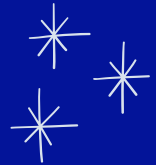




OHS YOUTH NEWSLETTER

By, For, and About Youth & Animal Welfare
Ohlone Humane Society Youth & Family



Editor: Makayla A, 16, Minnesota, Youth Volunteer & OHS Youth & Family Program

January 2025

Winter Safety! by Makayla A., 16 years

Animal Injuries in the Cold: How to Keep Pets Safe in Winter

Winter weather brings risks for pets and wildlife, including frostbite, hypothermia, and paw pad injuries. Cold, ice, and chemicals like antifreeze can cause serious harm if precautions aren't taken.

Common Cold-Weather Risks

- Frostbite affects exposed areas like ears, tails, and paws, causing swelling and discoloration.
- Hypothermia from prolonged cold exposure can lead to lethargy and organ failure.
- Paw Injuries from ice, snow, and salt cause cracks and irritation.
- Dehydration occurs from dry air and less frequent water breaks.

Keeping Pets Safe

- Limit Outdoor Time: Bring pets inside if they shiver or seem cold.
- Dress for Warmth: Short-haired pets benefit from sweaters or coats.
- Protect Paws: Use booties or wipe paws after walks to remove salt and chemicals.
- Provide Warm Shelters: Outdoor animals need insulated spaces and unfrozen water.
- Watch for Chemicals: Clean up antifreeze spills and store safely.

Caring for Wildlife

- Help wildlife by setting up bird feeders, providing fresh water, and avoiding disturbances to hibernating animals.
- Winter can be beautiful, but it's important to protect our furry and feathered friends. With a little preparation, you can keep them safe, warm, and healthy all season long!

Where Do Reptiles and Birds Go in Winter?

Winter brings significant changes for reptiles and birds as they adapt to survive cold temperatures. While birds take to the skies in search of warmer climates, reptiles stay closer to home, finding creative ways to endure the cold.

Reptiles: Adapting to the Cold

Reptiles are cold-blooded, which means their body temperature relies on their surroundings. During winter, they become inactive to conserve energy, entering a state called brumation (similar to hibernation in mammals). Here's how they survive:

- Underground Retreats: Many reptiles, like snakes and turtles, burrow into the ground or beneath logs to escape freezing temperatures.
- Aquatic Hideaways: Turtles often sink to the bottom of ponds and lakes, where they breathe through their skin and remain motionless in the oxygen-rich water.
- Rock Crevices: Lizards and snakes may shelter in rock cracks to avoid frost and predators.

Reptiles reemerge in spring when warmer weather allows their bodies to become active again.

Birds: Migrating for Survival

Birds have two main strategies for winter survival: migration or staying put and adapting.

- Migrators: Many species, such as geese, robins, and swallows, migrate thousands of miles to warmer climates with abundant food. They navigate using the Earth's magnetic field, the sun, and even stars.
- Winter Residents: Birds like chickadees, woodpeckers, and cardinals stay through winter, fluffing their feathers for insulation and eating high-fat foods to maintain energy.

Bird feeders help winter residents thrive by providing seeds, nuts, and suet when natural food is scarce; however, they can attract larger animals, too. Understanding these survival strategies highlights the resilience of reptiles and birds during winter.

Whether birds are flying south or reptiles are brumating underground, nature equips them with remarkable tools to endure the cold.

Animal News & Community Service Opportunity Ideas at Other Organizations

This information is shared for your convenience only, and we do not endorse or take responsibility for the event.

The following events are listed through [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) and you must sign up through their website.

[Flyway Trail-Don Edwards San Francisco Bay_NWR-Ravenswood Unit.](#)

February 22, 2025 Menlo Park

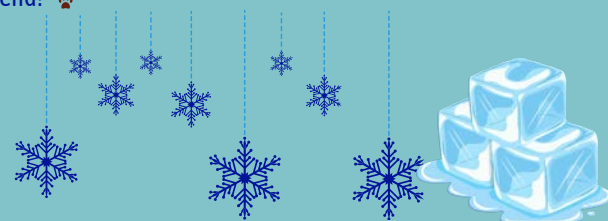
[Coyote Meadows Bioblitz January '11, 2025 San Jose](#)

[Planting for Pollinators in the Marsh January 19, 2025 San Jose](#)

Ice Safety for Pets

- Know the Ice Thickness: Stick to well-known areas with clearly marked ice thickness guidelines. Thin ice can crack under your pet's weight.
- Dress for Warmth: Short-haired pets may need a cozy sweater or jacket during winter walks to prevent hypothermia.
- Check Paws After Walks: Ice, salt, and chemicals can irritate paws. Rinse and dry them thoroughly to avoid discomfort.
- Carry a Safety Kit: Pack essentials like a leash, towel, and pet-safe hand warmers in case of an emergency.
- Watch for Slips: Just like humans, pets can slip on ice and get injured. Keep a close eye and avoid overly slick surfaces.

A little preparation ensures a safe and happy season for you and your four-legged friend! 🐾



Interested in writing an article or sharing original animal art for the OHS Youth Newsletter?

Tell us your thoughts on animal issues.

Draw a picture or take an original photo of an community animal in its local habitat.

Share an original nature poem.

Contact youth@ohlonehumanesociety.org for more info about community service hours for participation in the newsletter.

