
12. TRACK THAT ANIMAL

Overview: Students match cards of track and track characteristics to the animal.

Objective: To identify track and unique characteristics of each animal's tracks

Time needed: Approximately 30 minutes

Group Size: 2-4

Age appropriateness: 2nd grade and up

Site: track box

Background: The spacing, size and depth of tracks can help determine the size, weight and/or age of an animal. The species of an animal can be determined by studying tracks as each kind of animal creates its own unique patterns.

Materials:

Provided at the Garden

12 sets of animal pictures and clue cards

Provided by the classroom teacher

Preparation: None required.

Pre Activity: Make and observe human footprints. Observe bare ground areas around the schoolyard for evidence of animal activity.

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into groups of 2-4 students.
2. Hand out a set of animal and clue cards to each group of students.
3. Give the students time to match the clue cards with the appropriate animal.
4. Check the groups work and compare results with a large group discussion.

Modifications: Match animal cards to tracks in the track box.

Extensions: Create a track scenario, on paper or in the track box, where 2 or more animals are interacting and the students predict what has happened by making inferences.

Reference List:

Bone Box--Arizona Game and Fish

Desert Life by Pamela Elise Bell

Time of Year: any

****This activity was adapted from Desert Life by Pamela Elise Bell.**

The hind feet come down ahead of the front feet. As the speed of the animal increases, so does the distance between the front and hind paws.

This animal hops along on its hind legs, keeping its balance by using its tail as a stabilizer. The prints show the hind feet and a mark left by the tail.

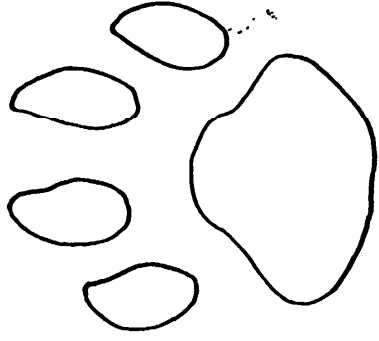
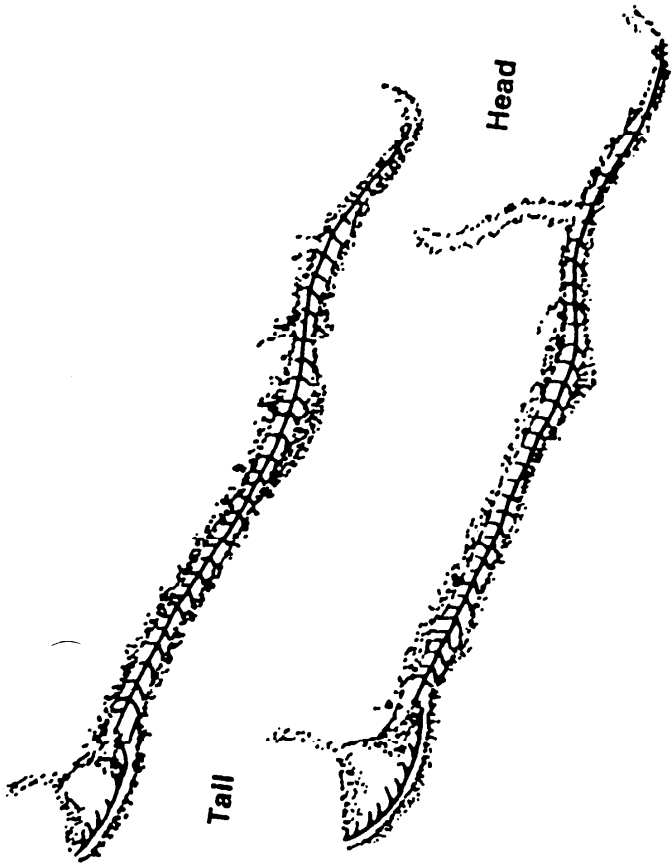
This animal has two different paw shapes. The front feet are smaller, while the hind feet show a larger heel pad. Each foot has 5 toes.

This animal is a member of the hoofed animals called ungulates. This animal has two toes on each foot. When they run, the tracks they leave will show the pairs of toes spread apart.

By swinging itself sideways, loop after loop, this animal leaves the J-shaped trail in the sand.

Members of the dog family have a large heel pad and 4 toes. Their claws do not retract, or pull in, so they leave a print at the end of each toe print.

Members of the cat family usually have their claws retracted, or pull in, so they do not leave a print. They do leave a large heel print and the prints of 4 toes.



(Approx. actual size.)



Front foot



Hind foot

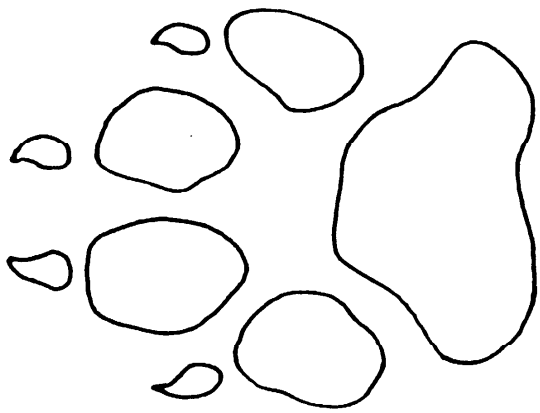
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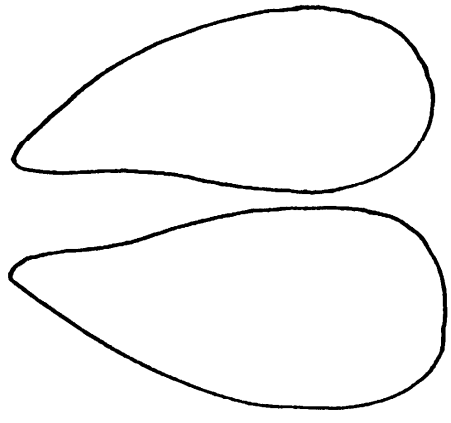
Front feet



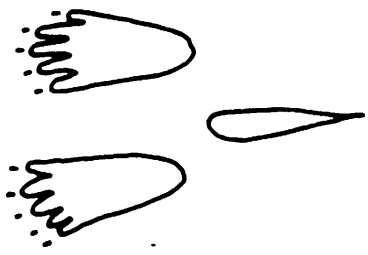
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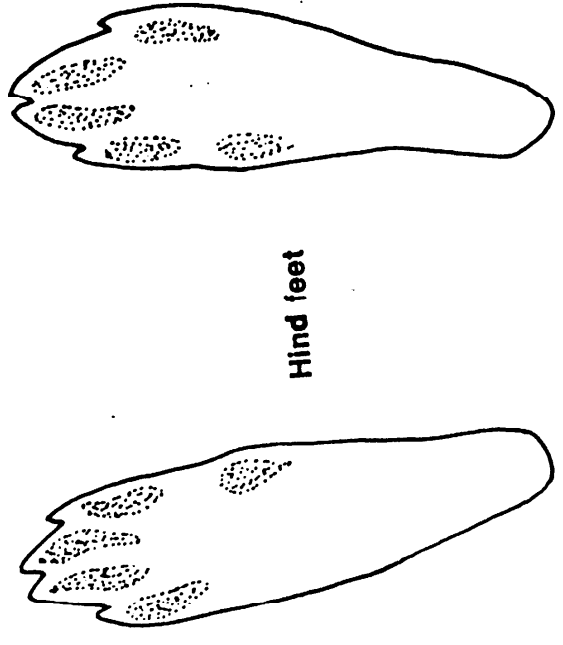
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Hind feet

