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<p>Description: Students learn how to look for evidence of wildlife in a natural habitat area by studying images of different types of wildlife sign. They walk through the natural habitat, making field observations and looking for wildlife sign, then record wildlife sign through drawing and journaling.</p>	<p>Vocabulary Wildlife sign: <i>evidence indicating the presence or existence of wildlife, traces of a usually wild animal</i> Scat: <i>excrement, animal fecal dropping</i> Tracking: <i>to follow the tracks or traces of, to search by following evidence until found</i></p>
<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learn to recognize wildlife sign. • Students understand that wildlife, even if they aren't visible, live in habitat areas. • Students understand that the type and details of sign can indicate exact species. 	<p>Washington State EALRs Science 1.1 Properties: Understand how characteristics are used to categorize life in living systems. 1.3.10 Identify the characteristics of organisms living in a given habitat and explain how those characteristics allow the organism to survive in that habitat. 1.1.6 Understand how to use characteristics to sort common organisms into plant and animal groups. Identify the characteristics of living organisms. Describe and sort living organisms using characteristics.</p> <p>Science Kits: Ecosystems</p>
<p>Print Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'How-to-do Activity: Wildlife Sign Basics' • Images: 'Wildlife Sign' <p>Kit Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foam core clipboards: 1 per student <p>Teacher Supplied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student journals or paper: 1 per student • Optional: Wildlife tracking field guides 	

Before activity: Go to natural habitat area and look for evidence of wildlife using 'How-to-do Activity' and 'Wildlife Sign' images to help locate evidence of wildlife. Record these sites as places to visit with students during this activity. It is more effective to do this before class which allows for enough time and concentration for locating a variety of wildlife sign in areas that you may not otherwise have time to explore. Especially look near water and along smaller side trails.

Activity

- Bring students to natural habitat area. Say, "In our *Habitat Hunt* activity we searched for some of the things wildlife need to survive. Review what they have learned about some of the things wildlife need in order to survive and the types of animals that might live in the habitat area.
- Ask, "How do we know which wildlife actually live in this habitat area?" (see them, hear them.)
- "What are other kinds of evidence of wildlife?" (poop or scat, tracks, nests, burrows, signs of feeding, etc.). "This evidence is called wildlife 'sign'. Let's look for some of these things."
- Show images: 'Wildlife Sign'. Show any nearby examples in habitat while discussing:
 - Homes: Nests, holes, molehills, spider webs, cocoons, etc.
 - Tracks: Look in wet or moist areas, especially near mud puddles, streams. Includes insect and bird tracks. Snowfall, and sometimes frosty ground, is excellent.
 - Feeding: Chew marks, piles of feathers or bones, empty snail shells, holes in trees, piles of seed pods.
 - Trails: Look for 'tunnels' in thickets (size and shape can indicate animal using it), paths worn in meadows, worn or scratched areas on trunks, logs, snags (hair and claw marks can indicate animal)
 - Sighting and hearing: the least common, except for birds and squirrels. Some people are expert at identifying birds by sound.
 - Scat: an important way to identify wildlife in your habitat, especially of nocturnal or secretive animals.
- Walk through the habitat area and go to sites that were located prior to activity and point out a variety of wildlife sign. Be sure to point out commonplace sign such as bird song, mole holes, insect feeding sign and woodpecker holes, along with more interesting or difficult to discern sign, such as trails, bird or insect tracks in puddles, claw marks and hair on tree trunks, etc.
- Encourage students to locate their own sign. Remind them to be alert for many types of sign. Share findings as they are discovered. Discuss the possible identification of the wildlife that made the sign and how students might learn more.
- Student journals: Draw and label one (or more) wildlife sign in the habitat area. Labels should include a description of the sign, the habitat need it represents (food, water, shelter, space), and the animal the student thinks made or uses it.
- Conclusion: "We can see evidence of wildlife in our habitat, even if we don't get to actually see the wildlife".

Extension: Students create a display about one urban wildlife species, and its sign, that might use the habitat area for survival.