

Wildlife tracking

Objective: The purpose of this curriculum is to have students learn different ways to track animals. This will be done by learning different types of scat and track prints.

Key Words:

- Scat
- Tracks
- Omnivore
- Carnivores
- Herbivore

Background: Animals leave behind clues that can help us identify who they are. Some of these clues are called scat or fecal matter. By looking at scat, we can identify what the animal was eating. The size, shape, and color of scat can also be helpful in identifying. Aside from scat, we can look for prints. Prints are left behind when animals walk on soft soil or snow. By looking closely, we can count the number of toes and look at the size of the print to determine the animal.

Looking for clues

Use the following information to help you identify animals that have been lurking around.

Black Bear (*Ursus Americanus*)

Diet

- Omnivore
- Berries, plants, nuts, roots, honeycombs, bees, insects, fish and small animals

Scat

- Tubular shape and large. Color varies on diet



Tracks

- 5 rounded toes, large blunt claws. Front tracks are smaller than the hind tracks
- 2.1-5.3 inches long
- 2.1-5.6 inches wide



Mountain Lion/Cougars (*Puma concolor*)

Diet

- Carnivores
- Deer, coyotes, raccoons, rabbits, birds and cats

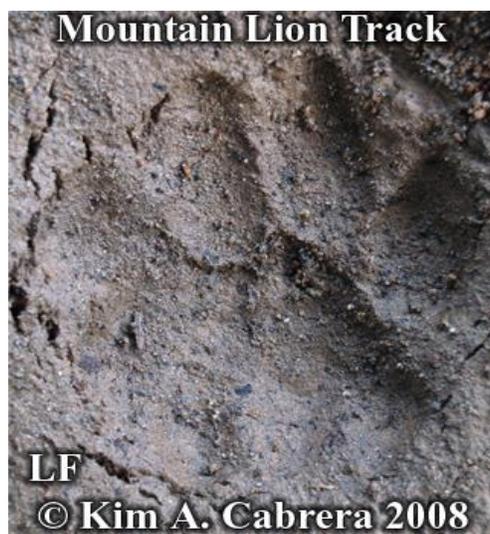
Scat

- 5 to 9.5 inches long with a diameter of 1 inch or larger
- Commonly has fur and bone fragments
- Cougars will scrape around or near the scat



Tracks

- They're four-toed and tracks usually lack claw marks
- Front Foot: 3 1/6 – 4 in. L X 2.75- 4 5/16 in. W
- Hind Foot: 2 15/16-4 1/8 in. L X 2 9/16-4.75 in. W



Coyote (*Canis latrans*)

Diet

- Carnivores but are true Omnivores
- Rabbits, rodents, carrion, birds, deer, berries and other plant material

Scat

- Tend to vary in length and covered in hair. Dark color due to animal blood
- Coyotes like to place their scat in the middle of the trails and roads to mark their territory



Tracks

- Four toed
- Front Foot $2 \frac{1}{8}$ - $3 \frac{1}{16}$ in. L x $1 \frac{5}{8}$ – 2.5 in. W
- Hind Foot 1.75- $2 \frac{15}{16}$ in. L x $1 \frac{3}{8}$ – $2 \frac{1}{8}$ in. W



Bobcat (*Felis rufus*)

Diet

- Carnivores
- Mice and deer

Scat

- Usually segmented but not always
- No fur or bone
- Firm and tightly packed



Tracks

- Four toed with usually no claws on track marks
- Front Foot 1 5/8-2.5 in. L x 1 3/8- 2 5/8 in. W
- Hind Foot 1 9/16-2.5 in L x 1 3/16-2 5/8in. W



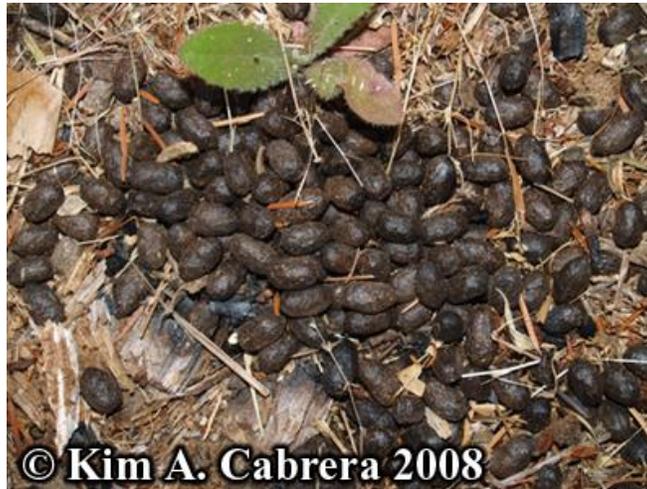
Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)

Diet:

- Herbivores
- Variety of vegetation

Scat

- Pellet form with dimple at one end and a point at the other
- Usually found near feeding locations



Tracks

- Two hoofed toes
- Front Foot: 1.8-3.2 in L x 1.5-2.6 in W
- Hind Foot: 1.5-3in. L x 1.1-2.6 in. W



Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)

Diet

- Omnivore
- Birds, nuts, berries, insects, eggs, fish, reptiles, and amphibians

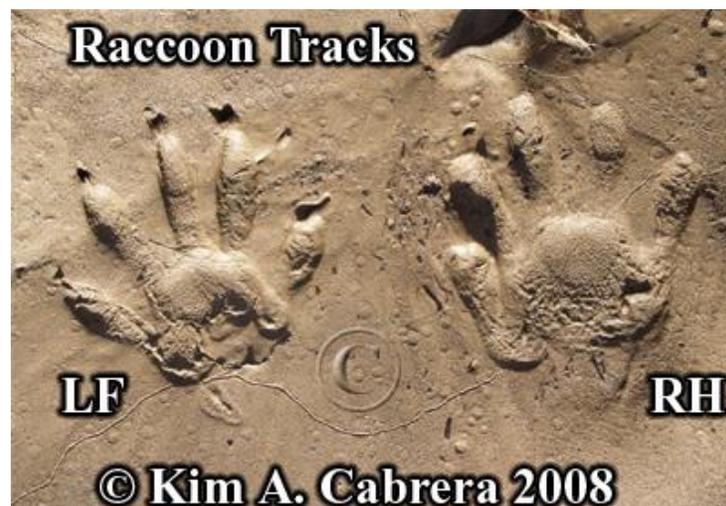
Scat

- Color of scat is due to diet
- Raccoons tend to leave their waste in the same location



Tracks

- Front foot: 1 9/16 in-3 1/8 in. L x 1 9/16-2 7/8 in W
- Hind foot: 1 15/16-4 in . L x 1 7/16- 2 15/16 in W
- Distance between the pairs of tracks is about 10-11 inches
- 5 toes



Sources:

<http://icwdm.org/inspection/Tubular.aspx>

<https://sciencing.com/id-mountain-lion-poop-2155858.html>

<http://www.naturetracking.com/>