



The hour hand: **Eastern Painted Turtle**

This handsome turtle lives in ponds and marshes dining on bugs, shellfish, water plants, minnows, and native tadpoles. He likes to float in the pond with just his head out. Look for him there among the water lilies. We picked him for the hour hand because he's a slow and steady mover.



The minute hand: **Eastern Gray Squirrel**

No one is busier than an eastern gray squirrel at dawn or dusk. Squirrels can run up to 10 miles per hour and, believe it or not, they're hardy swimmers. Eastern Gray Squirrels thrive in hardwood forests where they can both live (in old woodpecker holes or cozy, high-altitude leaf nests) and eat (acorns, walnuts, butternuts, beechnuts--you get the idea).



The second hand: **Ruby-Throated Hummingbird**

These amazing, tiny birds weigh a mere eighth of an ounce. Their wings beat up to 80 times every second--holding them nearly still while their needlelike bills sink deep into a flower for nectar. (Hummers also eat bees, flies, and even cloud gnats.) Hummingbirds can zip around at up to 50 mph, which is why we put one on this clock's second hand. (They also fly backward.) This one's a male--females lack the brilliant red ascot.



1 o'clock: **Eastern Bluebird**

It is a magical thing to have a pair of eastern bluebirds nest near your home--which can happen if you put up a special bluebird nest box (check specialty birder stores). They hunt grasshoppers and other insects, and eat fruit. They are songbirds whose liquid burble can be heard during mating season.



2 o'clock: **Monarch Butterfly**

Monarchs are famous for the mass winter vacations--oops, migrations--they take in Latin America every year. They are, in fact, the only butterfly species that migrates. Up north, these elegant insects love fields of milkweed--the underside of a milkweed leaf is the perfect place to find a gorgeous gold-tipped Monarch chrysalis. (Barring that, check out the Monarch tank in any kindergarten classroom.)



3 o'clock: **Eastern Chipmunk**

These little edge-of-the-forest dwellers eat a full buffet of nature's provisions, from sunflower seeds and peaches to worms, eggs, moles, and snakes. They are famous for stuffing things into their cheeks. Alfred Godin, who wrote "Wild Mammals of New England," reported that chipmunks have been known to cram up to 31 corn kernels or 70 sunflower seeds in their cheeks. Chipmunks are no doubt named for the surprisingly loud "chip! chip!" when they're wound up.



4 o'clock: **Bluegill**

The bluegill is a card-carrying member of the sunfish family. He loves the warmth of weedy ponds and shallow lakes. He feasts on fish, bugs, and crayfish--the last being his version of a lobster dinner. Euell Gibbons, the famous live-off-the-land cook, wrote in "Stalking the Wild Asparagus" that most anglers consider the Bluegill to be a "confounded little bait-stealing nuisance." Nonetheless, Gibbons goes on to give several recipes.



5 o'clock: **Mallard**

You can tell this mallard is a guy--he has the telltale shiny green head and a white collar. (The females are brown.) Mallards live in marshes, ponds, and lakes. They eat seeds, plants, water bugs, and (go figure) corn. "Peterson's Field Guide" describes the male Mallard's voice as a low "kwek."



## 6 o'clock: **Beaver**

Beavers are the lumberjacks of the woods. They use their teeth for cutting wood, and their mouths and hands to drag logs to the water-- all to build their enormous, stream-stopping underwater lodges. Beavers use their paddle tails for propelling them through the water and to whack the water's surface to warn each other of enemies. They eat mostly tree bark but are willing to give plants a try. Their teeth never stop growing—thus the constant gnawing.



## 7 o'clock: **Green Frog**

Green Frogs live on the edges of swamps, lakes, and streams, where they can lay their big masses of jellylike eggs in relatively calm water. The voice of a Green Frog has been described as the sound of a banjo or double bass. Frogs eat bugs and worms and occasionally (oops) each other. They hibernate in the winter, flattened under mud.



## 8 o'clock: **Red Eft**

An eft is actually a sort of teenaged newt. It is surprising and wonderful to find an eft or two under rotten gray-brown logs and old black leaf mold. Newts are found in ponds. Juvenile efts (who remain in that stage for up to seven years) live on land. They all eat bugs, larvae, spiders, and snails. Red Efts are poisonous to eat—don't be tempted.



## 9 o'clock: **Red Fox**

Red Foxes live in dens they've dug themselves or "borrowed" from other burrowers, like woodchucks. A fox's den is usually a tidy, deep array of tunnels. Tidyy—except for the litter the fox family leaves at the door. You can see foxes trotting along purposefully (they use their same old routes all the time) hunting for small animals to eat. They'll also eat berries and grains.



## 10 o'clock: **Eastern Cottontail Rabbit**

The eastern cottontail rabbit is most often seen at the edges of a forest, in meadows, farmland, and fields. Here it can hide in the crops and high grass but still find its favorite food, the bark, buds and twigs of trees. The cottontail is skittish, for it has many enemies to outwit and outrun.



## 11 o'clock: **Ladybug**

The Ladybug (technically ladybird beetle) is a beetle with that distinctive VW shape. Ladybugs are particularly good for humans because they eat many of our irritating pests, including aphids and mites. Northeasteners have seen a huge invasion of ladybugs in the past few years. Big groups of them cluster near the corners of our windows (inside!). We feed them raisins, which they love. If we accidentally vacuum one up, she squirts a pungent fluid to warn us to get away. Despite that, ladybugs are considered good luck.



## 12 o'clock: **Black Bear**

Black Bears are tiny when they're born—less than half a pound— but they can grow to weigh up to 600 pounds! They live in the forest and swamp, and eat a well-rounded diet of berries, seeds, apples, nuts, acorns, grubs, and even frogs and mice. A Black Bear's winter den can be a cave, a little scoop under a fallen tree, or a hollow log. Bears look slow and bumbling, but next time you're cruising along at 30 mph in your car, you'll experience how fast they really can go.