

# Nature Story Walk

By John Hamilton

Most of our native creatures, particularly mammals, are very hard to see. Especially if you have a group of noisy kids!

This is a group activity, firmly led by the storyteller. Use question and answer as a means of piecing the story together. Put in the information where necessary.

The object of this story is to create a picture of what might have been seen. A piece of evidence which proves a creature was here, at this very spot, is an excellent starting point. (It's a very good idea to know where you are going to find something – or even plant something in advance. A little preparation goes a long way.)

Keep repeating the story as it develops. Always look for fun phrases, like **bum shuffly** and repetitions, like **sniff, sniff, sniffing**. Create actions, especially with smaller children and keep using them.

This example stems from a time when I found a spot where a badger run passed under a fence. It could be any creature and any piece of evidence.

There are two ways to go with this. It can turn into a fantastic story, where the badger has a magic carpet and ends up on a planet made of chocolate. Or you can keep it real.

## Badger Story

Here is a spot that a badger used to squeeze under a fence.

*But what happened before that?*

He came down this path.

*How did he come down the path? How do badgers move? Do they hop? Do they leap?*

He walked.

*How do they walk?*

He walked in a bum shuffly sort of way (**action**).

*Okay he walked in a bum shuffly way. Wwhat was he doing as he walked along?*

He was looking all around (**action**).

*And what else?*

He was sniffing **(action)**.

*Did he just sniff once? Was he doing it all the time?*

Okay, so our badger came walking down this path in a bum shuffly sort of way, looking around and looking around, sniff, sniff, sniffing, sniff, sniff, sniffing as he went.

*So where was he before his walk?*

He was at home. Where is a badger's home? What is it called?

*So what was he doing in his set?*

Sleeping.

*To go for his walk he had to wake up. When do badgers like to wake up?*

When it's getting dark.

*So the badger wakes up from a deep, deep sleep, just as it's getting dark. What does he do first?*

Has a great big yawn **(action)**.

*And what else?*

He has a good scratch **(action)** .

*By the way, what's the badger called?*

Benny.

Okay, here's the story so far.

*Benny the badger is sleeping in his set, in the woods just up there. He wakes up from a deep, deep sleep, just as it's getting dark.*

*He has a great big yawn **(action)** and a good scratch, scratch, scratch **(action)**.*

*He peers around and has a good big sniff (**action**). Then off he sets down this path.*

*He walks in a bum shuffly sort of way (**action**), looking all around (**action**) and sniff, sniff, sniffing, sniff, sniff, sniffing (**action**) as he goes.*

*And that brings him right to the spot where we are standing now!*

*What happens next? Let's move on and see if we can find anything Benny might have been interested in.*

Now you have created Benny you can take him on the walk with you. You can bring him in at any point, "*What would Benny think of this?*", to investigate any new discovery.