

LITTLE RED BAT



BY CAROLE GERBER

ILLUSTRATED BY CHRISTINA WALD



LITTLE RED BAT



Animals deal with seasonal changes in a variety of ways. Red bats are the only bat species that can migrate or hibernate to protect themselves from cold winters. As the weather is getting colder, the Little Red Bat has a decision to make. She questions other forest animals about how they will spend the upcoming winter as she tries to decide whether to stay or to go.

Animals in the book include:

- Red bat
- Squirrel
- Deer
- Rabbit
- Chipmunk
- Mouse
- Wild turkey
- Sparrow

It's so much more than a picture book . . . this book is specifically designed to be both a fun-to-read story and a launch pad for discussions and learning. Whether read at home or in a classroom, we encourage adults to do the activities with the young children in their lives. Free online resources and support at www.ArbordalePublishing.com include:

- For Creative Minds as seen in the book (in English & Spanish):
 - Match the Bat Adaptations
 - Bat Fun Facts
 - How Animals Deal with Seasonal Changes
 - Red Bats and Seasonal Change
 - Bat Life Cycle Sequencing Activity
- Teaching Activities:
 - Reading Questions
 - Language Arts
 - Science
 - Mathematics
 - Geography
 - Coloring Pages
- Interactive Quizzes: Reading Comprehension, For Creative Minds, and Math Word Problems
- English and Spanish Audiobooks
- Related Websites
- Aligned to State Standards (searchable database)
- Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts! Quizzes
- Lexile and Fountas & Pinnell Reading Levels

eBooks with Auto-Flip, Auto-Read, and selectable English and Spanish text and audio available for purchase online.

Thanks to Laura Seckbach Finn, Director of www.FlyByNightInc.org: The Bat Specialists, for verifying the accuracy of the information in the book.

Award-winning author Carole Gerber has written over 100 science and reading textbooks, a multicultural folktale series, several adult nonfiction books, two chapter books, and 15 picture books. *Little Red Bat* is her first title with Arbordale. *Winter Trees* was selected as a 2009 Outstanding Trade Book by the National Science Teachers' Association and the Children's Book Council. Other awards include NSTA and Cooperative Children's Book Center commendations for *Leaf Jumpers*, a CCBC commendation for *Blizzard*, and a Parent Council Award of Excellence for *Hush! A Gaelic Lullaby*. Carole is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators and participates in the Artists-in-Schools Program through the Greater Columbus, Ohio, Arts Council.

Christina Wald illustrated *Little Red Bat*, *Henry the Impatient Heron*, *Habitat Spy*, *Warm Winter Tail*, and *The Fort on Fourth Street* for Arbordale as well as a wide variety of toys, games, other books, and magazines. Christina enjoys the research aspect of projects, saying that each new book is a fascinating new learning experience. From herons to horses, she says that each new book is a fascinating new learning experience and the research is an integral part of the process of creating illustrations. For *Little Red Bat*, she visited a couple in Ft. Wayne, Indiana who rescue bats of many species. Luckily, they had a red bat family (a mother and three babies) that they were preparing to release back into the wild. She lives in Ohio with her husband and two geriatric cats. When not illustrating, she enjoys movies, travel, and reading.



