

ANIMAL TRACKS

ACTIVITY CHOICES:

You will not have time for all of these activities. Decide which you wish to use for your center, keeping in mind the time length of the centers.

Activities:

- Make a set of track prints on paper.
- Make a "story" on a large sheet of paper by printing animal tracks.
- Make track "stories" in the sand.
- Play "Animal Track Bingo."

Discussions:

- Talk about the three types of animal feet (see background information below).
- Talk about how different types of feet help animals to move, find food, and defend themselves.
- Read excerpts from We Walk in Sandy Places.

LOCATION:

CESC staff will inform you of the location of this activity.

EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE:

Set of rubber animal foot replicas
Stamp pads with water-based ink
Brushes for cleaning tracks
Book: We Walk in Sandy Places

Pictures of animals
Animal Track Bingo game



EQUIPMENT BROUGHT FROM SCHOOL:

- Paper for making track prints—notebook-size sheets for individual printing, or large sheets of butcher paper so students can make track stories.

ASSIGNMENT FOR GROUP LEADERS A FEW WEEKS PRIOR TO TRIP:

The leader reads all the material about the center. The Peterson Field Guide Series Book, A Field Guide to Animal Tracks is one source of information if the leader wishes to do more research about tracks. There will not be enough time to do all the activities in the usual 40 minute time allotment. Select the activities to be used for the center and work out a plan.

DIRECTIONS FOR GROUP LEADERS ON TRIP DAY:

Pick up materials from a Cooper staff member at Biznaga workroom.
Take the materials to the assigned activity area.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mammals have three types of feet:

1) **Plantigrade** (walking on the sole of the foot)

The flat surfaces which bear the animal's weight extend from toe to heel and are in contact with the ground at some point during the step. These are slower moving animals.

...To illustrate this foot type, ask the children to "walk" their hands on the ground using the entire flat of the hand.

...Examples:

bear, raccoon, coatimundi, skunk, human being

2) **Digitigrade** (walking on toes)

These animals walk on their toes, with the heel permanently raised. These are faster movers than the plantigrade animals.

...To illustrate this foot type, ask the children to "walk" their hands on the ground with only fingers touching the ground, and the "heel" of the hand raised up.

...Examples:

bobcat, mountain lion, wolf, coyote, fox, rabbit, squirrel, mouse

3) **Unguligrade** (walking on hooves)

These animals move on the tips of their toenails. The toenails have evolved into enlarged nails we call hooves. This group includes the fastest moving animals.

...To illustrate this foot type, ask the children to "walk" on their hands with the fingers bent under so that they are "walking" on their fingernails.

...Examples:

deer, pronghorn, javelina

THE LESSON: (Choose one or more of the following ideas.)

No matter which activities you use, begin with an introduction about animal feet. The depth of the discussion will depend upon the age level of the group.

Introduction:

- 1) Talk about the three types of feet as outlined above.
- 2) Talk about how the type of foot helps the animal in walking, running, climbing, getting food, defense.
- 3) How do we use our hands and feet? Our hands are quite different from our feet. Do the front (fore) feet of animals differ from the back (hind) feet?

Activities:

- 1) Make animal track prints on small pieces of paper using inkpads and the foot replicas.
- 2) Make animal track prints on a large piece of butcher paper to make a story.

Instruct the students to stamp their animal tracks on the inkpads to make their imprints.

- 3) Make a story on the paper using the tracks. Here are some ideas. The children will come up with many more.
 - ❖ A rabbit hopped along. A coyote follows the rabbit. The coyote catches the rabbit. How could you make track prints to show this story?
 - ❖ There are many javelina tracks around a prickly pear cactus. What is happening?
 - ❖ A deer was walking along browsing on plants. A mountain lion appears. The deer bounded away.
 - ❖ A skunk walked along. A coyote came near. The coyote ran away.
- 4) Play the "Animal Track Bingo" game.
- 5) Read excerpts from We Walk in Sandy Places by Byrd Baylor.

CLEANUP:

Gently scrub the ink from the feet using the cleanup brushes, water, and soap if necessary. Have students wash ink off their hands with water and soap if necessary.

KEEP TRACK OF THE TRACKS. An inventory list is in the box. Be sure all tracks are returned to the box. If any of the foot replicas are in need of regluing let the camp staff know so that repairs can be done.

Return the box to Biznaga Cabin.