



Wildlife Challenge: Tracking Wildlife



Inspire Kids to Do

Skill Building

- Take a closer look at the animals living in your area. Learn more about ways to identify them. What clues do they leave behind?
- Once you've identified the wildlife in your neighborhood, see if you can find tracks that they are leaving behind.

Goals

- Learn which wildlife species live in your neighborhood.
- Capture their signs through casting or photos.

Project Ideas

- Select one wildlife species and create a display about its tracks.
- Cast plaster tracks of wildlife found in your area. Identify them.
- Keep a journal of wildlife you see in your neighborhood.

Self-Evaluation Before

Using the rating scale below, answer the following:

- 1 = not at all
- 2 = a little
- 3 = a lot

I know how to...

- Identify tracks for different wildlife species common in my area 1 - 2 - 3
- Identify scat left behind by wildlife species common in my area 1 - 2 - 3
- Identify other signs left by willife species common in my area 1 - 2 - 3

Kansas wildlife is an important and diverse part of our state and includes buffalo, birds, fish, deer and more.

Wildlife leave signs that they've been in the area. Footprints, or tracks that they leave on the ground, rubbing or chewing on tree bark, droppings or scat are just a few of the visual signs. Some animals, like skunks, leave scents behind.

In this challenge, we'll explore some of the ways you can learn more about the wildlife in your area using the signs they leave behind.

Starting Out

- Research the types of wildlife found in your area. What do the signs they leave behind look like? Tracks, scat, rubbings or chewing?
- Make castings of several tracks found in your area.

Learning More

- Build a footprint tunnel to see what tiny tracks you can capture.
- Take part in a Track Scavenger Hunt.

Expanding Horizons

- Search your surroundings for wildlife. What kinds of tracks do you find?
- Build a track trap to entice wildlife in and then cast their tracks.
- Study wildlife scat and see if you can identify the wildlife that left it behind.

Wildlife Challenge: Tracking Wildlife

Challenge Instructions	Helpful Tips	Leadership	Curriculum and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch the video and review the instructions for how to cast wildlife tracks: Youtu.be/BnSXFqDPus • Watch the video and review the instructions for how to build a footprint tunnel: youtu.be/TwyvyjHrrbU • Take a track scavenger hunt and see what you can find in your area. <p>When finished, please visit: www.tinyurl.com/KS4H-Challenge to tell us what you learned. Thanks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking for tracks after a rain will help you find tracks. • Make plaster for casting tracks about the thickness of pancake batter. • Place your track tunnel in a location to attract small rodents, such as along the side of a building, out in a hedge row, or other places you'd like to investigate. 	<p><i>(Suggested for Intermediate and Advanced Levels.)</i></p> <p>Teach someone what you have learned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach 4-H members how to cast tracks. • Assist younger members in learning about wildlife tracks. • Other _____ _____ _____ 	<p>To learn more, visit www.Kansas4-h.org</p> <p>National 4-H curriculum is found at www.Shop4-h.org:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife Science 1 • Wildlife Science 2 • Wildlife Science 3 <p>Project WILD: www.fishwildlife.org/projectwild</p> <p>GetOutdoorsKansas.org</p> <p>National Wildlife Habitat Education Program: www.whep.org</p>

Life Skills Learned (check all that apply)

- Positive Self-Concept
- Inquiring Mind
- Concern for Community
- Sound Decision-Making
- Healthy Interpersonal Relationships

Evaluate Your Experiences!

What did you learn about wildlife in your area? _____

What animals did you find evidence of in your footprint tunnel? _____

What animals did you take a plaster cast of their footprints? _____

What challenges did you encounter in identifying your tracks? _____

To complete the Challenge, take a selfie while doing the activity. Upload the photo and take the survey about your Challenge experience. www.tinyurl.com/KS4HChallenge

Local Contact Information

Share

- Volunteer at a wildlife shelter.
- Present a project talk or demonstration at a club meeting telling what you learned about wildlife tracks.
- Other _____

Self-Evaluation After

Using the rating scale below, answer the following:

- 1 = not at all
- 2 = a little
- 3 = a lot

I know how to...

- Identify tracks for different wildlife species common in my area 1 - 2 - 3
- Identify scat left behind by wildlife species common in my area . 1 - 2 - 3
- Identify other signs left by wildlife species common in my area 1 - 2 - 3

Kansas Clover Classroom

Adapted from NW 4-H Advisory. Challenge created by 4-H Youth Development Agents Daniel Skucius, Pottawatomie County, and Susan Schlichting, Cottonwood District



Tracking Wildlife -- Casting Tracks

Capturing tracks of wildlife can be a fun way to learn more about them. Here's how to make a plaster cast of animal tracks you might find in your area.