Carole Gerber

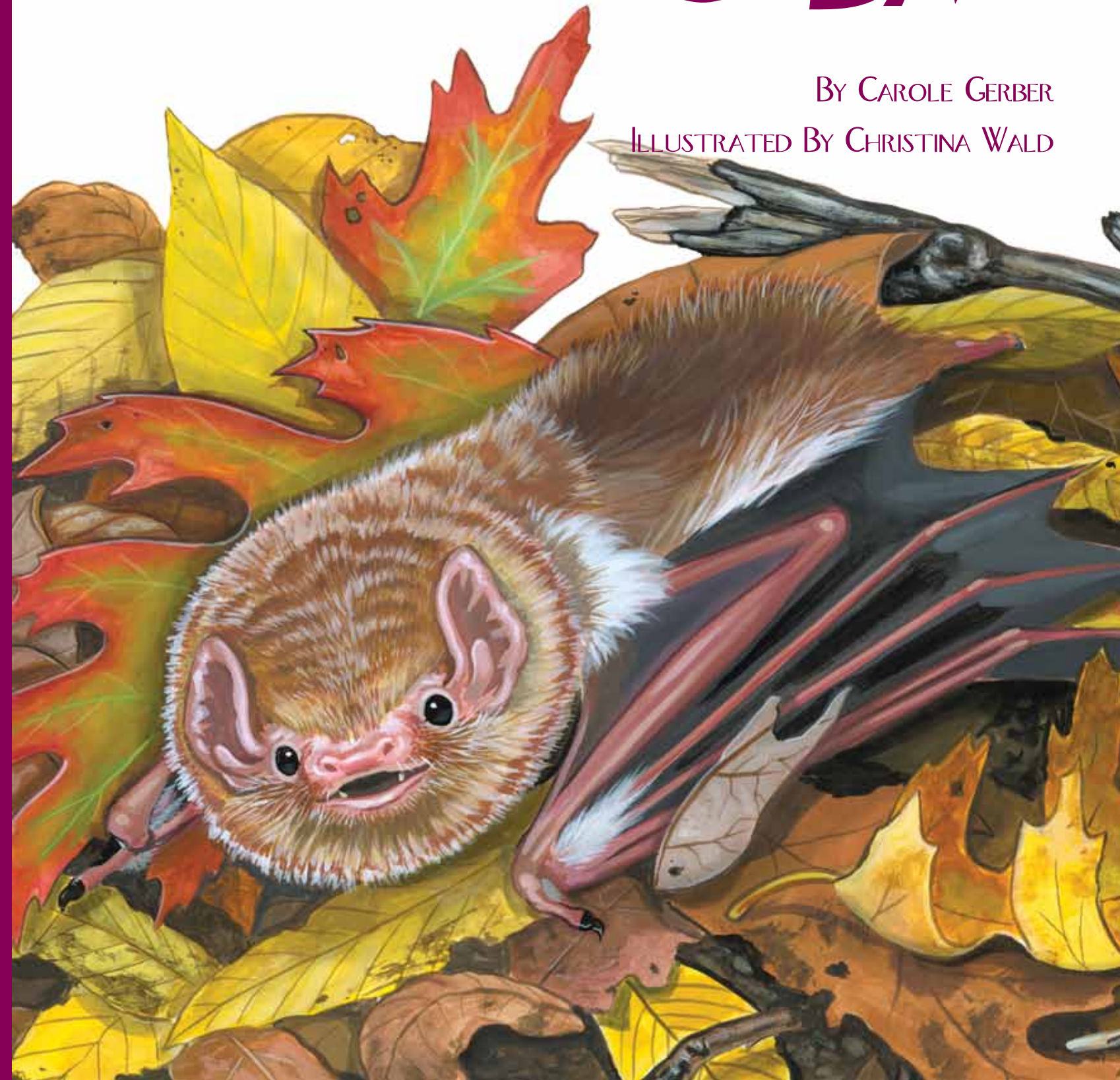


Christina Wald

LITTLE RED BAT

