

Winter Tracks Grade 1 to 3

Post Activity – Winter Wildlife	Cross Curricular	
	Safety Notes	Dress appropriately for the weather outside.

Big Ideas
 Changes in daily and seasonal cycles affect living things. (Grade 1)

 Animals have distinct characteristics. (Grade 2)

 There are similarities and differences among different kinds of animals. (Grade 2)

 Humans need to protect animals and the place where they live. (Grade 2)

Specific Expectations
 Describe changes in the appearance and behaviour of living things that are adaptations to seasonal changes.

 Describe an adaptation as a characteristic body part, shape or behaviour that helps a plant or animal survive in its environment.

Description
 Students will search for tracks on freshly fallen snow to see if they can identify the animals that are still active during the winter months. They will also look at the tracks to see if the animals have special adaptations that allow them to travel on top of snow.

Materials

- Proper winter clothing and boots
- Online Winter Tracking Guide from Nature Conservatory Canada or Canadian Wildlife Federation - see other files
- Ruler
- Camera

Accommodations/Modifications
 Students can use social media, like Twitter, to upload their pictures and play #snowsleuths with Ontario Parks.

 Use iNaturalist.org to identify unknown tracks – the online community can help you out.

Introduction

The best time to look for tracks in the snow is the morning after a snowstorm, or the morning after a fresh snowfall. As many of animals are nocturnal and active at night, you can use their tracks on the snow to learn about how they live in the winter.

Action

1. The day after a snowstorm, or a fresh snowfall, take your students outside to carefully look for fresh tracks in the snow.
 2. Bring your students to a part of the school yard where students have not been playing and there is a flat expanse of “untouched” snow. Students might also like to venture into their own yards to find and record (take a picture of) tracks.
 3. When you find a trail of tracks made by an animal, use the guides and rulers to determine what kind of animal made the tracks.
 4. If it is too cold to stay outside for a long time, use your camera to record the tracks, with the rulers for scale, and look at the pictures in the classroom.
 5. Look to see if the tracks lead to tunnels in the snow that might eventually meet up with tunnels in the ground.
 6. Look at the types of tracks made to determine why the animal has feet with that particular shape. Also, look at the pattern of the tracks to determine how the animal moves.
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Consolidation/Extension

Upload your pictures to Twitter to play the game #snowsleuths with Ontario Parks, or search #snowsleuths online and have your students figure out what animal has left the tracks in the pictures. If you are looking for information about tracks, post a question to #AskAnOP-Naturalist, and they will help you identify them for you. iNaturalist.org is an online community of experts and amateur nature observers. If you upload a picture to the website, and ask questions, people can help you figure out which animals have left the tracks.

Additional Resources

Canadian Wildlife Federation Outside Projects - <http://cwf-fcf.org/en/resources/DIY/outside/>
Ontario Parks Parks Blog - <http://www.ontarioparks.com/parksblog/>
Nature Conservancy Canada - <http://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/blog/archive/how-tracking-animals-leaves-a.html>
