



Fluffed Feathers



Signs in Snow



Berry Buffet



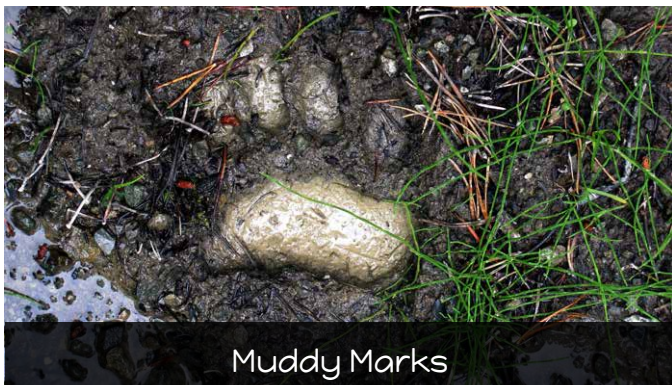
Owl Pellets



Bark Bites



Digging for Dinner



Muddy Marks



Colour Change



Winter Signs

Fresh snow is the perfect canvas to see wildlife tracks. The delicate surface shows the tracks of even very light creatures, such as mice. It is also easier to spot other signs such as scats against the plain white backdrop. Where do the tracks lead?



Winter Signs

Have you noticed that many birds look puffier and rounder when it's cold? That's because it helps them stay warm. A bird's body heat warms the air trapped by the feathers. The more trapped air, the warmer the bird will be.



Winter Signs

Owls are active hunters all winter. Pellets are made up of indigestible materials such as fur and bones that are regurgitated (coughed up) by the owl. Investigating a pellet can show you what has been on an owl's menu recently.



Winter Signs

In winter, when food is scarce, a bountiful source of food is a popular place. A berry bush will attract numerous species of birds and other wildlife. Wait near a food source and wildlife will come to you!



Winter Signs

Wildlife large and small will scrape away patches of snow while searching for vegetation, nuts, and other food hiding beneath the surface. Small animals will also dig tunnels through the snow to travel without being exposed from above.



Winter Signs

When leaves are scarce, some animals will feed on the bark of trees. Porcupines will climb trees to feed, while rabbits, voles, and other small rodents will gnaw tender bark around the base of young trees and shrubs.



Winter Signs

To stay camouflaged all year, some animals change with the seasons. In autumn, the Short-tailed weasel moults, replacing its brown and white summer coat with denser, all-white fur for winter. The Snowshoe hare also moults from brown to white for winter, as does the ptarmigan.



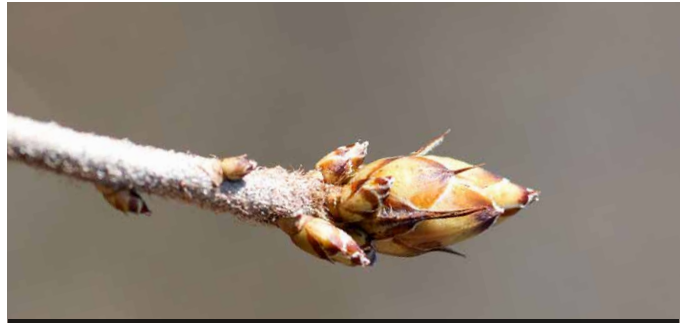
Winter Signs

In some regions, winter means heavy rains rather than heavy snow. Mud is an excellent material for capturing track impressions. Keep an eye out for wildlife signs, especially in low areas and around wetlands where the ground stays soft.





Open Water



Dormant Buds



Insect Galls



Broken Branches



Leaf Skeletons



Lichen



Seed Pods



Trees With and Without Leaves



Winter Signs

In spring, dormant buds will open up into a flower or a leaf. However, in winter they remain within the bud, protected from cold and snow.



Winter Signs

As temperatures drop below freezing, wetlands begin to ice over. Waterfowl that find food and safety on open water will gather densely in areas where water remains open due to depth or current. These areas are great for wildlife-viewing, as many species come together.



Winter Signs

High winds of winter storms and heavy snow can cause branches to break. Conifer trees that live in the mountains where snow pack is heavy, have drooping boughs and needles that allow the snow to slide right off.



Winter Signs

Some insect manipulate plants to grow a chamber to house their offspring. Here they will remain, protected from the elements until spring, when they will emerge and continue their life-cycle.



Winter Signs

Lichens are hardy organisms that serve as winter food for some animals including large animals such as caribou, moose, and small animals such as voles, and pikas.



Winter Signs

Leaf skeletons are formed when the softer tissues of the leaf are eaten away by insects or fungi and only the veins remain.



Winter Signs

Most broad-leaved trees lose their leaves to prevent damage caused by heavy snow loads, while conifers retain their green needles. The Arbutus, found in south-west BC is the only broad leaf tree in the province to keep its leaves all year.



Winter Signs

The remnants of the year's flowers remain after petals fall to disperse the plant's seeds. This can be an important source of food for birds and small mammals.

