

Traces for You to Find



Bird Nest

A Bird's Home

Different bird species build unique nests. Some roost in the cavities of trees, some live in bushes and others build fancy nests. If you were a bird, where would you build your nest: in the hollow of a tree trunk like a woodpecker or in the canopy of a tall tree like the red-tailed hawk?

Tree Invaders

An oak gall is a large (1-2 inch diameter) rounded growth that is filled with a spongy mass. A single wasp larva is located in a hard seed-like cell in the center. This gall acts as the larva's home. It receives all the nutrients it needs to start its life. When the larvae is ready it will burrow out through a hole and start life as an oak wasp.



Oak Gall



Eaten Nut

Yesterday's Lunch

Many animals leave traces of their food choices for us to find. Squirrels and deer leave fragmented nuts and acorns, while raccoons may pull trash from a trash can, or a coyote or bobcat may leave behind bird feathers or fur from their prey. Can you find something an animal has eaten?

Ant Predator

An antlion is a small insect that will build a trap to catch ants. It makes an inverted cone in the soft sand and if an ant goes into the hole it will be devoured by the antlion hiding under that sand at the bottom of the hole. Since it preys primarily on ants, the antlion is, metaphorically speaking, a "lion" among ants. See if you can find an antlion trap.



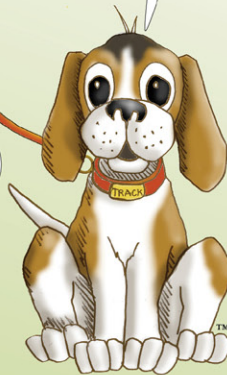
Trap Antlion

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Thanks for joining us on the trail today! Visit our website to find more TRACK Trail™ adventures near you!

The next generation of stewards will help preserve the world's plants, animals, natural lands and our heritage. What will you do to make a difference?

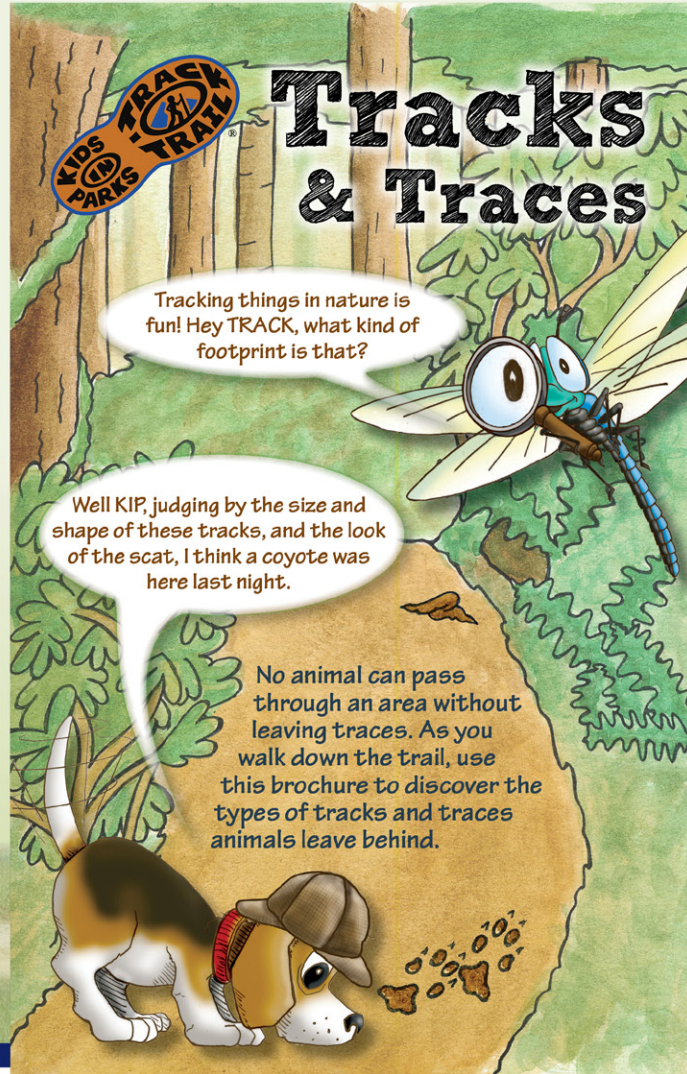


Kids in Parks...

Providing a network of fun-filled adventures that get kids and families active outdoors and connected to nature.



Kids in Parks Founding Partners



Tracks & Traces

Tracking things in nature is fun! Hey TRACK, what kind of footprint is that?

Well KIP, judging by the size and shape of these tracks, and the look of the scat, I think a coyote was here last night.

No animal can pass through an area without leaving traces. As you walk down the trail, use this brochure to discover the types of tracks and traces animals leave behind.



WARNING:

Do not approach wild animals or handle their scat (poop).

Raccoon ☐

Raccoon tracks have five toes on their front and rear paws and resemble miniature human-baby hand prints.



Track (Left/Front)



Scat



Tracks



Because raccoons are **omnivores** (they eat both plants and animals), their scat can vary in size, shape and color. As a rule of thumb, if you can't identify the scat, treat it as raccoon scat and **DO NOT** touch it. Raccoon scat may contain the eggs of raccoon roundworm, which can be fatal to humans.

Mule Deer ☐

Deer tracks are usually the easiest to find because their hard hooves leave better impressions than the soft paws of other animals.



Track



Scat



Deer Trail

Found in clusters, a deer scat pellet has a dimple on one end and a point on the opposite end. Deer trails connect a deer's resting spot to places it eats and drinks; look for narrow paths in the grass. Mule deer get their name from their large mule-like ears.

Barn Owl ☐

Barn owls are **raptors** (birds of prey). They have four talons on each foot to help them capture prey. The shape of an owl's wings allow it to fly slowly and with almost complete silence.



Scat from nest in tree



Owl Pellet



Molted Feather

You may find feathers when owls molt. (Please note: it is illegal to collect owl feathers.) Owls eat mice and other small animals by swallowing them whole. An owl digests the animal inside its body and will spit out an owl pellet containing the bones and hair of the animal it ate.

Rattlesnake ☐

Rattlesnakes are venomous snakes with diamond shaped heads. They get their name from the rattle at the end of their tail. Rattlesnakes have different ways of moving across the land.



Track



Never approach a rattlesnake.



Scat



Snake Skin

The type of locomotion shown in the top photo is called **lateral undulation**. After killing their prey with venom, rattlesnakes swallow it whole the same way an owl does. Rattlesnakes **molt** (shed their skin) as they grow. Each time they shed they get another rattle on their tail.

Bobcat ☐

Cat tracks have four toes on both the front and back feet. Because cats have **retractable claws** (claws that draw back in to their paws), claw marks are usually not present in bobcat tracks.



Track (Left/Front)



Scat



Scratch Markings

Containing the hair and bones from their prey, bobcat scat is segmented and round on the ends. Although bobcats have retractable claws which helps keep them sharp, they sometimes sharpen their claws by scratching the trunk of a tree.

Coyote ☐

Coyote tracks are approximately 2.5 inches long, capped with claw marks and are found in pairs. Their toes are closer together and not as wide as the toes of dog tracks.



Track



Scat



Den and Scat

Coyotes are **opportunistic eaters** (meaning they'll eat almost anything) so their scat can take many forms. In general coyote scat is long, with a rope-like twist and pointed ends.