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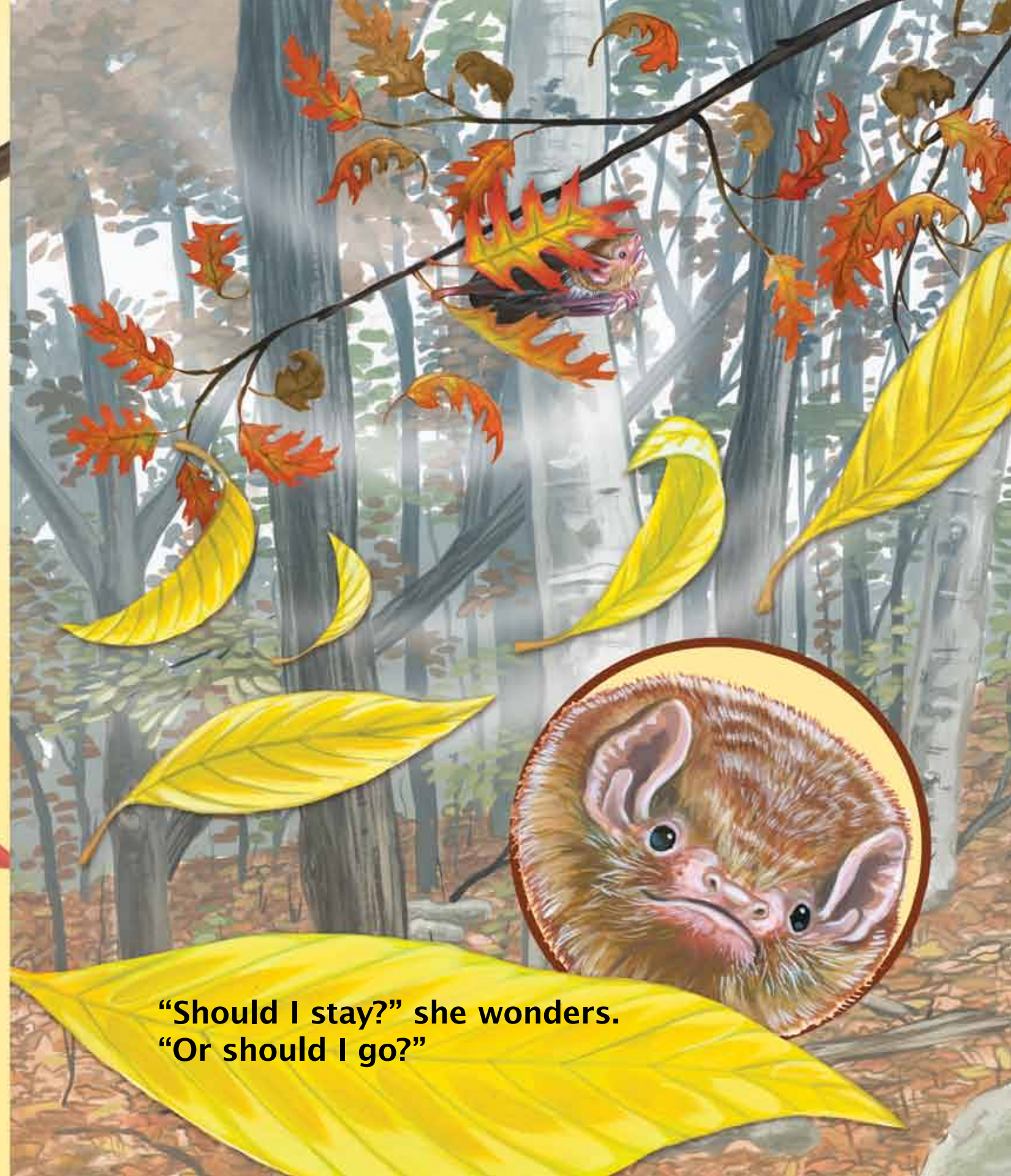
