
Did you know that . . .

in Europe, stores sell tree frogs in small glasses to be used as weather forecasters? Although there is no scientific proof, it has long been a popular adage that when frogs croak more than usual or when ducks quack more than usual, rain is on its way. The assumption that these animals can predict rain seems to be based on their close association with water.



Concept

Many plants and animals are sensitive to changes in air pressure and humidity and react to a change in the weather.

Activity

Natural weather indicators. Give each student the activity worksheet "Nature's Weather Forecasters" and have them work through it before discussing the answers in class. You might also ask students to share other weather signs they have heard of—or to make up their own.

ANSWER KEY:

Nature's Weather Forecasters

(All answers may vary.) 1. Possibly true; rain may wash away the trail scent, so ants will stay closer together to keep the scent. 2. Possibly true; ants try to protect their nests from the moisture. 3. False; storage depends on how many nuts are available. 4. False. 5. False. 6. Possibly true; sunflowers may raise their heads to get the last bit of sunlight, or in reaction to increased moisture. 7. False. 8. False. 9. Possibly true; a sense of air pressure change may induce restlessness. 10. Possibly true; animals will spread out when there is no storm danger or need for warmth and protection. 11. False; the croaking of frogs is a mating call. 12. Possibly true; deer and elk move to lower ground to get away from a dangerous area to a more protected one. 13. False. 14. False.

NAME _____

NATURE'S WEATHER FORECASTERS

Many plants and animals react to a change in the weather. They are sensitive to changes in air pressure and humidity. Which of the following are true statements about how plants or animals react to weather? Mark each statement true or false.

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- _____ 1. In fair weather, ants move scattered about. In rainy weather, they move in a single-file line.
- _____ 2. When ants sense rain, they close up their nests.
- _____ 3. If a squirrel stores many nuts, expect a severe winter.
- _____ 4. If you slap away a fly on your nose and it comes back, a storm is coming.
- _____ 5. If a groundhog sees its shadow on February 2, expect six more weeks of winter.
- _____ 6. When sunflowers raise their heads, it is a sign of rain.
- _____ 7. When a cat scratches itself on a fence, it is a sign of rain.
- _____ 8. Flies bite excessively before stormy weather.
- _____ 9. Horses race around before a violent storm.
- _____ 10. When sheep go into the hills and scatter, expect nice weather.
- _____ 11. Frogs croak more than usual before a storm.
- _____ 12. Deer and elk come down from the mountains at least two days before a storm.
- _____ 13. Bluebirds chatter when it's going to rain.
- _____ 14. Birds on a telephone wire indicate the coming of rain.

