

Autumn Animal Signs

Autumn is here! Get outdoors and feel the coolness of the air. See the falling leaves and smell the rain. Wildlife can feel these changes too. Look around and see if you can discover what animals are up to..



Slug and Snail Trails

Slugs and snails come out when the weather is cool and damp enough to keep their bodies from drying out. They create slime trails to help them glide along, as well as to allow them to stick to surfaces— even vertically or upside-down.



Bird Nests

When the leaves of deciduous trees fall, it can be easier to see the springtime nests of birds. This one, woven from spider webs and plant material is made by bushtits. It is insulated with feathers, fur, and other warm materials. It looks a bit like an old sock hanging in a bush.



Antlers

Male elk and other similar species, such as deer and moose, have antlers to attract females. Antler size is determined by genetics and nutritional state. They are also used to fight with competing males. After the fall mating season or “rut”, the antlers are shed and a new set will grow in the spring.



Scats

As winter approaches, animals eat to build up fat reserves. Sometimes you can tell what they've been eating from their scats. This river otter scat contains crab shells. River otters leave their scat in prominent places to mark their territory.



Squirrel Midden

From the safety of a favourite tree, a squirrel will pull apart the scales of a conifer cone to reach the edible seeds within. The rest of the cones pile up below in a midden. Over a few years the middens can become quite large. Squirrels will also stash cones for future winter meals in the center of the midden.



Migrating Birds

Many species of birds migrate to northern areas in spring to take advantage of rich feeding grounds. In fall they fly south to avoid the cold. Many fly in 'V' formations to conserve energy, as the birds further back in the V experience less wind resistance. Birds at the front move to the back when they tire.



Tracks

Damp ground and snow make fall a good time to see animal tracks. Tracks can tell you about the habits of wildlife and show you who has passed through the area without being seen. The placement of prints can indicate the gait of the animal and how it was moving at the time.



Woodpecker Holes

Woodpeckers make tree holes to find food and for nest sites. Sapsuckers make lines of small holes to access tree sap and the insects it attracts. Pileated woodpeckers make large rectangular holes seeking wood-dwelling insects. These holes become important shelters for many animals during the colder months.



Dens

When the weather gets cold, many animals retreat to dens to keep safe and warm. Dens can be found in tree holes, rock piles, or dug into the ground. Look for a worn path to the entrance, along with scat piles, food leftovers, fur, or in the case of the porcupine den above, quills. If it looks occupied- do not disturb!

Autumn Colours in Nature

Every season brings a new palette of colours to the outdoors! Autumn is known for its fiery leaves, but if you look carefully, you'll see a whole rainbow around you. Here are some examples, can you find more?



Red

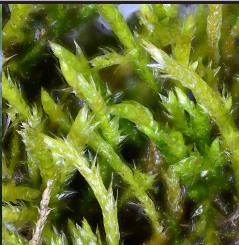
Red elderberries
and
Sockeye salmon

Orange

Orange peel fungus
and
Spotted towhee

Yellow

Banana slug
and
Paper birch leaf



Green

Douglas fir needles
and
Lawn moss

Blue

Steller's jay
and
Blue sky

Violet

Douglas' aster
and
Amethyst mushroom



Brown

Garry oak acorn
and
Western hemlock cone

Black

Common ground beetle
and
American crow

White

Bull's-eye lichen
and
Snowberry