

REPTILES and

When air temperature falls, so does the body temperature, heart rate and digestion of these animals. They need to get underground below the frost line or into a sheltered area where temperatures will not dip below freezing.

TURTLES

Instead of breathing with their lungs, as they would during summer, they get the oxygen they need by absorbing it through their skin. Sometimes turtles may be seen swimming under the ice. Their bodies will be the temperature of the surrounding water—about 40 degrees F.



PAINTED TURTLE



SNAPPING TURTLE

Turtles are usually snuggled into the mud at the bottom of the pond for the winter.

SNAKES

Snakes, like this garter snake, gather in crevices in rocky places and underground holes. When spring comes, the ground warms. They leave the confined space and begin sunning themselves to warm up.



GARTER SNAKE

Bundled together like a big knot, snakes share body heat—just enough to keep them from freezing.

Look for large numbers of snakes in the spring as they "wake up" and emerge over a few days.

AMPHIBIANS

Eating plenty of food through summer and fall will make certain they have enough stored body fat for winter. This body fat will provide all the food they will need until spring when food is plentiful once again.

FROGS & TOADS

Most frogs hibernate buried in the mud at the bottom of the pond. Instead of breathing with their lungs, as they would in the summer, they get the oxygen they need by absorbing it through their skin from the surrounding mud. Toads and some frogs hibernate under logs and leaf litter on the forest floor. A blanket of snow will help to keep them warm enough to survive the winter.



BULLFROG

AMERICAN TOAD



SPRING PEEPER



WOOD FROG

FROGSICLE!
Antifreeze forms inside the wood frog's cells in preparation for hibernation, creating a thick liquid. Ice forms between the cells without harming the frog. While frozen, the wood frog's heart is completely stopped.



SPOTTED SALAMANDER

RED-BACKED SALAMANDER

Red-backed salamanders are the most common salamander in New York State. Look for them in wooded areas during warmer months. They go underground for winter.

SALAMANDERS

While aquatic salamanders may be active under the ice through the winter, their land-based cousins are not. Like toads, these salamanders will find shelter and hibernate in underground burrows, under logs and leaf litter on the forest floor, and in rocky crevices.

