

# Animals and Sleep: How Many Hours?

If you were to ask 10 different animals how much sleep they need each day, you would probably get 10 different answers...if animals could talk! Some animals get their sleep by taking short naps. These brief naps might add up to only a few hours of sleep in a 24-hour day. Other animals snooze for hours at a time, sleeping for half the day or more.

Wild animals often get more sleep when they are in a zoo. Food is provided for them, and they are safe from predators. So they can relax and sleep for longer periods of time. In the wild, they have to spend time hunting or gathering their food. Some animals have to migrate for weeks across long distances. Many also have to remain alert when predators are nearby. So they may spend less time sleeping in the wild.

For example, in captivity the slow-moving sloth sleeps for about 16 hours per day. But a team of scientists went to a rainforest to study sloths. They found that brown-throated, three-toed sloths slept for less than 10 hours per day in their natural environment.

*The following chart compares the estimated number of hours that a variety of adult animals sleep in a typical 24-hour day. Which animals sleep more – or less – than you?*