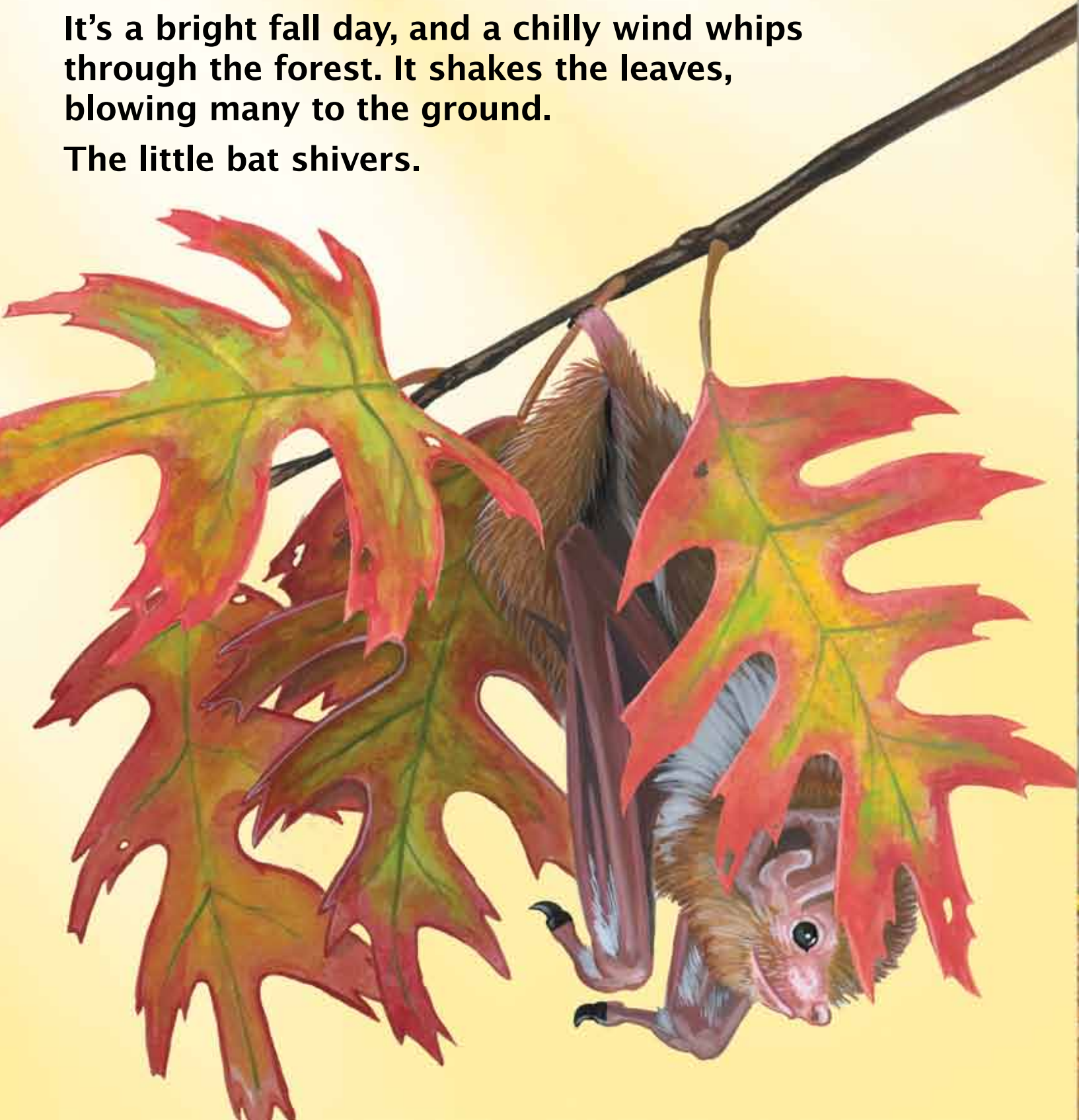
ILLUSTRATED BY CHRISTINA WALD



A tiny foot clings to the stem of a leaf. The foot belongs to a little red bat. The bat, too, looks like a leaf.

It's a bright fall day, and a chilly wind whips through the forest. It shakes the leaves, blowing many to the ground.

The little bat shivers.



“Should I stay?” she wonders.
“Or should I go?”

A moment later, the plump little bat lies on the ground. The leaf she clung to is beside her, blown down by the wind. Instantly, the little red bat curls herself into a ball and wraps her tail around her body. Now, the little red bat looks like a furry pine cone.



“Good trick,” says a squirrel, burying nuts nearby.

The little red bat doesn't answer. She's shy and used to being alone. She seldom leaves her tree except at dusk, when she flies around eating insects. Lately, the little red bat has been eating more insects than usual.

“I said, ‘good trick,’” repeats the squirrel.

The little red bat is pretty sure the squirrel only eats nuts. She uncurls her tail. “Thanks,” she says.

“What are you doing here?” asks the squirrel as he digs. “Aren't you supposed to hang out in a cave?”

“I'm a tree bat,” replies the little red bat. “I hang out in trees.”

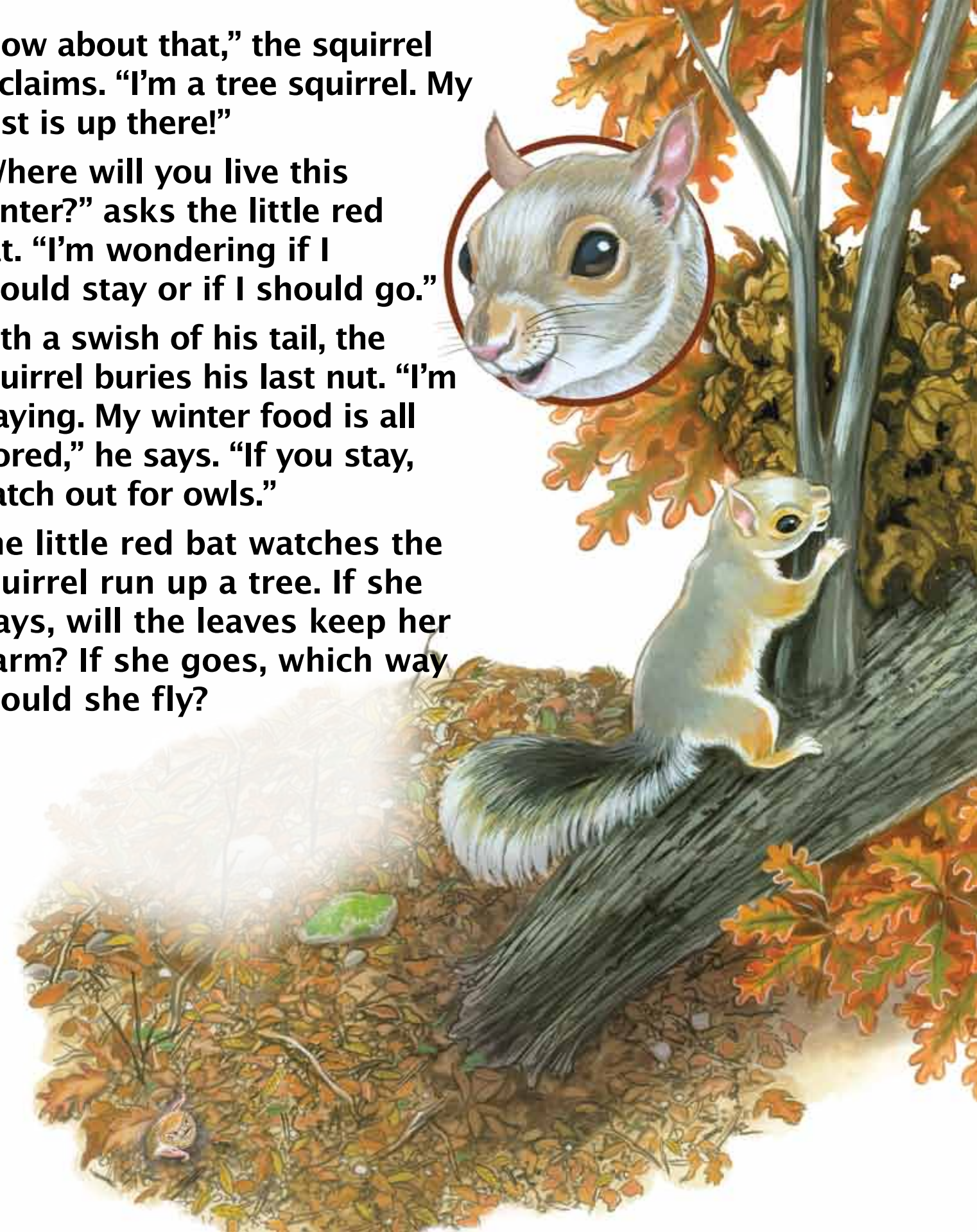


“How about that,” the squirrel exclaims. “I'm a tree squirrel. My nest is up there!”

“Where will you live this winter?” asks the little red bat. “I'm wondering if I should stay or if I should go.”

With a swish of his tail, the squirrel buries his last nut. “I'm staying. My winter food is all stored,” he says. “If you stay, watch out for owls.”

The little red bat watches the squirrel run up a tree. If she stays, will the leaves keep her warm? If she goes, which way should she fly?



The little red bat hears noises. Something is coming! Again, she rolls into a ball.

A deer stops to eat twigs. She's pretty sure deer don't eat bats. Still, the little red bat uncurls and creeps under a leaf pile.

The deer hears the leaves rustle. "Who's there?" he asks, ready to run.

"Just a bat trying to stay warm," the little red bat replies.

"Why are you still here?" asks the deer.

"Why are *you* still here?" asks the bat.



