Outdoor Odyssey
The Wildlife Chronicles

ECO-LAB

SCIENCE EAST

Signs of Wildlife

ENVIROTHON NB

Suggested Time: 45-60 minutes
Science, Environmental Science

Envirothon NB Learning Objectives

Recommended Grades: 6 - 12
Outside activity
Group or Individual

Curriculum Outcomes

Skills

- **Observation, Data Collection**
  - Decide how to collect information
- **Analysis and Interpretation**
  - Learn to use a key or field guide to identify species.
- **Analyze, Interpret and Communication**
  - Convey findings through presentation

NB Global Competencies

- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
- Communications
- Collaboration
- Sustainability & Global Citizenship
- Innovation & Creativity
- ·Self Awareness and Self Management

Key Concept

Identify evidence of wildlife species.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

15 LIFE ON LAND

13 CLIMATE ACTION

Acknowledgements

New Brunswick / Nouveau-Brunswick

Your environmental trust fund at work.

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Description

The need to monitor and report on the status of wildlife is one of the key conservation elements agreed upon nationally in 1996 in the Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk. The status of New Brunswick wildlife species is determined by specialists in the field of natural resources and biologists as well as naturalists who have extensive field experience and expertise. We can help by learning how to identify what animals are around us.

Animals are good at hiding and might not be the easiest to spot, especially in more urban areas. However, they may leave behind evidence of their presence (disturbed garbage cans and trails of trash by raccoons or bears aside). This can include tracks, scat, shed antlers, fallen feathers, damage caused to trees, or any other sign of an animal's presence.

Activity

In this Eco-Lab, you are asked to find signs of wildlife that might live around you, or in a landscape that you visit recreationally. This includes photographic evidence of tracks or other signs that point towards an animal's presence (not domestic pets). Your observations must make note of your reasoning for the ID in the "notes" field of your observation.

Valid observations for this Eco Lab DO NOT need to go down to a species level. For example, if you find an owl pellet at the base of the tree, the sighting can be classified as just a "Typical Owl (Family Strigidae)". Animal signs do not always point to a specific species.

Observations can include
- Tracks
- Scat
- Damage to plants and trees (e.g. beavers, deer grazing, EAB damage)
- Remains (e.g. bones, shed antlers)
- Fallen feathers
- Tree cavities, stick nests, or other dens

NOTE: *Be careful not to disturb the evidence, especially signs of habitat. Wildlife may want to return to their home the way they left it.*

Extension Activity

It's natural to be curious. What questions pop in your thoughts when you find evidence of wildlife?

Examples: What are their size? Where are they now? What happened?

Discuss and write down your questions. Try to answer them using the evidence and resources.

Signs of Wildlife

Teams / Groups

As a team / group, collectively find signs of 4 animals. The observations may include the animal in question but must include photographic evidence of tracks, scat, remains (such as bones or shed antlers), feathers, an identifiable den or nest, or other feature that could be used to identify the animal if it wasn't there. State your reasoning in the "notes" field.
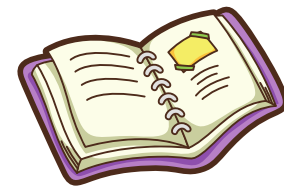
Individual Participants

Individually, find signs of 2 animals. The observations may include the animal in question but must include photographic evidence of tracks, scat, remains (such as bones or shed antlers), feathers, an identifiable den or nest, or other feature if it wasn't there. State your reasoning in the "notes" field.

Reporting and Presentation

Now that you have collected your evidence, determine how you want to share your findings.

- **Slide show** – power point presentation, Canva, etc., upload your photos and add captions.
- **Journal** – print your photos or draw and make notes
- **Video** – make a 1-2 minute video on your adventure showing your evidence and talking about what it is and how you identified it.

Resources:

Here are some resources that might assist in your interpretation of the signs of wildlife around you!

- Furbearers of Canada – Wildlife Profile Sheets
- Tracking Down Winter Wildlife
- Animal Tracking
- Wildlife Guide: Scat and Track Identification
- Track Guide (1 page)
- Feather Atlas ID Tool
- Bird Wing ID
- iTrack – an app to help identify tracks. Can be used offline!
- World of Wisdom (EECD) – Book a Traditional Knowledge Keepers

Going Further:

Community Science
NCF-Envirothon iNaturalist Project

Join the NCF-Envirothon iNaturalist project for additional activities and worksheets. Post your favourite photos of tracks, habitat, fur, bones, feathers, etc.

Accept the Challenge - Instructions
Get the FREE App!

We want to hear from you!

Share your video, photos or presentations with us! E-mail them to becky.geneau@scienceeast.nb.ca or tag us on social media. #ScienceEast #EnvirothonNB

Questions?
Connect with a natural resource expert.
Contact us:

Becky Geneau
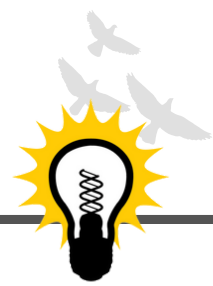Director
Environmental Programming & Science Competitions
becky.geneau@scienceeast.nb.ca
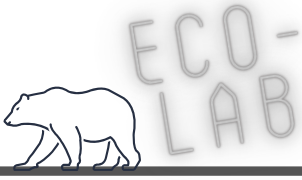
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Field Notes

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Photo Evidence

Location _____   *Date* _____

Paste photo here or draw your evidence of wildlife.

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What did you find? _____

Notes:
Using resources and field guides, identify the wildlife. Comment on where you found the evidence. What is the size of it? What resource did you use to identify it. Write down other observations you made about the surrounding environment.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Guide To Animal Tracks

DIAGONAL

WHITE-TAILED DEER 2½" to 3"

MOOSE 4½" to 5½"

DOG – 2¼" to 4"

COYOTE   F – 2½"   H – 2¼"

RED FOX   F – 2¼"   H – 2"

GRAY FOX   F – 2"   H – 1¾"

BOBCAT – 1⅞"

LYNX   F – 4¼"   H – 3"

HOUSE CAT – 1 to 2"

GALLOP

OTTER – 1½"

FISHER – 2¼"

MINK – 1"

WEASEL – ½" to 1"

TRACKS NOT TO SCALE

Depending on the substrate (snow, mud, dust, sand, etc.) and the speed the animal was moving, tracks may show great variability in their appearance.

F – Front track
H – Hind track
T – Tail marks may be present

PACE

RACCOON   F – 2½"   H – 4"

STRIPED SKUNK   F – 2"   H – 2"

PORCUPINE   F – 2¾"   H – 3¼"

BEAVER   F – 3"   H – 6"   T

BLACK BEAR   F – 4½"   H – 7"

OPOSSUM   F – 1¼"   H – 2"   T

WOODCHUCK   F – 2"   H – 2¼"

MUSKRAT   F – 1½"   H – 2½"   T

BOUNDER

SNOWSHOE HARE   F – 2"   H – 5"

COTTONTAIL RABBIT   F – 1"   H – 3½"

GRAY SQUIRREL   F – 1½"   H – 2¼"

WHITE-FOOTED MOUSE – ¼"   H   F   T

CROW – 2½"

TURKEY – 4"

RUFFED GROUSE – 2"

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION:
begins with conserving habitat!