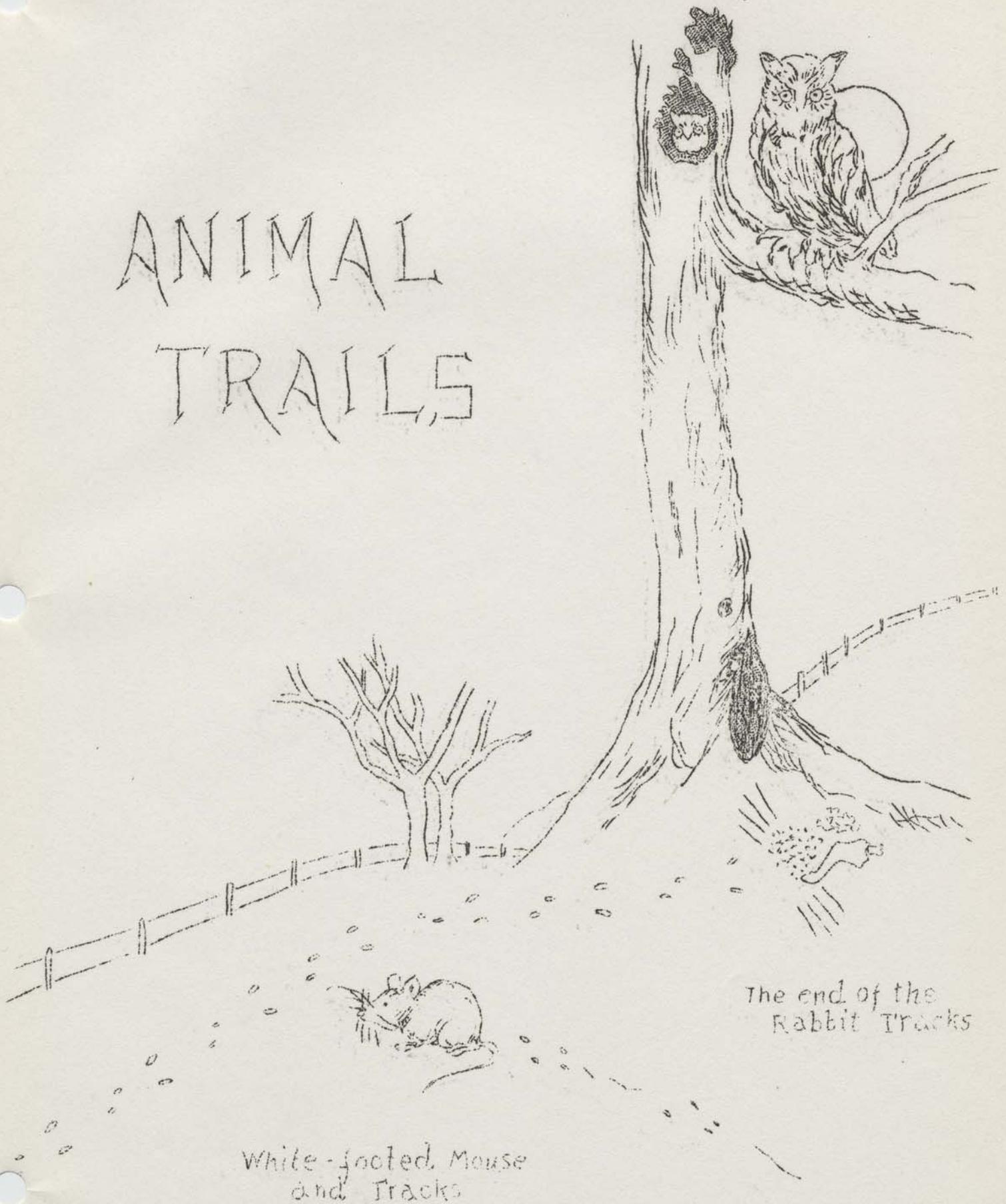


ANIMAL TRAILS



The end of the
Rabbit Tracks

White-footed Mouse
and Tracks

INTRODUCTION TO ANIMAL TRAILS

Life is always interesting but when movement is added to still life, keener observation and more imagination is required. Signs to call attention to the how and the why of the flying of squirrels, the jumping of rabbits, the biting of wolves and the calling of all animals should furnish thoughts for those who frequent these trails. In a summary of studies of children's free choice of interests, the living animals came first.

