

# Tips from the Author

## Outdoors: Be a Wildlife Detective



You can learn a lot about forest animals by simply looking and listening. With a grownup, sit *quietly* beside a trail to see what wildlife will come out of hiding.

**LISTEN** for sounds and try to find out who is making them—a woodpecker tapping, a bird chirping, squirrels chattering, an animal rustling leaves or digging.

**LOOK** for animal clues:

- Can you find tracks in the mud? What direction is the animal going? A great site to identify different animal tracks is: <http://www.bear-tracker.com/mammals.html>
- What has the animal eaten? Animal droppings, called “scat,” can tell you what the animal has eaten, and what kind of animal it is.
- Be sure to look *up* into the trees for nests and other animal homes, and *down* on the ground for burrows and ant hills, or under rocks.
- Use a magnifying glass to get a closer look at leaves, moss and rocks. Look for tooth marks on twigs and branches, or scratches where an animal has climbed. Use binoculars to check out animals in the distance.

## Indoors: Learning about the forest and its animals

*Over in the Forest* offers wonderful opportunities for extended activities. Here are some suggestions:

- Ten different verbs were used in the story to show how each animal behaves. Act them out as you read or sing the story. You may also want to add “actions” for the hidden animals.
- Ask: What were the ten parents called as babies? How many have the same “baby” name? What about the hidden animals? Do you know what they were called as babies?
- Introduce vocabulary that younger children might not be familiar with, e.g. *lodge, fawn, graze, poults, dew, musky, dunk and dabbled.*
- Discuss: Which of the twenty wildlife animals in this book live in your state?
- Create a forest diorama See: <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/diorama/forest/>
- Play “Who Am I?” Write two sentences describing an animal in this book, not mentioning which one it is, e.g. *I am the only marsupial in this story. I am shy.*

Choose two forest animals in this book and compare them in a Venn diagram. <http://www.graphic.org/venbas.html>

Write a diamante poem, comparing an animal in the story with the hidden animal on the same page. See [www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/diamante/](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/diamante/) to get started.

Food is a basic need for all living things. Which forest animals are *omnivores*? Which ones are *carnivores*? Are there any *herbivores*?

## Discover more in books . . .

*Animal Tracks and Signs* by Jinny Johnson (National Geo. Books, 2008)

*Forest Animals (Animals in Their Habitats)* by Francine Gaiko (Heinemann Library, 2002)

*Forest Bright, Forest Night* by Jennifer Ward (Dawn Publications, 2005)

*A Forest Habitat* by Bobbie Kalman (Crabtree Publishing, 2006)

*Growing Up Wild: Exploring Nature with Young Children*, (Council for Environmental Education, 2009)

*Lost in the Woods* by Carl R. Sams II (Photography, 2004)

*Tracks, Scats and Signs* by Leslie A. Dandy (Copper Square Pub., 1996)

*The Tree in the Ancient Forest* by Carol Reed-Jones (Dawn Pub., 1995)

*Who Lives Here? Forest Animals* by Deborah Hodge (Kids Can Press, 2009)

*Wild Tracks* by Jim Arnosky (Sterling, 2008)

*The Woods Scientist* by Stephen Swinburne and Susan Morse (Houghton Mifflin, 2002)

## . . . and on the internet

<http://www.kidwings.com/owlpellets/flash/v4/index.htm>

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/biomes/tempdecid/tempdecid.shtml>

<http://www.nwf.org/wildlifewatch/>

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/?source=NavAniHome>

<http://www.smokeybear.com/resources.asp>

<http://www.projectwild.org>

Many more teaching and learning ideas from Marianne are available as free downloads at [www.dawnpub.com](http://www.dawnpub.com). Go to “Teachers/Librarians,” then “Downloadable Activities.”

