

IN THE RAIN

LOOKING FOR DRY SPOTS When it rains, people usually look for cover. They may dart inside, open an umbrella, or grab a raincoat. Many kinds of wild animals also look for shelter in a storm. A bird may tuck itself under a leafy branch. A fox may scurry down a burrow. Butterflies often dangle from the undersides of leaves. And apes called orangutans may even break off big leaves and use them as umbrellas!

ON THE LOOKOUT When it rains, some animals may do the opposite of what you'd expect. A deer, for example, may stand in the middle of a meadow instead of in the shelter of a forest. Why? It may suspect an enemy is nearby and doesn't want to be caught by surprise. A hard rain can be really **LOUD** in a forest and it may even cover up the sounds of a predator sneaking toward a deer or other animal. But out in the open, it's easier for the animal to hear and see the sneaky predator.

RAINDROPS OR LEECH-DROPS? When it pours in the rainforests of Queensland, Australia, some leeches leave the ground and slither up into trees. From there, they drop onto unsuspecting animals passing underneath. The plop! of a leech landing on an animal feels like the plop! of a raindrop. So the animal may not even know the leech is there. The leech then attaches itself to the animal's skin and starts sucking blood.

GREAT BALLS OF . . . ANTS? Sometimes it rains so hard that sheets of water rush across the land. And that can be trouble for creatures the size of ants! But some ants do a clever thing.

They cling together and make a big ball. The ball keeps the ants from getting separated from each other. It also turns them into a kind of rolling, floating "raft." As the ball rolls around on the surface of the water, each ant gets its turn to breathe. So most of them manage to survive.

A GULP OF RAIN Horned lizards live in the desert where it's not easy to find enough drinking water. But no problem: They have a special trick for capturing rain. When the first drops begin to fall, a horned lizard will hurry to get into the rain (even if it was sleeping underground). The lizard then stands with its body spread wide to collect rain on its back. The scales on the lizard's back are like tiny bathroom tiles. The rainwater moves along the narrow grooves between the scales and toward the thirsty lizard's head. From there it runs right into the lizard's open mouth!

WINDY DAY CATCH Since fish live underwater, you wouldn't think that it would matter to them if it's raining or not. But some fish come up near the surface when it rains. Why? Rain and wind can knock flying insects into the water. So, insect-eating fish such as bluegill come up to nab a meal. Meanwhile, many fishermen know that this is a good time to get a catch. Not only are the fish near the surface, they also can't see as well as usual. The raindrops break up the smooth surface of the water and make it harder for the fish to see people. So when it starts raining, both fish and people may start looking for an easy catch!