

Be a Detective! Find Evidence of Animal Life

6 POINTS



Habitats are living spaces for animals. They consist of water, food, and shelter. When you hike or enjoy the outdoors, you are likely doing so within the habitat of many different animals. However, you might not see any of them. How then do you know animals are present? How can you determine which animals are present?

Animals always leave behind evidence that they are living in a particular habitat. These **animal traces** may include feathers left behind by birds and molted skin from a snake. Other examples include tracks in the soil and shelters of varying types, like nests or burrows. If you look hard enough, you are also likely to encounter scat (poop).



What animal do you think left behind this track?

Answer: a bear!






Go on a hike at Kings Gap or another park and imagine you are a detective searching for evidence of animal life.

- Look for as many animal traces as you can find.
- Use the guide on the next page to record your discoveries.
- Based on the evidence you find, hypothesize which animals you think are present.

Don't forget!

Hike with an adult...Stay on the trail...Leave no trace behind!

Hiking Guide—Searching for Animal Traces

Category	Tally Marks (Add a tally mark in the correct category for each animal trace you find)
<p style="text-align: center;">Tracks & Footprints</p> 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Nests, Burrows, & Other Shelters</p> 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Scat</p> 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Tree Markings</p> 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Snake Skin, Feathers, & Other Animal Remnants</p> 	

Animal Adaptations

10 POINTS

All animals have adaptations. An adaptation is any characteristic about an animal's body or behavior that helps the animal survive or reproduce. Adaptations can help an animal move in its habitat, find food, hide from predators, keep warm in the winter, and so much more!

*What's that smell?
Skunks spray a smelly liquid to scare away predators. The smelly liquid is their adaptation!*



Take a walk at Kings Gap or another state park and observe the different animals you see. Try to find at least one mammal, bird, and reptile or amphibian. Study how the animals move, find food, and avoid predators. The way their bodies are designed to do these things are the animals' adaptations!

MAMMAL

What does the animal look like? _____

How does the animal move? _____

How does the animal find and eat its food? _____

How does the animal hide or avoid predators? _____

The feathers on my wings are fringed to help me fly silently.



BIRD

What does the animal look like? _____

How does the animal move? _____

How does the animal find and eat its food? _____

How does the animal hide or avoid predators? _____

REPTILE/AMPHIBIAN

What does the animal look like? _____

How does the animal move? _____

How does the animal find and eat its food? _____

How does the animal hide or avoid predators? _____

I have a third eyelid that is clear. It helps protect my eyes when I am underwater!



Now that you have observed different animals, imagine that you have just discovered a brand new animal species when out exploring!

Draw your animal and its habitat in the box below.



What is the name of your animal?

What unique adaptations does your animal have?

How do these adaptations help the animal survive?
