

Wild Tails

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED why most animals have tails? What are they for? Just what do tails do anyway?

Tales of Tails

Monkeys, opossums, anteaters, and seahorses use their tails to grab and hold on to objects.

Squirrels and lemurs use their long tails to help them balance as they run along branches and leap through the trees.

Kangaroos use their strong, muscular tails to help support and push them forward as they hop—like a fifth leg!

Animals such as elephants, zebras, giraffes, horses, and cows can use their tails to swish and swat flies away.

White-tailed deer have bright-white tails that they raise like flags if there is danger. This can confuse predators and warn other deer.

Salamanders can distract and escape from predators by letting their tails fall right off—and if this happens, they can grow another one!

Beavers store fat in their big, flat tails.

Arctic foxes use their fluffy tails to stay warm by curling up and covering their face with it while they sleep.

Alligators, whales, and fish use their tails to swim.

Fashion and Function

Birds' tails are made of feathers. A peacock's tail feathers can be six feet long! But peacocks aren't the only birds with impressively long tail feathers. Check out these other amazing birds:

» Ribbon-tailed astrapia
(tinyurl.com/astrapia)

» Superb lyrebird
(tinyurl.com/lyre-bird)

These long, fancy tails all belong to male birds. The longer and fancier the feathers, the stronger and healthier he is.

But tail feathers don't have to be long to be beautiful. Wilson's bird-of-paradise has short, curling tail feathers (tinyurl.com/bird-of-paradise).

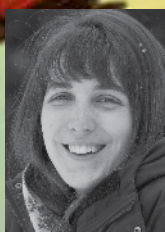
A woodpecker's tail feathers might not be as fancy as a peacock's, but they are very useful. Stiff and pointed, their tail feathers help to prop the birds up as they cling to a tree trunk.

Birds also use their tails to help steer when they fly.

Isn't it amazing that tails are used in so many different ways? Creation can remind us every day of how awesome our God is!

*How many are your works, LORD!
In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.*

—Psalm 104:24



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