



# Whose Scat is That?

## **Audience**

Activity is designed for ages 6 years and up.

## **Goal**

Students will understand why identifying animal scat is important.

## **Objective**

- To learn to identify different animal scat.
- To be able to identify herbivore and carnivore scat.
- To use hands on skills to make their own animal scat.

## **Conservation Message**

All animals play vital roles in their ecosystems, even the icky ones. Slimy worms are important decomposers of organic matter. Creepy spiders are a valuable food source in the food web. It is important that we value all wildlife and find ways to educate ourselves to be better conservationists. Little changes in your life, can make a huge impact on the nature world. Try turning off the light when leaving a room, use a refillable water bottle instead of a disposable plastic one and shut off the water when you are brushing your teeth!

## **Background Information**

Scat is what scientists call animal droppings or fecal matter. It is important to know what species of animals live around you. A good way to know what animals are around is by looking at their droppings. Scat tells you a lot about the biodiversity of an area. The droppings of animal typically tells you that the animal is comfortable and it will most likely come back to that area. Looking at animal poop can tell you a lot about the animal, such what is in the poo can tell you what that animal eats. The texture of the scat can tell you how long ago the animal was there. It can also tell you if the animal is sick or healthy. The shape of the scat can tell you what kind of animal left it there. A thick tubular shape usually comes from animals that eat meat such as bears, foxes, coyotes and raccoons. A small pellet shape scat typically comes from animals that eat plants such as deer, rodents, rabbits and squirrels.

## **Materials Needed**

### Activity 1

- Herbivore Scat Matching Worksheet
- Carnivore Scat Matching Worksheet
- Pen/pencil

### Activity 2

- Measuring cup
- Teaspoon
- Mixing bowl
- Plates
- Oatmeal (not instant)
- Cocoa Powder

## **Length of Activity**

20 minutes per activity

## **Procedure**

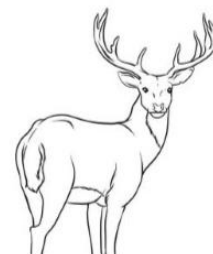
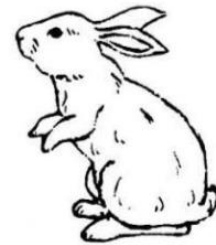
### Activity 1

- Looking at the Herbivore Scat Matching Worksheet and the Carnivore Scat Matching Worksheet, match the scat with the animal that made it. Draw a line to match the scat with the correct animal.
- Check your work with the answer key.

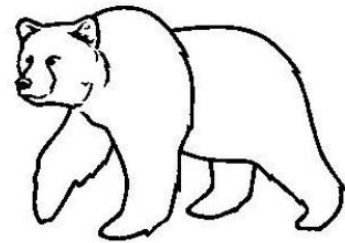
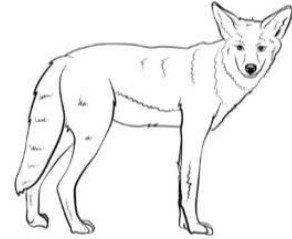
### Activity 2

- Put ½ cup oatmeal in mixing bowl.
- Use your fingers to grind oatmeal to make it less chunky.
- Add in 2 teaspoons cocoa powder, you can use a spoon or use your hands to mix it together.
- Start by adding in 1 teaspoon water, slowly add the water teaspoon by teaspoon until the mixture can be molded together.
- Pick your favorite animal poop from the pictures on the Scat Matching Worksheets and mold your mixture to create faux scat!

# Herbivore Scat Matching



# Carnivore Scat Matching



# Poop Types- Activity 2

## Herbivore



### Rabbit

Round, slightly squashed pellets of finely chewed plant material. Dark brown, tan or black depending on food.

## Carnivore



### Fox

Note tapered ends and hair in scat. Fox scat will almost always have these two features, and it may be thicker or thinner depending on food, animal, and level of decomposition.

## Omnivore



### Raccoon

Note blunt ends and uniform thickness, like a Tootsie Roll. Scat will contain berries, seeds, corn and perhaps crayfish parts.



### Deer

Vary in size but are generally squashed spheres with a slight taper. There will generally be a small pile. Entirely vegetative and quite uniform in consistency.



### Coyote

Very similar to fox, but larger. A large fox and a small coyote may have identical scat.



### Opossum

Uneven and variable due to changing food sources. May contain hair or berries. Often in small segments. Not commonly found.



### Porcupine

Somewhat variable in shape, but usually oblong. Contain a great deal of wood pulp. Individual scat may be connected by thin strands.



### Mountain Lion (Puma, Cougar)

Chords with uniform diameter. May contain fur or feathers. Scats rarely seen since cats cover it up.

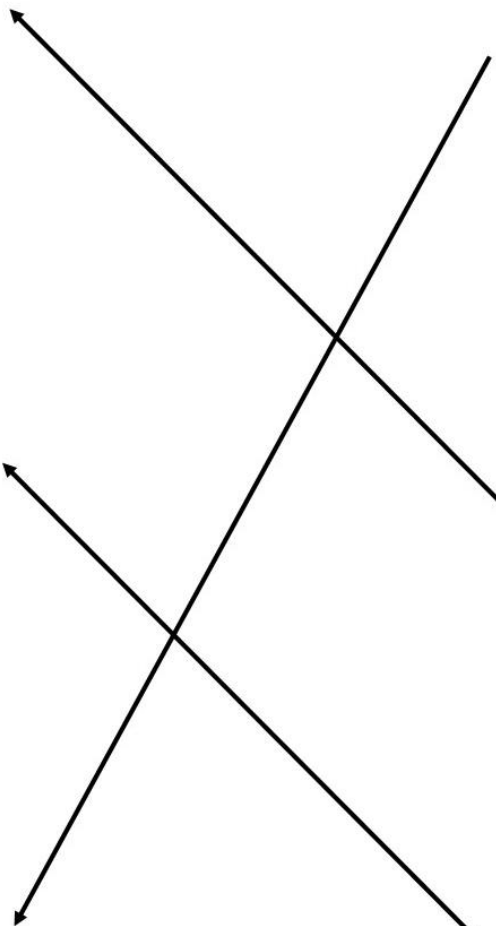
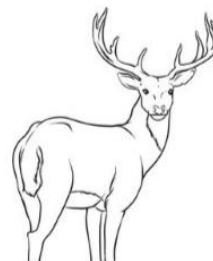


### Rat

Dark brown or black, even consistency. Small, oval pellets.

# Herbivore Scat Matching

## Answer Sheet



# Carnivore Scat Matching

## Answer Sheet

