

## Hemlocks are a Sanctuary

As winter arrives, animals seek protection from the sharp winds and falling temperatures. While all evergreens offer a degree of protection with their needles, hemlocks offer something special.



Tolerant of low light levels, young hemlocks can grow in the shade of giants - either of other hemlocks or beneath cedars and other moisture-loving trees. They retain their needles, even on the lowest branches, providing cover

and protection across the whole height of the trunk. Their needles are short and flattened, but not sharp, creating a protective screen against cold winds. The overall conical shape of the tree helps it shed snow, creating a slight hollow beneath it when the snow is deep elsewhere.

As you travel the trails here at CNC or explore another woodland, stop to look and listen around hemlocks. You may find a deer bed beneath its branches or perhaps you will hear the chatter of Black-capped Chickadees and red squirrels as they seek the seeds from inside the tiny cones. If you're lucky, you might even find evidence of a porcupine enjoying the the inner bark of this special tree.



## Other Evergreen Shelters

**Eastern white pine** are among our tallest evergreens in these woods. They are easily identified with long, soft needles found in bundles of 5. Their bark and needles are enjoyed by many animals and the seeds are a regular food for many songbirds, squirrels and mice.



**Eastern white cedar** provides dense cover similar to that of the hemlock. Its scale-like needles create a wind break sheltering many types of animals. The needles are a preferred winter food for white-tailed



deer and the seeds feed many songbirds.

**Stop by the Visitor Center Office for program information.**

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