkajou

Scientific Name *Potos flavus*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range Central and South America

Diet Omnivore

Kinkajous are nocturnal animals that live in the tropical rainforests of Central and South America. This

means they sleep all day and come out at night to forage for food, which makes them active from dusk until dawn.

15. Kiwi

Scientific Name *Actinidia*

Type of Animal Bird

Range New Zealand

Diet Omnivore

The kiwi is a nocturnal animal that lives in New Zealand. They have been known to walk around their habitat foraging for food as early as two hours after sunset, but they tend to stay hidden from predators by daybreak.

16. Lemurs

Scientific Name *Lemuroidea*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range Madagascar

Diet Omnivore

Lemurs spend their nights foraging, eating leaves and fruit. They are known for being social animals

live in groups.

Lemur mothers give birth to one baby at a time which is cared for by the entire group during its early development period. They are the only type of primates that live in groups.

Related Article: [Do Lemur Have Opposable Thumbs?](#)

17. Leopard

Scientific Name *Panthera pardus*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range sub-Saharan Africa

Diet Carnivore

The leopard is a large carnivorous feline that lives in southern Africa, but can also be found on other continents.

Leopards have a number of physical characteristics that make them nocturnal hunters, including very large pupils and forward-facing eyes so they can take in as much light as possible at night.

The leopard's spotted coat allows it to blend into the trees and bushes where they spend their time
ting. They are able to stalk prey silently before pouncing on them with sharp claws that act as
lethal weapons for grabbing onto animals while climbing or killing from a distance.

18. Moths

Scientific Name *Lepidoptera*

Type of Animal Insect

Range Worldwide

Diet Herbivore

Moths are nocturnal creatures. They spend the day hiding in dark, sheltered areas and become active at night.

Nocturnal animals have adapted to their environment by having eyes that can see well in low light conditions as well as large ears which enable them to pick up sounds better than other types of animals or insects.

Some moths are never seen during the day and fly at night in search of a mate so it is not unusual to only see them flying around your porch lights when you turn them on.

19. Opossum



Scientific Name *Didelphidae*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range United States, Mexico, Central America, South America and Canada

Diet Omnivore

The opossum belongs to the marsupial family and is a nocturnal animal. They will sleep during most of the day and hunt at night but can be seen hunting early in the morning or late evening as well.

Opossums are also known to be loud animals that will hiss, growl and scream when threatened or frightened.

This is an attempt at scaring off the predator that may have been threatening them. The opossum will usually play dead in this situation as well if they feel like their life is in danger.

20. Owl

Scientific Name *Strigiformes*

Type of Animal Bird

Range Worldwide

Diet Carnivore

Owls are nocturnal birds of prey who hunt for small rodents during the nighttime. The biggest owl is The Blakiston fish owl (*Bubo Blakistoni*) which stands about 6 foot tall.

Owls have been around for about 70 million years and they are found all over the world except in Antarctica.

Nocturnal birds often use their exceptional vision to hunt at night when it is easier to see food without being detected by predators themselves or other prey animals that might be active during the day.

Many nocturnal birds have features that help them find prey during the night, such as good hearing and special feathers that reflect or scatter light.

21. Porcupine

Scientific Name *Erethizon dorsatum*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range the United States and northern Mexico

Diet Herbivore

Porcupines are nocturnal animals that spend most of their time sleeping in trees or on the ground where they can successfully hide from predators.

These herbivores feed almost exclusively at night, which is when the majority of plants and other vegetation are available for consumption.

22. Raccoon

Scientific Name *Procyon lotor*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range North America

Diet Omnivore

Raccoons typically sleep just a couple of hours during the day, but they spend most of their time foraging and playing at night. You might even hear a raccoon rustling around in your garbage of a nighttime!

23. Rattlesnakes

Scientific Name *Crotalus*

Type of Animal Reptile

Range United States

Diet Carnivore

Different species of snake are active at different times of day. This is to avoid one another as well as to avoid predators. Rattlesnakes often choose to be nocturnal in summer. This is because the nights are warm so they're comfortable at night, but it's also to avoid the prying eyes of predators.

24. Red Fox

Scientific Name *Vulpes vulpes*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range United States from Alaska to Florida

Diet Omnivore

The red fox is a mammal of the order Carnivora, family Canidae. It has adapted to hunting in cold climates and is found throughout the world outside polar regions.

The Red Fox tend to sleep during daylight hours and become active at night when their prey species will also be most active.

25. Tarsier

Scientific Name *Tarsiidae*



Type of Animal Mammal

Range Southeast Asia

Diet Carnivore

Tarsier is a nocturnal animal that is primarily located in Southeast Asia. Most of them have their own natural habitat in rainforests, but some also live on islands or other continents.

26. Wombats

Scientific Name *Vombatidae*

Type of Animal Mammal

Range Australia

Diet Herbivore

Wombats are nocturnal animals meaning that they sleep during the day and become active at night.

Their large, shovel-like forepaws help them dig their burrows which can be up to 30meters long.

They mainly eat grasses but will also feed on roots, bark, or fruit.

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[31 Examples of Omnivores](#)

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[31 Animals that Hiss](#)

[33 Examples of Carnivores](#)

[33 Animals that Produce Milk](#)



Gareth

Hi, I'm Gareth. Living in South Africa I've had the pleasure of seeing most of these animals up close and personal. When I was younger I always wanted to be a game ranger but unfortunately, life happens and now at least I get to write about them and tell you my experiences.

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