

A Tale About Tails

One of the most useful tools an animal has is tail. Each kind of animal uses its tail for special things.

Some animals **hang** by their tails from branches, while gathering fruit.

An *alligator* use its tail to **fight** of its enemies.

A *fox* uses its tail to keep **warm**.

Other animals balance themselves with their tails as they **hop, jump** or **fly**.

A *squirrel* uses its tail as a kind of **parachute** to help it land safely if it falls from a tree.

Some tails are only slightly useful, like the *cow's* tail, which keeps **pesky flies** away.

Others are very useful.

The *Beaver* uses its tail to sound a **warning**, to **paddle** and **steer** when it swims, to **pack** its home with mud and to hold itself **steady** while it cuts down a tree with its strong teeth.

A **beaver** longed to have a tail not quite so short and fat.

A **spider monkey** swapped with him — it did not stop with that.

The animals all joined the fun and swapped their tails around.

They thought a tail was just a tail, but this is what they found.

The **beaver** dangled overhead and gnawed a tree in two.

He felt quite silly when he fell — and, why not, wouldn't you?

The **monkey** with a beaver's tail could never climb a tree,
So fruit and eggs were out of reach, while he watched hungrily.

The **robin** with the squirrel's tail could hop, but could not fly.

For feather and not fluffy fur keeps robin in the sky.

The **lion** took the robin's tail and put it to the test.

He tried to soar, gave one loud roar, and landed in a nest.

The **skunk** put on the lion's tail and carried it with pride.

The beasts all thought it was a joke and laughed until they cried.

The **squirrel** chose the skunk's fine tail and when the air had cleared,

He tried to show it to his friends, but they had disappeared.

Some animals were hungry, and some got scared and hid.

But in the end they worked it out — can you guess what they did?

Each animal took back his tail, and having done so, each had learned a simple lesson that mistakes can sometimes teach — "The tail I took just couldn't seem to do as it was told. And now I wouldn't swap my own for one made out of gold."