What you'll need:

- Plaster of Paris
- Cold Water
- Zip Bag
- Strip of Cardboard or Poster board
- 2 Paper Clips

Steps

1. Locate a well-defined track that you'd like to cast.
2. Clear away any leaves, sticks or other debris from the track.
3. Create a ring from the cardboard and secure it with the paperclips.
4. Place cardboard ring into the ground around the track. This cardboard will hold the plaster in place.
5. In your zip bag, mix together 2 parts plaster of paris and 1 part water. (Refer to your plaster instructions.) It should be the consistency of thick pancake batter.
6. Carefully pour the plaster from the bag into the ring, covering the track. Use a twig to smooth out the plaster, filling the entire ring.
7. Allow to dry for 30 minutes.
8. Pull back some of the soil around the ring, so you can remove the track easily.
9. Lift the ring straight up to remove the cast.
10. Let dry a couple of days before cleaning the track.
11. Remove the cardboard.
12. Gently wipe off any excess dirt.
13. Rinse off the track.
14. Research the animal that you "tracked." Create a display about this animal and it's habitat.
15. Take pictures of the tracks you cast and share them on www.tinyurl.com/KS4HChallenge
16. To view a "How To" video, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnSXFFqDPus>

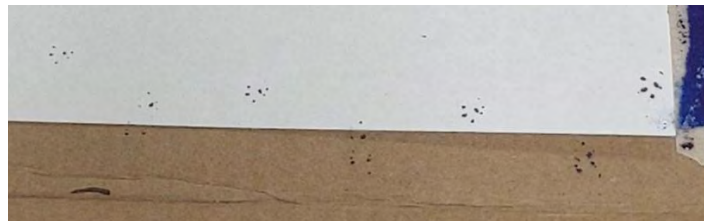


Taking a raccoon track casting



Raccoon track cast

Let's Make a Footprint Tunnel



Capturing tracks of wildlife can be a fun way to learn more about their habits. Here's how to make a Footprint Tunnel to capture the tracks of critters both large and small!

What you'll need:

- Piece of Cardboard – 24" X 30"
- Ruler
- Ink
- Duct Tape
- Masking Tape
- 1 Small Plate
- Bait – peanut butter works great
- Spreading Knife
- 2 Pieces of White Copy Paper

Steps

1. Divide the cardboard into three equal parts, folding along the lines to form a "tunnel."
2. Tape 2- 8 ½" X 11" sheets of white paper to the floor of the tunnel, positioning them at each end.
3. Use masking tape to hold them in place.

4. Lay a second strip of masking tape across the entire end of each sheet, nearest to the center of the tunnel.
5. Tape a small plate in the center of the tunnel, between the two sheets of paper.
6. Add a good amount of "bait" to the plate.
7. Go outside and find a good location to place your tunnel.
8. Before placing the tunnel, cover the masking tape strips near the bait plate with ink.
9. Fold up the cardboard sides and tape with duct tape to create the tunnel.
10. Place the tunnel in a location you might expect to find small rodents. You may have to experiment to find a good location.
11. Come back the next day to see what tracks you captured.
12. Research to identify the animal tracks you found.
13. Take pictures of the tracks you captured and share them on www.tinyurl.com/KS4HChallenge
14. To view a "how to" video for making a Footprint Tunnel, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwvyvjHrbU>

Track Scavenger Hunt

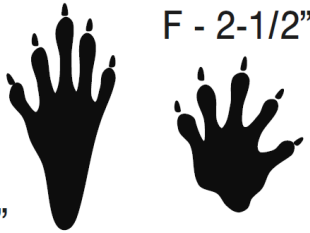







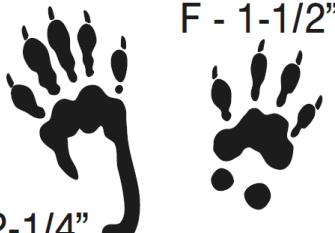

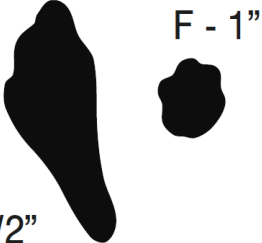
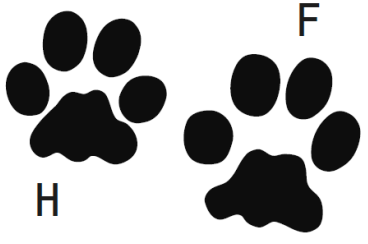
Level 1: Find three in a row

Level 2: Find any six

Level 3: Find them all

F – Front Track

H – Hind Track

 <p>H - 4" F - 2-1/2"</p> <p>RACCOON</p>	 <p>H - 6" F - 3"</p> <p>BEAVER</p>	 <p>2-1/2" to 3"</p> <p>WHITE - TAIL DEER</p>
 <p>H - 2-1/4" F - 2-1/2"</p> <p>COYOTE</p>	 <p>H - 1-1/2" F - 2-1/2"</p> <p>STRIPED SKUNK</p>	 <p>CROW - 2-1/2"</p>
 <p>WHITE-FOOTED MOUSE - 1/4"</p>	 <p>TURKEY - 4"</p>	 <p>H - 2-1/4" F - 1-1/2"</p> <p>SQUIRREL</p>
 <p>H - 2" F - 1-1/5"</p> <p>OPOSSUM</p>	 <p>H - 3-1/2" F - 1"</p> <p>COTTONTAIL RABBIT</p>	 <p>H F</p> <p>BOBCAT - 1-7/8"</p>



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director of K-State Research and Extension, Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts.