

Tips for Seeing More City Critters

Animals are all around you in the city, but you might not notice them. Use these tips to see more city critters at home and in our neighborhood.

Let the animals come to you.

Sit in an area where there is food, water, or shelter for animals. It might be in your backyard or a park. Near water is always a good place to see animals. Sit quietly without moving for several minutes and wait for animals to show themselves to you.



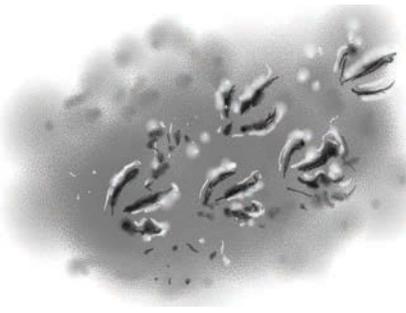
Good food always attracts a crowd.

Birds are one of the easiest city critters to see. Put up a bird feeder or birdbath and watch all of the action. But be aware that birdseed can also attract unwanted visitors, like rats. Keep the area under your feeders clean. Pet food dishes left outside and garbage cans with loose lids can also be an invitation to raccoons, skunks, bears, and other animals that you don't want coming too close to your home.



Look for signs.

Animals leave signs that they've been in the neighborhood. Look for tracks, scat (poop), bones, fur, or feathers—look closely, but don't pick them up.



Go on a Night Walk.

Invite an adult to join you on a walk in the dark. Grab a flashlight and explore your yard or neighborhood. Shine the flashlight under a bush, into the branches of a tree, or under a porch. You may see the eyes of a raccoon, opossum, or even an owl shining back at you. Remember to look with your eyes and not with your hands—never put your hands under anything in the dark! You might scare an animal who could react with a swipe of its claws or a bite.



Pay attention to plants.

Plants provide food and shelter to lots of animals. Look inside flowers, on leaves, close to the ground, and flying in the air nearby. You might also want to plant specific plants that attract critters like butterflies and birds. Your local plant nursery or native plant society are good resources.



Go outside and listen, listen, listen.

To help focus your listening, close your eyes. Morning is a good time for listening because there are fewer man-made noises. At night, open a door or window to listen for several minutes before going to bed.