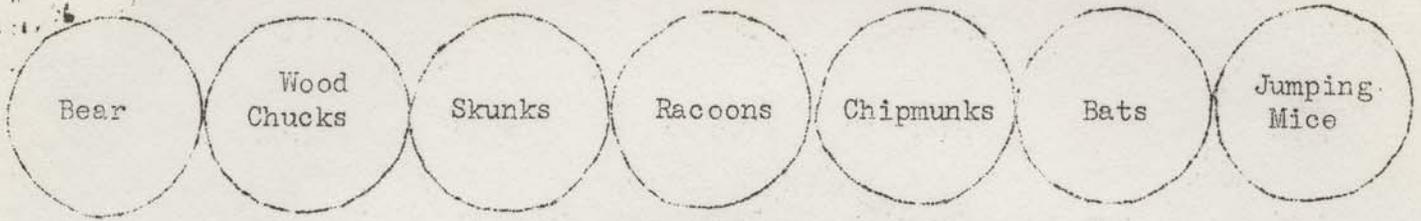
Since all mammals have backbones, a list of all the vertebrates could be made. Later these could be compared with the lower forms such as insects, snails, clams and lobsters which have their skeletons on the outside.

The fact that all animals are parents and that they care for their young will always be a matter for close observation when marking a trail. The differences in structure and use between mammals and birds and reptiles* will always furnish interesting quests for the trail labels. The birds reveal the practice of the ideas of the modern human parent**, in that they do not carry their young, nor show undue impatience in teaching and generally both father and mother share in feeding and protecting their offspring.

* Read introductory pages of Chapman's "Birds"

** Read in a recent issue of the "Parent Magazine", the article on Birds as Parents.

SEVEN FAMOUS WINTER SLEEPERS



These animals hibernate but in warm climates many mammals, reptiles and insects estivate in summer time

Fig. XXVII

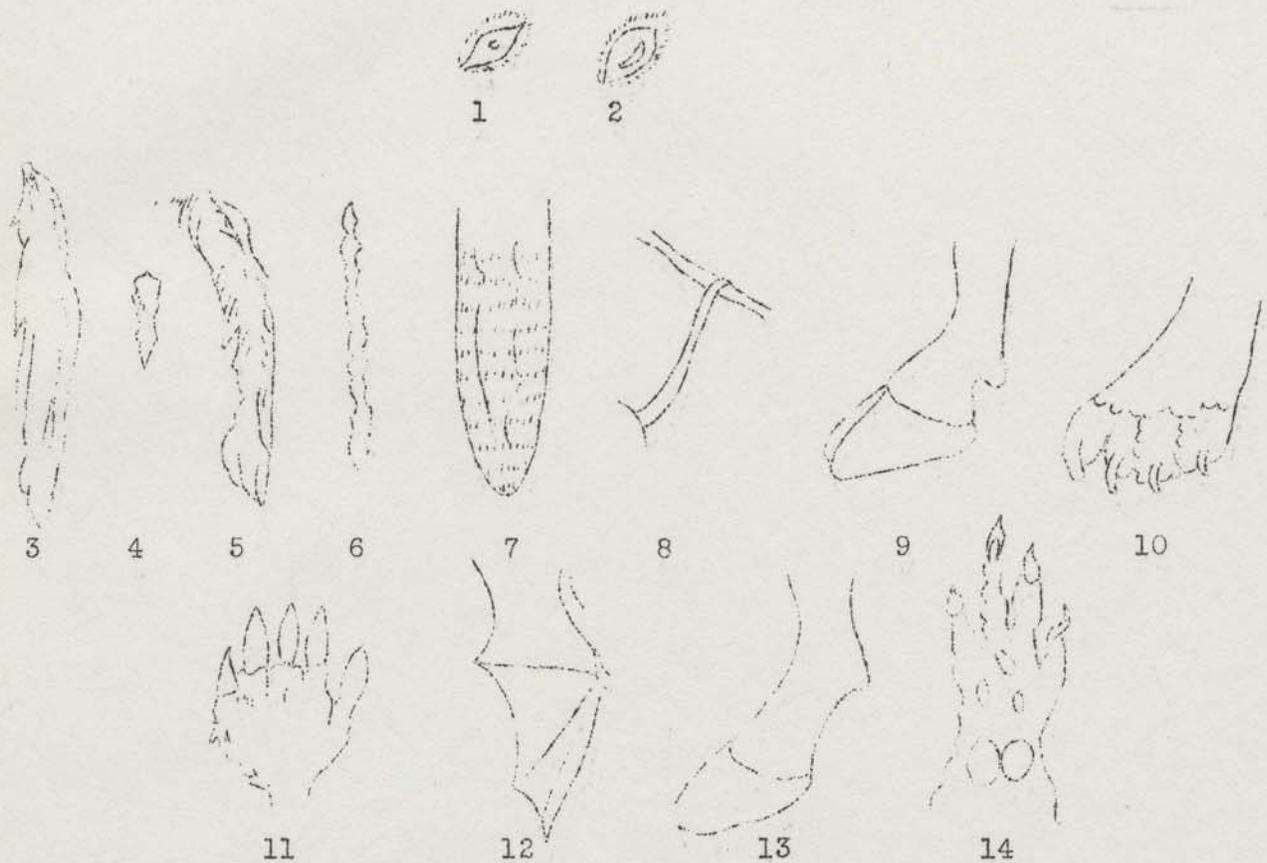


Fig. XXVIII

Numbers 1 and 2 are squirrel eyes. Which one belongs to red squirrel, active in the day. No. ().

