

Wild Animal Safety

Objective: Students will learn a location where dangerous animals may be in close proximity.

Concept: Wild animals are often found within the rural environment. Most of these animals are easily scared away by noises and movement. However, if the tracks of aggressive and dangerous animals are identified, it is wise to leave the area.

Targeted Age: Middle school

Materials: Paw Identification Sheet (page 79)

(A variety of websites offer more detailed information about each species. Some sites also feature audio of the animals, helping students identify the animal by sound.)

Match up the animals with the correct paw print. Discuss the actual size of the print and how close to reality the sizes represent.

More ideas! Find additional information (sound, manure, foot pattern, etc.) on the internet to further help identify each animal. Classify the animals into pets and wild animals.

Take a trip to a rural location and look for animal tracks. Using an animal guide, try to identify the specific species.

Q: What should you do if you find a nest of baby rabbits when mowing the yard?

A: Leave the nest alone and do not touch the babies. This is true of all animals. The mother is probably close by and will return when you leave. Rabbits are usually not aggressive so they will probably not attack you, but in the case of more aggressive animals, you may be in a dangerous situation.

Q: What characteristics help you identify animal tracks?

A: Shape of the paw print is the first clue. Number of toes and in what direction they face. Size of the toes in relation to the total paw print. Overall size of the print. Animals walking foot pattern.

