

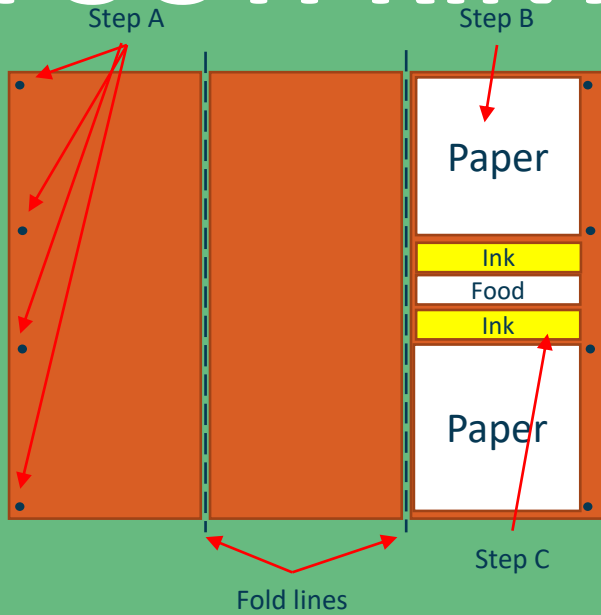
# MAKE A MAMMAL FOOTPRINT TUNNEL

**Age:** Upper Primary to Lower Secondary



**Saving  
Wildcats**  
#SWAforLIFE

**Equipment you will need:** - Correx poster board – Food colouring or poster paint - String - Scissors – Dog or cat food (dry or wet), peanut butter, nuts, seeds etc. - Spoon - Sharp knife or scissors - White A4 paper - J-cloth / old cloth.



**Activity:** Begin by folding the poster board (60 cm X 80 cm) into three even sized panels. Follow the **steps A to I** below...

**Step A.** Using the sharp knife (be careful) pierce holes in both sides of the tunnel. These are shown as black dots on the picture. At the very end these holes will be threaded together with the string (to hold the tunnel together) and so they should be opposite each other. Don't attach the string yet.

**Step B.** Fold the A4 paper to fit inside the tunnel and tape each edge / corner down securely. Make sure not to tape across the middle of the sheets as the animal will be walking here.

**Step C.** Cut the sponge cloth or j-cloth into two rectangular lengths and tape into position. Again, do not tape across these.

**Step D.** Squeeze some of the food colouring or poster paint onto the j-cloths and spread around. This needs to stay damp for a few days, so be generous!

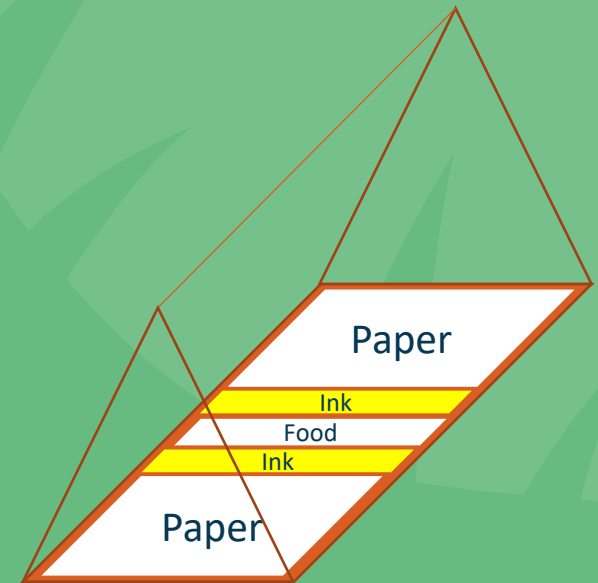
**Step E.** Place some animal food in the middle of the tunnel using the spoon.

**Step F.** Thread the string through the holes made earlier. Tie these tightly, but remember you have to open it a later to check. It should look like the triangular tunnel, as seen in the diagram to the right.

**Step G.** Place in a sheltered area of the school grounds, preferably lengthways along a hedgerow or under bushes for up to one week to monitor for hedgehogs and small mammals. You may need camouflage the footprint trap (so it does not scare the animals) to weight it down carefully with a few rocks so it does not blow away.

**Step H.** When checking the tunnel, remove the string. Check if there are any footprints on the paper. If there are then carefully remove the paper. If not, maybe try a new location but check that the paint is still wet (if not add more) and put in more dog food.

**Step I.** Allow the footprints on the A4 sheet to dry out if wet. A good idea is to laminate the sheet once the footprints are dry. Then carefully examine the various prints and try to identify them.



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## Follow-up Activities

Complete a project on the mammals that are found nearby.

- What do they eat,
- what do they look like,
- is there any folklore associated with them,
- are they endangered?

Turn it into a science experiment by creating a fair test. Make a few mammal footprint traps.

Try putting the trap in different locations or maybe use different types of food, for example peanut butter or a hot dog.

Become a nature detective! Go outside and see what animals live nearby.

What clues have they left behind? For example, dog footprints in mud, an apple core

## Safety –

- All poster paint used should be non-toxic. This is important for the children and also the animals.
- Only an adult should use the knife.
- Hands should be thoroughly washed after collecting the tunnel. This is best done by a teacher.



## Q. Why do we not see some mammals very often?

A. Many of our mammals, including badgers, hedgehogs, foxes and bats are nocturnal (they come out at night) or are shy.

There are many reasons why animals (not just mammals) are nocturnal. It could be because their predators don't come out at night (so they are a little safer) or that their food only comes during darkness. It also could be that they aren't competing with other animals for the same food. Although they are not mammals, think of a kestrel hunting mice during the day and an owl hunting mice at night.

## Q. What could we do to find out what mammals live in our area?

A. There are many different methods of discovering what animals live nearby. A mammal tracking tunnel like this could be set up and the animal identified by its tracks.

Also, mammal traps capture animals (unharmful!) which can then be recorded or tagged and released the next day.

Cameras traps with night vision are great for photographing and videoing.

Finally, clues can be left by the animals. Squirrels are messy eaters and leave half-eaten pinecones under trees. Badgers defecate (poo) in specific spots called Latrines, while otters use locations called sprainting sites. These areas are specifically used for communication with other otters.