

Winter Animal Signs

Brr.. it's wintertime! Rain and snow, short days and long nights. Some creatures have migrated south, while others are hibernating. Look for signs to see who is still out and about.



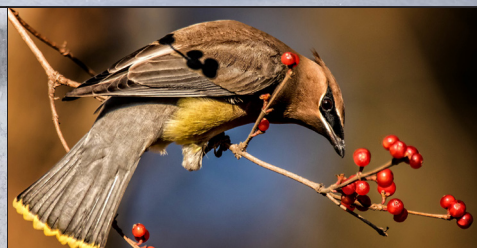
Fluffed Feathers

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.



Signs in Snow

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?



Berry Buffet

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!



Owl Pellets

Owls are active all winter long. A large part of their diet consists of small birds and rodents. 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.



Bark Bites

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. Generally, these signs are at or slightly above the snow line.



Digging for Dinner

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 get around without being exposed from above.



Muddy Marks

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.



Colour Change

To stay camouflaged all year round, 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. Large, densely furred feet act like snowshoes on snow.



Open Water

As temperatures drop below freezing, wetlands begin to ice over. Wildlife such as 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 Shapes & Textures

What can you see and feel around you in nature's winter wonderland?



Sparkly



Round



Pointy



Soft



Crunchy



Lumpy



Smooth



Squishy



Hard