"I'm staying. The trees give me shelter, and I eat their twigs and bark," explains the deer. "What about you?"

"I can wrap up in my tail and stay here in the leaf pile," says the little red bat. "Or I can fly to a warmer place."

"If you stay, watch out for raccoons," warns the deer before trotting away.

The little red bat looks around. If a raccoon sees her, will it think she's a pine cone?



For Creative Minds

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There are two types of red bats: Eastern Red Bats (*Lasiurus borealis*) and Western Red Bats (*Lasiurus blossevillii*).

Red bats are solitary creatures. Except for females raising their young, these bats live alone.

Match the Bat Adaptations

Match the bat's adaptations to the letters on the picture. Answers are upside down on the bottom of the page.

- 1 Bats' wings are their "hands." Each wing has five digit (finger) bones, just like our hands. Bats belong to the order, *Chiroptera*, a Latin word that means "hand-wing."
- 2 Bats use their large ears during echolocation. They make clicking noises with their mouth or nose, then listen for the echoes to bounce back. This lets them know where things are.
- 3 Long toes with sharp claws make it possible for bats to hang upside down from their roosts (where they sleep).
- 4 The saying "blind as a bat" is not true! Bats have very good light vision but use echolocation in the dark because it is easier than carrying a flashlight!
- 5 The bat's "thumb" has a claw at the end for climbing and holding food.

Bats can get rabies just like any mammal, but it's rare. Never touch any animal you do not personally know.

Some bats eat fruit and seeds. Bananas, cashews, and saguaro cactus are some of the plants that rely on bats for seed dispersal or pollination.

Most bats (including red bats) eat insects. A single little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) can eat 600 mosquitoes in an hour!

Except for the polar regions and isolated islands, bats live all over the world.

Red bats are among the fastest flying bats. Their speed has been measured at over 40 miles (64 km) an hour. They have such a distinctive way of dipping and diving as they fly that naturalists can identify them from far away.

There are over 1,000 types of bats. Red bats are one of the most common bats in North America.

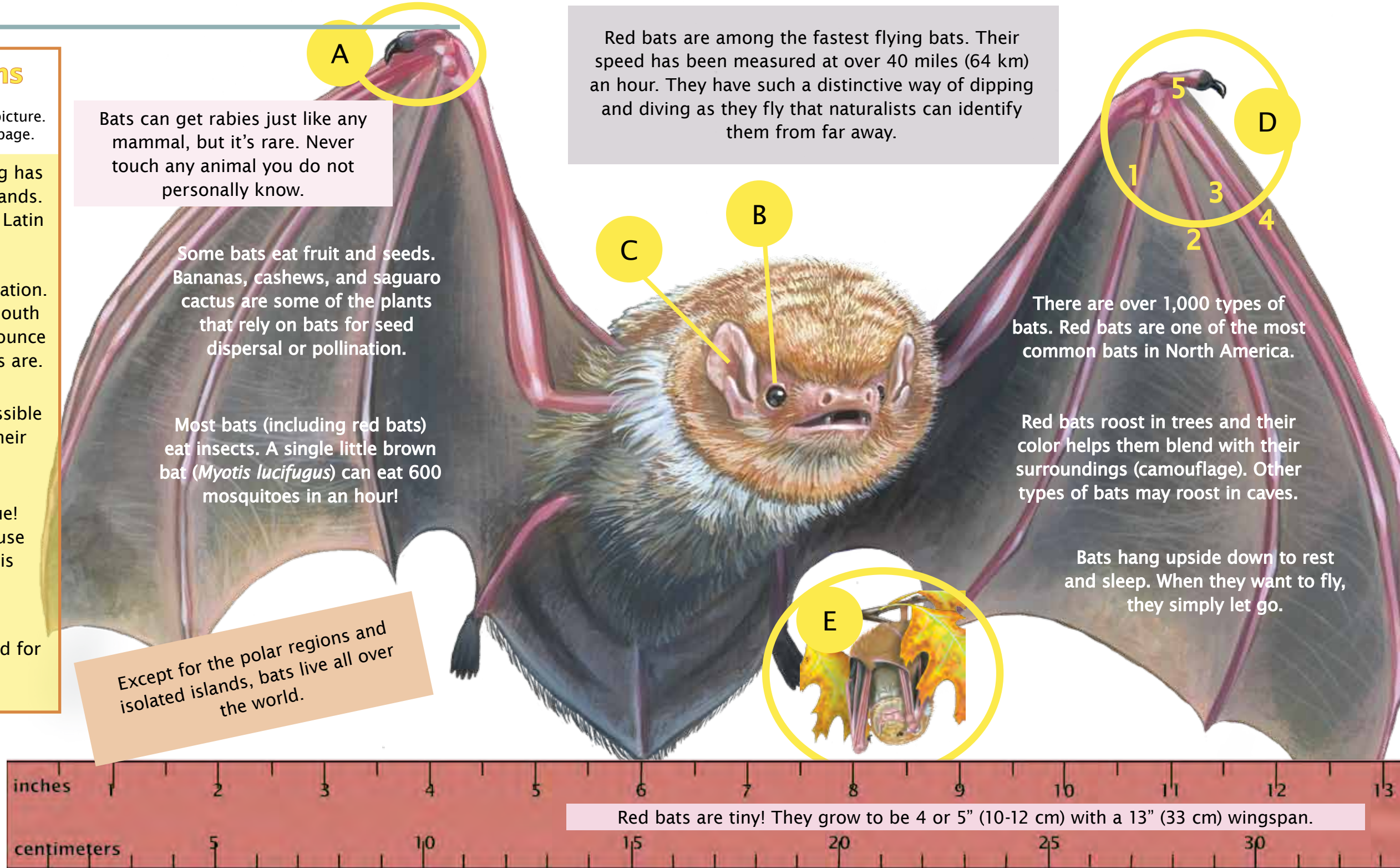
Red bats roost in trees and their color helps them blend with their surroundings (camouflage). Other types of bats may roost in caves.