Tails of Mammals

Numbers 3 to 8 belong to squirrels, horses, deer mouse, meadow mice, and opossum. What is use of each?

Feet of Mammals

Numbers 9 to 14 belong to horse, cow, squirrel, mole, cat and bat. Which one could the barber use as a pattern for his "clipper"? Which belong to which? How used. The cat can draw in these claws.

These figures, (Fig. XXVII and Fig. XXVIII,) could go on your master animal sign. These general questions could be put upon signs.

1. What animals chew their "cud"?
(Giraffe, cow, antelope, deer, goats and camels)
2. What animals, named, live alone and which in company?
(Cat and bear - alone; Goats, wolves, deers, and horses - in company.)
3. Also a covered sign could hold pictures of the local animals with a box to hold the list of those seen by the trailers.
4. With a picture of a beaver, these questions and statements could be posted. (If there should be a beaver trail, at its entrance would be an opportune place for it.)
 - a. Who was first mammal to build home above ground?
 - b. Who was first animal to throw bridge across a river and remains yet the only mammal (excluding man) capable of that feat?

A Beaver - A Supreme natural engineer.

The beaver practices conservation. An expert in flood control and irrigation, a planter of trees and a friend to fish. Two beavers can fell a three inch tree in three minutes. Watch their orange colored teeth.

1. Can you tell which way the beaver meant for the tree to fall?
2. Do they know what kind of a dam is needed in a swift or a sluggish river?
3. What part of his body and head does he use to carry, to pack mud, to signal danger or guide his logs?
4. What kinds of trees do they prefer?

Suppose this ability to dam rivers, throw bridges, make roads and canals could have improved with each generation of beaver, then surely they would have challenged man as engineers. There are 400,000,000 beavers in the United States.

A Gray Squirrel

Feed the gray squirrel and he'll not bother the birds and be your friend forever. Who probably planted many of our forests? Now gray squirrels have been driven to town and reforestation is left to man.

A Ground Squirrel

Gaily painted with dots and stripes down his back - What a whistle just before he dives into his hole! Man killed too many hawks and owls, and now there are too many ground squirrels to eat corn crops. Does man know how to "Balance Nature"?

Rabbits

Do they have a voice? When? Notice their tracks when sitting and when running.

Chipmunks or Rock Squirrels.

Does he hibernate? He believes in Scout rule, "Be Prepared". Find his tracks. Notice what animals leave a flat footed track.

Porcupine

A barbed tail proclaims his presence. Does he throw his quills? His room is generally more prized than his company.

Raccoon

Bobby Coon is flat footed like what large animal? Does he wear a mask? Try out his sense of smell. His doings for a day would be interesting sport. What two animals "Dunk" their food?

Opposum (First straphanger)

For what does he use his tail? What foreign animal carry its young in same manner as this one American mammal? Twelve baby opossums can nestle on one tablespoon.

Bat

This instructive problem could be put on a sign. If a bat catch one female codling moth every night from May 20, to July 1, inclusive, how many bushels of apples may be saved, allowing that each moth lay 50 eggs upon as many apples each day and that 200 apples make a bushel? (273) bushels). Try awakening a bat in winter by warming, then see if he sleeps again.

ACTIVITIES ALONG THE MAMMAL TRAIL
OR IN THE MUSEUM

1. Animal tracks in mud can be cast by placing a heavy paper around the track, clipping the edges of paper together. Then pour plaster of paris mixed to a consistency of thick cream upon the encased tracks. Bring the negative prints or casts into the museum or craft room. Grease it thoroughly and press lightly into a paper plate containing the creamy plaster of paris. A hole can be made in cast before it hardens so it can be hung on the wall and labelled.*
2. Build a box home for gray squirrel, shoulder high and 4" across.
3. Watch for animal heroes.
4. Build box traps and cages for temporary catches for observation and exhibit zoos.
5. Form pet club.
6. Have a pet show.
7. Make a clay zoo of all animals on trail or at home. Place them in pasteboard boxes with natural habitat around. Cover of box can be made transparent with cellophane.

* For simple negative casts, parafin wax can be melted and poured into the tracks.

8. Pick out one animal family as yours, and write up its doings through a season. Have this write-up placed on entrance bulletin board, in the museum paper or in the animal column of the city papers.

9. Make map of trail locating animal homes.

10. Chalk boxes and cigar boxes can be sawed out to leave only the frame, bottom and top. Screen can be put on sides and ends and top fastened down after placing your small animal or insect inside. Thus these live specimens can be fed and watched.