



AFTER THE SUN SETS

The setting sun, for many animals, marks the beginning of a new “day.” A nighttime community emerges, teeming with lurking predators and wary prey that have adapted to life with little light.

Nocturnal animals use highly developed sensory mechanisms to spot predators and prey. Bats, for instance, echolocate—they emit high-pitched signals and use their large ears to pick up echoes that bounce off moths and other potential meals. Moths have developed a hearing system that quickly recognizes echolocation. The moth folds its wings and falls, narrowly avoiding the jaws of its swooping predator. Such survival mechanisms, of both predator and prey, keep the nocturnal food web in balance.

Most wildlife species are nocturnal, and daytime sightings of them are rare. Look for tracks on park trails—they may be the only signs you see of nature’s other, darker world.

