

Animal Tracks and Traces

Synopsis

K, 1st—6th, upper



Hartley
Nature Center

Summary

Every animal leaves something behind! Be it tracks, scat, fur, or evidence of a home, classes gather clues about the lives of local animals while learning about their adaptations and habitat.

Looking for and recognizing the signs that animals leave behind helps students realize they don't have to see an animal to know it was once there.

Take a nature hike into Hartley Park with our educators to see what animal signs can be found.

MN Academic Standards

supported during HNC program. More standards can be supported with pre- and post- lesson activities.

Science

- 1.4.2.1.1 ~ animal survival needs
- 1.4.2.1.2 ~ habitats provide needs
- 3.1.1.2.1 ~ science and observation
- 3.1.3.4.1 ~ tools and record keeping
- 3.4.3.2.1 ~ generational traits
- 5.1.3.4.1 ~ get data, analyze, interpret

Authenticity

Students observe and interpret real tracks and traces within animals' habitats. Students learn about the organisms in their own communities.

Goals & Objectives

This program will:

- Introduce habitat and what animals need.
- Encourage students to carefully observe tracks and traces left by animals.

Students will be able to:

- Recognize 5 animal signs.
- Recognize that different animals leave different signs.
- Describe why animals leave signs intentionally and unintentionally.
- List 5 local animal species.

Activities

In the classroom:

- Types of animal signs left behind; scat, fur or feathers, chew or antler marks, tracks, etc.
- Have groups get into snowshoes (if teacher reserved snowshoes for group).

In the field:

- Walk on trails while looking for animal signs, stopping and talking about each as it is found. These may include nests, rubs, scat, tracks, shed fur/feathers, food caches, or live animals.
- Play a Predator-Prey game.
- Identify, measure, and compare animal tracks.

Bad Weather Alternatives

- Compare 5 vertebrate groups (mammal, bird, amphibian, fish, reptile)
- Do an animal dress up (i.e. beaver)
- Measure "tracks" of students and compare to animal track measurements
- Look at plaster casts of various animal tracks
- Look at mammal furs and bird skins
- Observe insect and bird nests
- Discover dragonfly larva exoskeletons
- Compare skull, antler, and scat samples