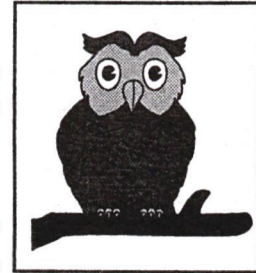


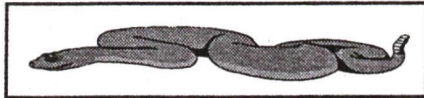
PREDATOR BY NIGHT

Katharina Fichtner, Pocono Environmental Education Center

A large number of animals are adapted to the night life. Less competition for food and space and more safety against predators are two key reasons for a nocturnal lifestyle.



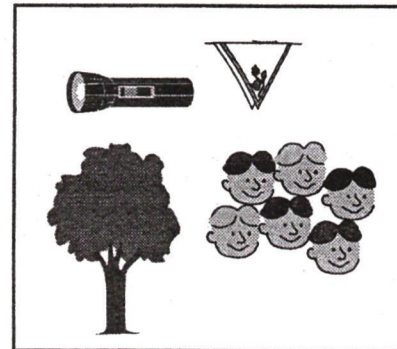
To optimize their life by darkness, nocturnal animals have special adaptations. Some animals have excellent eyes/eyesight and are



able to see a lot with a minimum of light. Some animals, such as snakes, are able to orient themselves by smell or heat sensors at their tongue or skin. Other nocturnal animals navigate with their hearing. They are well adapted for their nocturnal lifestyle.

To better understand the mechanism of nocturnal animals and to introduce students to a fascinating, secret world, engage them in the following activity:

- MATERIALS:** 1 flashlight, 1 blindfold
GROUP: 5 - 12 students, any age
SETTING: a small wooded area
(not too many leaves on the ground)



One student is chosen to play the "predator by night". He is very hungry and searching for prey. This predator is blindfolded and can navigate only by using his sense of hearing. When he hears/senses his prey, he shines the spot of the flashlight on it and thereby captures it.

The rest of the group, the prey, is lined up 10- 15 feet away from their predator. The prey have to pass the predator, one at a time, in order to get safely home, a pre-designated area 10 feet behind the predator. All the players are silent. If the predator hears a sound, he turns the flashlight in the direction where he supposes his prey to be. If the light meets the prey on the spot, the prey is caught. He then becomes the next predator.