

animal tracks

Welcome!! This activity is fun for the children and you need not feel intimidated even if you don't know a dog track from a deer track. This is an exploration led by the kids. You simply need to give guidance and encouragement (and your opinion if you wish). This activity will only work if it is snowy or muddy outside. Good luck and have fun!!

Walk along the edge of the woods (the back of the Habitat). Hike up the hill along the tree line. Look for fresh sets of animal tracks in the snow.

Have the students draw one set of tracks on their worksheet. They should try to make the drawing "actual size"

The kids can work in pairs or small groups to measure the distance between each set of tracks. Have them try to determine if the animal was hopping, running or walking. They should measure how deep the tracks sink into the snow or mud and then make a guess as to how big and heavy the animal was. Follow the tracks if possible... there is plenty of poison ivy along the wood's edge, don't go into the trees to follow the tracks!!

Ask the kids if they know what animals are doing in the winter. Who hibernates?? (Bats, groundhogs and to some degree chipmunks) Who migrates?? (Various birds, bats and Monarch butterflies) Who sleeps when it is particularly cold and only come out on sunny winter days?? (Raccoons and skunks)

Squirrels, birds, rabbits, fox, deer, coyotes and a variety of small rodents such as voles, moles and mice are the usual inhabitants of the winter woods. They will leave their tracks in the snow as they move around searching for food.

