

# Surviving the Winter

A book on recession

By Dave Hunt



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## Foreword

Dr David Kirshner

Sydney Aquarium and Sydney Wildlife World.

It's a jungle out there. It's also a dog-eat-dog world. Sometimes, it's even a rat race. The English language is replete with expressions comparing competition among people with a struggle for survival in the animal world. But can we really learn something about the financial affairs of humans by observing other animals? This comparison may not be as frivolous as it seems. After all, survival in the wilderness is all about a tightly run budget, albeit an energy budget rather than a fiscal budget. Otherwise, the goals are the same: maximize income (food in this instance) on minimal expenditure (energy lost) and expand when possible (reproduce).

Following on the above analogy, this clever book looks at fiscal recession as an economic 'winter' and compares animal strategies for coping with real-life winters. Although most people may face only one or two economic winters in a lifetime, animals have to cope with a real winter every year and consequently have many well-adapted strategies for dealing with it. So perhaps animals do have a few things to teach us after all.

In summer there are good days and bad days, but for most there is food and shelter. Effort is generally rewarded. In winter conditions change. Doing more of the same will not end well. As winter comes you must be prepared, proactive and strategic.

Consumers, businesses and business people can learn from animals in winter. More is won and lost in winter than any other time. As winter comes know your strategy; dormancy, migration, partner, make do.







## Dormancy

## The bear sleeps.

Slows activity and consumption.

Waits out the winter.

Needs enough fat to survive.



## The dormouse hibernates.

Shuts down almost entirely to conserve energy in winter;  
Lowers body temperature, breathing and heartbeat.  
Restarts when conditions improve.





# Migration



## The bird migrates.

Flocks to warmer climates.

Returns to known grounds.

Makes the dangerous journey in groups during the autumn.

Must have enough energy to make the journey or be able to find food on the way.

Some migrate to lands others have migrated from.



## The moose repositions.

Congregate around water and eat aquatic plants from lakes and rivers in summer.

When water freezes they move to woodland; eat twigs and bark from trees and shrubs from the land.

Stay in the same area but reposition.







## Partner



## Wolves hunt in packs.

Hunt alone or in pairs in summer.

Form packs and hunt larger prey in winter.

Roam further to find food.

Work together to survive.



## The penguin procreates.

Invests during the harsh winter.

Sets the offspring up for launch in spring.

The egg must be carefully nurtured; one drop on to the cold ice would destroy it.

Males huddle to maintain heat and work together, while females get food.





Make do



## The squirrel stores food before winter.

Gathers stores during summer.

Eats in to stores through winter to survive.

Rations consumption to last the winter.

Gathers food to top up rations.

Looks for different food in different places.



## The fox scavenges.

Tops up hunting with scavenging.

Saves excess food for later.

Becomes more cunning and courageous.



## The hare adapts.

Grows a thicker coat.

Changes colour of coat for camouflage.

Changes diet to what's available.





## Humans



## Humans adapt to winter.

We do less to conserve energy.

We return to what we know and explore less.

We seek solace from the cold.

We look after our families.



## As consumers we change our habits.

We do less; trim discretionary spending.

We return to what we know and explore less; we return to trusted brands.

We seek solace from the cold; mini-escapes (lipstick, cinemas, gaming and cheap booze).

We look after our families; wholesome pursuits increase (fitness, education, family time and reduced vices).



## Businesses also change their habits.

We do less; trim activity and head count.

We return to what we know and explore less; focus on core business.

We seek solace from the cold; protect status quo.

We look after our families; become increasingly political.



## Choosing your animal





Successful consumers and businesses  
choose the right strategy:  
Bears that forage in winter starve sooner.



You must know your ecosystem.

Who's dormant?

Who's migrated in and out?

Who could you partner with and how?

What else can you do to get by?





You must then select your strategy.

Dormancy; is there enough food to make it worthwhile looking?

Migration; can you make it to a better location?

Partner; is there anyone you should partner with?

Make do; is there any other way you can get by?



## Then pick your animal

Dormancy

Can you slow operations to a level that can be sustained? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you shutdown and restart in spring? \_\_\_\_\_

Migration

Is this a new market? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this a reposition in the same market? \_\_\_\_\_

Partner

Are you sharing key resources? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you creating something new? \_\_\_\_\_

Make do

Do you have enough savings to survive? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you survive off something else? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you protect yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

→ Bear

→ Dormouse

→ Bird

→ Moose

→ Wolf

→ Penguin

→ Squirrel

→ Fox

→ Hare



Each animal strategy needs careful  
consideration to make it work



The bear must find a deep sleep.

How far can you cut down expenditure without  
shutting down?

How long can you last?



The dormouse must shut down.

How do you shut down so you can restart?  
How will you restart?



The bird must make the journey.

What do you need to get there?

How will you find the way?

Will you come back?

Can you get supplies along the way?





The moose must find it's new position.

How will you reposition?

How will you be successful there?

Will you come back?



The wolves must work together.

What will you share?

How will you ensure it's valuable for everyone,  
fair and followed through?



The penguins must nurture the egg.

What does each partner need to give?

How will you nurture the egg?

What support will each of you need?



The squirrel must be disciplined.

How long must your rations last?

How will you ensure you stick to your rations?

What activity will you undertake?



The fox must be cunning and courageous.

What will you target?

What do you need to do to be successful?



The hare must invest wisely.

How will you protect yourself?

What will it cost?

What returns will it deliver?



Execution is everything



Animals pick one strategy and follow it through.

Bears don't wake up hungry and go foraging.

Birds don't pop back for the weekend.

Penguins don't leave the egg on the ice and go for a swim.

Squirrels don't have a mid-winter binge.





How do animals know what to do...  
instinct and experience.

Instinct – if it feels wrong it is.

Experience – those that have been there show the way,  
the old teach the young.





We can be a hybrid.

Different parts of us may need to be different animals.

How will you survive the winter?



Animals survive using simple strategies they follow through.

1. Decide which animal or animals you are.
2. Carefully plan how you will make it work.
3. Execute with discipline and tenacity.

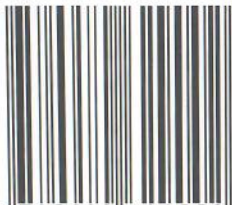


Recessions are economic winters. In winter more is won and lost than at any other time. Animals have highly evolved strategies to survive the winter that they apply with consideration, discipline and tenacity. We can learn much from their strategies. This book tells the survival stories of nine animals.



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