



# OHS YOUTH NEWSLETTER

By, For, and About Youth & Animal Welfare  
Ohlone Humane Society Youth & Family

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## TRACKING WILDLIFE FOOTPRINTS IN THE SNOW: A WINTER GUIDE FOR NATURE ENTHUSIASTS

BY MAKAYLA A., 16 YEARS

Winter snow offers a unique opportunity to explore the hidden movements of wildlife. Tracking animal footprints not only helps identify local species but also provides insights into their behaviors and survival strategies. Whether you're a nature enthusiast or just curious, learning to recognize tracks can deepen your connection with the natural world.

### Why Tracking Matters

Animal tracks tell a story—revealing movement patterns, feeding habits, and even interactions with other wildlife. Tracking can also aid conservation efforts by helping monitor animal populations and behaviors in changing environments.

### Tips for Successful Tracking

- **Look Early:** Fresh snow offers the best conditions for spotting clear tracks.
- **Observe Details:** Pay attention to size, shape, and patterns to identify species.
- **Follow the Trail:** A single print may not tell much, but a trail can reveal movement behavior.
- **Know Your Habitat:** Different animals prefer specific areas—deer favor forests, while rabbits frequent fields.
- **Use a Guide:** Field guides or tracking apps can help with quick identification.

### Understanding Track Patterns

- **Walking:** Evenly spaced tracks, common for deer and foxes.
- **Bounding:** Rabbits and squirrels leave this pattern, with hind feet landing ahead of front feet.
- **Galloping:** Larger animals like moose when moving quickly.
- **Dragging:** Some animals, like opossums, may drag their tails, leaving a mark.

### Respecting Wildlife

While tracking, observe from a distance to avoid disturbing animals. Stick to trails and avoid disrupting habitats to ensure minimal impact on their environment.

### Conclusion

Tracking wildlife in the snow is a fun and educational way to engage with nature. Each footprint holds a fascinating story, offering a glimpse into the secret lives of animals during winter. So, bundle up, head outdoors, and start exploring the wonders of wildlife tracking!

### Common Winter Tracks

- **Deer:** Heart-shaped prints, 2–4 inches long, often found near forests and fields.
- **Canines (Foxes, Coyotes):** Oval-shaped prints with visible claws, moving in a straight line.
- **Felines (Bobcats, Lynx):** Round prints without claw marks, typically in wooded areas.
- **Rabbits:** "Y" shaped tracks with large hind feet and small front feet, showing a hopping pattern.
- **Squirrels:** Small paired prints in a bounding pattern, often near trees.



## COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

This information is shared for your convenience only, and we do not endorse or take responsibility for the events.

The following events are listed through [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) and you must sign up through their website.

### ATTEND AND BE A REPORTER FOR THE OHS YOUTH NEWSLETTER:

Attend and report on this event for the OHS Youth Newsletter with photos or video explaining what you saw and learned to share with your colleagues in our newsletter and YouTube channel.

[Flyway Trail-Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR-Ravenswood Unit.](#)

February 22, 2025 Menlo Park

[Heller Park Bioblitz](#) February 9, 2025 San Jose

[Tending for Tomorrow](#) February 16, 2025 San Jose

## Winter Survival Strategies for Pets

Winter can be a challenging season for wildlife, but nature has equipped animals with remarkable survival strategies. From hibernation to migration, species adapt in unique ways to endure the harsh cold.

### What are ways you and your pets stay warm in the cold?

Send photos or descriptions of your pets' way to keep warm, For example: do they lay next to the heater vent, burrow under the blankets, sleep right next to you, do you keep a heating pad for them?

Send your answers to [youth@ohlonehumanesociety.org](mailto:youth@ohlonehumanesociety.org)



### Interested in writing an article or sharing original animal art for the OHS Youth Newsletter?

- Tell us your thoughts on animal issues.
  - Draw a picture or take an original photo of a community animal in its local habitat.
  - Share an original nature poem.
- Contact [youth@ohlonehumanesociety.org](mailto:youth@ohlonehumanesociety.org)  
Community service hours possible for participation in the newsletter.

