



## Superstar Service Awards: Nature Helps Nature



This would follow a discussion of how every aspect of nature depends on many others, and how every animal or plant has a contribution to make, including predators, which keep populations healthy. (E.g., if cougars did not eat deer, deer would overpopulate, share disease, and eat so many leaves that birds would not have nesting spots, etc. If wolves did not prey on elk—sometimes just scaring them out of an area—there would not be enough saplings (which elk would nibble) to grow into trees, for beavers to harvest for dams, which create essential wetlands. And so on.)

Have ready: as many large gold stars as there award, with the award qualifications written on each (or glued, from list below). Give each student a label (or hanging sign around their neck) of one of the animals or organisms below (you will find 2 bats, 2 opossums, 2 skunks). Have them stand in a circle.

Spotlight one animal (or plant or fungus) and ask students what contribution they think it makes. Then give out the award star. As each star is awarded, children applaud the animal or plant (or fungus). Below are 35 ideas.

Bat	mosquito-eating	Coyote	bird protector
Bat	saving grain fields		(though bird-eater control)
Songbird	eating insects	Fence Lizard	Lyme disease control
Bee	pollinating	Vulture	Germ-killer
Skunk	yellowjacket-eating		& clean-up champ
Skunk	cockroach-eating	Mole	healthy-soil maker
Hornet	fly-eating	Bear	forest soil helper
Wasp	black-widow eating	Woodpecker	home creator for others
Earthworm	healthy soil maker	Gopher Tortoise	“ “ “
Spider	insect control	Spider	strong-nest contributor
Ladybug	aphid control	Wolf	wetland enabler
Opossum	tick control	Scrub jay	tree-planter
Opossum	snail & slug control	Rat (& mice)	native-grass spreaders
Barn owl	mouse control	Insect	Pollinator and recycler
Snake	rodent control	Cockroach	Recycler
Beaver	wetland maker	Fly	recycler
Tree	soil saver (roots)	Bobcat	seed spreader (they lodge in its fur, then drop)
	& pollution reducer		seed spreader (pooping)
Green leaf	oxygen producer	Fox	(& other fungus) soil-maker from wood
Mountain Lion	plant protector (thru deer control)	Mushroom	final recyclers
		Bacteria	

BAT  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for eating thousands of mosquitoes!

BAT  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for eating thousands of moths and saving  
our fields of wheat, rice, and corn!

SKUNK  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for eating yellowjacket larvae!

SKUNK  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for eating cockroaches!

HORNET  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for eating flies

WASP  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for eating black widow spiders!

EARTHWORM  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for making healthy soil!

SPIDER  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for controlling insects!

LADYBUG  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for eating plant-eating aphids!

OPOSSUM  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for eating thousands of ticks!

BARN OWL  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for eating hundreds of mice!

SNAKE  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for eating rodent pests!

BEAVER  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for creating wetlands, home to  
many animals!

TREE  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for keeping soil in place with its roots,  
and for filtering out air pollution!

MOLE  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for making healthy soil!

GREEN LEAF  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for producing oxygen!  
(while doing photosynthesis)

MOUNTAIN LION  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for saving leafy habitats!  
(by controlling the number of deer)

COYOTE  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for saving songbirds by controlling smaller  
predators that eat birds!

FENCE LIZARD  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for reducing Lyme disease!  
(Lyme bacteria carried by ticks dies  
when they bite the lizards)

VULTURE  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for killing germs while being  
a cleanup champ!

OPOSSUM  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for eating slugs and snails in gardens!

BEAR  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for making healthy forest soil!  
(by leaving fish bits around)

GOPHER TORTOISE  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for digging underground homes  
used by many others!

WOODPECKER  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for creating homes for many!  
(who use abandoned woodpecker holes)

WOLF  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for making wetlands possible!  
(by controlling sapling-eaters like elk)

SCRUB JAY  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for planting oak trees!  
(when it forgets buried acorns)

MUSHROOM (and other fungus)  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for decomposing wood into soil!

INSECT  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for pollinating and recycling!

SPIDER  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for making silk used to  
strengthen bird nests!

RAT  
is a SUPERSTAR  
(along with his cousins, mice)  
for spreading seeds of native grasses!

COCKROACH  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for recycling dead matter!

FLY  
is a SUPERSTAR  
for recycling dead matter!



**BOBCAT**  
is a **SUPERSTAR**  
for spreading seeds that cling to its fur!

**FOX**  
is a **SUPERSTAR**  
for spreading fruit seeds!  
(after it has eaten the fruit)

**BACTERIA**  
are **SUPERSTARS**  
for doing the last stage of recycling  
to make healthy soil!