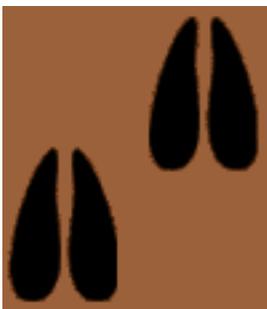


Exploration Animal Tracks

COMPARE

What's different about these tracks? What animal do you think made each set?



Exploration Animal Tracks

COMPARE



What shape is this track?

What part of the track shows the animal's claws?

FUN FACTS

The Raccoon has miniature human-like hands with long finger-like toes. His claws leave little round marks in front of his tracks.

Up to 23 raccoons have been seen living in one den! When raccoons share a den like this they are usually related.

Exploration Animal Tracks

COMPARE



How would you describe the shape of the track?

Does the shape of this track remind you of anything?

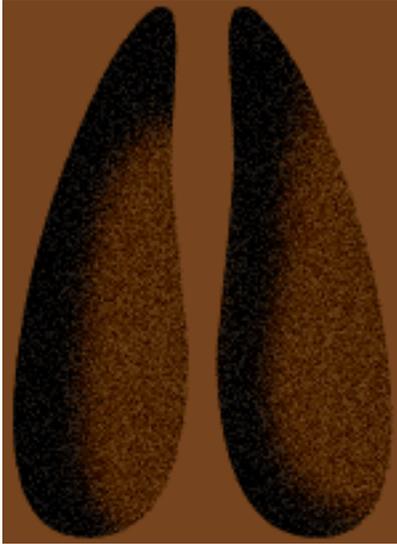
FUN FACTS

The Black Bear has five toes on each foot and big claws. The hind foot makes a track like a human footprint.

These bears are mostly vegetarians but will eat anything that is available.

Exploration Animal Tracks

COMPARE



White-Tail Deer

actual size track!

What shape is this track?

What do you think the foot that made this track looks like?

FUN FACTS

The White-Tail Deer has two large toes. The tracks look a little like upside-down hearts.

The female White-Tail Deer will bear offspring once a year.



Exploration Animal Tracks

FIELD JOURNAL

Instructions

Let's look for some tracks! A muddy area is sometimes a great place to look. When you find an interesting track, draw a picture of it and then try to describe it.

As you are drawing, you might want to think about these questions:

- What shape is the track?
- How many toes did this animal have?
- What animal do you think might have made the track? If you are not sure, what are two or three possible animals?

When you are finished, look at all of your pictures. How are these animal tracks the same? How are they different?

Your Name:	Today's Date:
What's the Weather Like?	

Draw the tracks you find in the space below.



Exploration Animal Tracks

TIPS FOR ADULT HELPERS

General Tips

- 1. Try to ask children open-ended questions.** These kind of questions help children talk about nature. For example, a useful open-ended question could be, “How would you describe this shell?”
- 2. There are many “correct” answers.** When asking open-ended questions, remember that there is no one “correct” answer. There are many “right” answers. The goal is to have children and adults have a thoughtful discussion.
- 3. Praise thoughtful answers.** If you ask a close-ended question (such as “What animal lives in that shell?” or “What color is that bird?”), any thoughtful answer could be praised. Even if the child’s answer is inaccurate, you could say something like, “That was a great idea. You know, that is how scientists learn, by thinking and trying out different ideas.”
- 4. Start from what the child knows already.** When trying to get a thoughtful discussion going, start with what the child already knows about a topic. Use that information as a springboard for further exploration. Through discussion and exploration, children can expand and revise their knowledge about nature.
- 5. Explore together.** If the topic is new to you as an adult helper, share this information with the child. You can make guesses and explore together. All science starts off with questions, not answers.
- 6. Science IS exploration and discovery.** When you let children try out different theories, you help introduce them to the scientific method and start building research skills.
- 7. Explore a science book together.** If a child is interested in a particular topic, you might want to follow up the activity reading a science book together and writing down what you have learned about the topic.

Examples of Open Ended Questions About Animal Tracks

When you **compare and contrast** different tracks, you might want to begin by asking questions such as:

- How would you describe the shape of the track?
- How many toe marks does each track have?
- Do you see any claw marks in any of the tracks?
- Do you think this animal was large or small?
- How is the front track different from the back track?

In discussing **what animal might have made each track**, you might begin with asking the child:

- What shape is this track?
- What kind of paw do you think made this track?
- What do you think the paw that made this track looks like?
- What are some animals that you think have this kind of paw?

After the child sees what animal made each track, you might ask them to tell you what they know about that animal.