Bats hang upside down to rest and sleep. When they want to fly, they simply let go.

Bats are not birds—they are mammals like us. They are warm-blooded, have fur, give birth to live babies, and produce milk to feed them. Bats are the only mammals that fly.

Red bats are tiny! They grow to be 4 or 5" (10-12 cm) with a 13" (33 cm) wingspan.

Answers: 1D, 2C, 3E, 4B, 5A



How Animals Deal with Seasonal Changes

Animals survive cold-weather winter in one of three ways: they adapt, migrate, or hibernate. How will each of the animals in the book spend their winter?

ADAPT: Animals either store food, as squirrels do, or eat the less tasty food that's available in winter and grow thicker coats that help them stay warm.

MIGRATE: Animals travel to a warmer place where their usual food supply is available. They return each spring when the earth warms and there is once again plenty to eat.

HIBERNATE: Animals stay put, their body temperature drops, and their breathing slows. The fat they have stored in their body keeps them alive through the winter.



Animals are not to scale.

Red Bats and Seasonal Changes

Red bats may migrate, hibernate, or do both. Some fly south and remain active through the winter. Red bats have been seen traveling in migratory waves along with small birds.

Bats are one of the few species that are “true hibernators.” Once they conk out for the winter, they rouse themselves only occasionally to “answer calls of nature” (potty time!), to get a drink of water, and to snack lightly if they can find insects nearby. Some red bats, even in relatively cold climates, stay put. They wrap up in their furry tails and hibernate under leaf piles, fallen logs, or in hollow trees.

Bat Life Cycle Sequencing Activity

Put the red bat life-cycle events in order to spell the scrambled word.

A

Pups learn to fly when they are only three or four weeks old.

B

Pups cling to their mothers. When the mother leaves to hunt at night, she may carry a pup or it may hang from a small tree branch while she is gone.

D

Most bat pups are born naked or with minor peach fuzz.

E

Most bats give birth to only one pup per year, but red bats can have as many as four.

R

Female red bats become pregnant in the spring. The mother bat is pregnant for approximately three months.

T

Pups are weaned when they are five or six weeks old at which point they leave their mother.

