

Animal Tracks

INTERPRETIVE CHEAT SHEET

OBJECTIVE

To become more aware of different animal tracks and how they can be seen in ASRA.

MATERIALS

Container with animal track stamps, ink pads and include paper. Also have Animal Paws Display board with rubber tracks; posters of mammals and posters and cards of animals.

ACTIVITY

Lay out animal track rubber stamps, ink pads and paper. Put up display board of paws and/or poster or picture cards of animals. Show visitors the animal track stamps and invite them to make their own stamp impressions. Show them the stack of animal photos and ask them to try to match the pictures with the tracks. They could also pull the rubber paws out of the bags on the display board to look at more closely.

If they are interested, you can share more information from the posters, printed sheets and John Muir Laws book. Challenge the visitors to look for these tracks when they are travelling through the park.

OUR ANIMAL TRACK STAMPS

The stamps have numbers 1-9 and include front feet/paws (number written in black ink on stamp) and hind feet/paws (numbers written in blue ink on stamp).

1. bobcat
2. coyote
3. deer
4. possum
5. raccoon
6. red fox
7. river otter
8. skunk
9. squirrel

BOBCAT – carnivore (usually rabbits, birds, mice, squirrels); 11-30 pounds; live in forests, swamps, deserts, suburban edges; avg. life span 10-12 years; can leap 10 feet; have 1-6 kittens who stay with mother 9-12 months; nocturnal and rarely seen

RACCOON – omnivore (crayfish, frogs, mice, insects, eggs, fruits and plants); 4-23 pounds; adapt well to human developed areas, including cities; have 1-7 cubs; climb trees; in cold climates they hibernate

SKUNK – omnivore (fruits, plants, insects, worms, larvae, eggs, rodents, reptiles) 1-14 pounds; nocturnal; average life span 3 years; have 2-10 cubs; can spray up to 10'

FOX – omnivore (rabbits, rodents, birds, amphibians, fruit, eggs) widespread from Arctic to subtropics; average life span 3-5 years; have underground dens and give birth to 4-6 kits

COYOTE – omnivore (rabbits, rodents, insects, fish, deer, snakes, fruit, grass) 20-50 pounds; live up to 14 years; can run up to 40 mph and have keen sight and smell; good swimmers; have 3-12 pups; previously lived only in prairies and deserts of Southwest but now spread throughout most of U.S.

POSSUM – omnivore (carrion, grass, nuts, fruit, mice, birds, insects); 9-13 pounds; only marsupial in U.S.; have up to 20 pups but most don't survive; live mostly in trees; play possum to fool predators

DEER – herbivore (they prefer new plant growth and acorns); Black-tailed Deer, a subspecies to Mule Deer, are most common locally; only males grow antlers, which they lose in January; fawns are born in May and June; they can jump 8' vertically and 25' horizontally

OTTER – the local river otter lives only by water and is a carnivore feeding on fish, crayfish, amphibians, birds and reptiles; it grows up to 3 ½ feet long and 30 pounds; it has one to three pups in a litter

SQUIRREL – the Western Grey Squirrel is most common locally; it grows up to 24" length (half body, half tail); lives up to 8 years; may have 2 litters per year (in spring and late summer); nest in tree hollows or build branch and leaf nests high in trees; uses keen sense of smell to locate buried caches of acorns and seeds