Answer: REDBAT

To Tyler Stephen DeLacey with love from Mimi

To Robert and Ann Walton, who opened their home to me to observe the red bat family they rescued and later released back into the wild. It was invaluable to observe these fascinating little bats up close which immensely improved my ability to illustrate them. Thank you also to Mary Kay and Tom for sharing their bat knowledge and anecdotes. Finally, to Linda for coming along and taking pictures during the bat observation trip (and sharing her bat rescue knowledge as well)—CW

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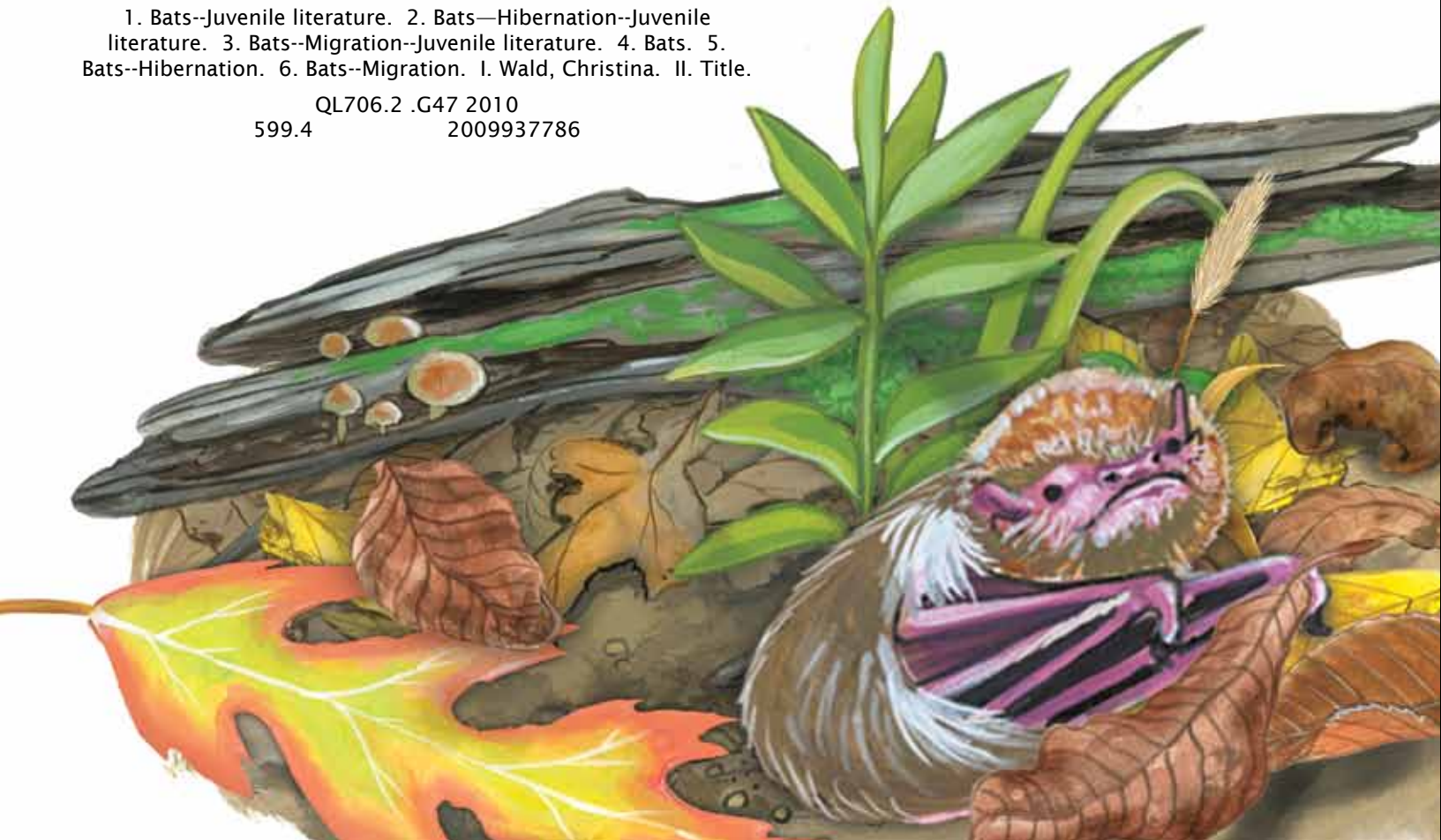
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