



GREEN MOUNTAIN Audubon CENTER



Winter Inquiry



Exploring at the Green Audubon Center

The children started the program in the Education Barn with an introduction to winter habitats, animal strategies for surviving winter, and the skill of wildlife tracking. For the second portion, students headed outside to explore the Center's winter woods and fields, looking together for animal tracks and signs, and observing the different challenges plants and animals face during winter. Every exploration was different, but each focused on fostering scientific skills, such as how to make observations, asking questions, and making predications in and about the natural world.

Here are some of the things your children learned about during their fieldtrip to the Green Mountain Audubon Center...



Dormancy

Did You Know... bears do not hibernate? Instead they go into a state of dormancy. Dormancy is when the animal or plant temporarily slows metabolic activity, which allows the animal to occasionally resume normal active behavior. A female black bears give birth in mid-winter and nurses her young in the den until spring.

Ask Your Child... about which Vermont animals are dormant and which hibernate during winter.

Snow

Did You Know... voles and other animals live in tunnels under the snow during winter? If the snow begins to melt sometimes the tunnel patterns will become visible.

Ask Your Child... how might snow help animals, like the vole survive during winter? In what ways does snow affect temperature?

Energy

Did You Know... smaller animals in winter, like chickadees, have to produce more heat relative to their body size to keep warm? To keep warm chickadees turn down their internal thermostats at night to save energy.

Ask Your Child... about observing birds on the office porch. Why were the birds on the porch? What type of birds did he/she see? Why do birds constantly eat in winter?

Tracks

Did You Know... dogs and cats both have four toes but dog prints show claws? This is because cats have retractable claws.

Ask Your Child... to go over the four main animal movement patterns: galloper, walker, bouncer, and waddler. When looking at tracks, what does the movement pattern tell us about the animal?





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COME OUT AND VISIT US
AGAIN DURING WINTER!



Snowshoe

Come to the Audubon Center to snowshoe on our trails in search for some animal tracks and to enjoy the variety of wildlife. Choose a set of tracks to follow and practice your tracking skills. Can you determine what animal it is? What type of movement pattern does the animal use? What else do you notice as you observe the land around you during this cold season?

Track Hide-n-Seek

The Audubon Center provides plenty of great areas to play a fun activity after fresh snow has fallen. Have your child close his/her eyes or blindfold them while you walk, hop, run, or waddle to a hiding place. Have your child try to find you by following your tracks. You may even try to make the activity more challenging by backtracking or walking to and from several hiding places in attempt to trick them. A fun twist is to act like a squirrel and hide a cache of treats for the kids to locate after they trace your steps.

Start An Animal Tracks Journal

Start your own journal of animal tracking information. Include drawings or photographs of each set of tracks that you find and identify. For helpful printouts to guide you in tracking go on to our facebook page.



WINTER ACTIVITIES TO DO
AT HOME WITH YOUR
CHILD!



Homemade Bird Feeders

A great way to attract birds for observation is to build a birdfeeder. Take a milk carton and cut two holes on the bottom across from each other about three inches from the bottom. Below those holes poke a stick long enough to extend through both sides of the carton for a perch. Fill the bottom with seeds, hang it, and enjoy it!

Quinzee Building

Quinzee building is different from Igloo building, but is a great way for children to learn about the insulating properties of snow. Explain how animals like the vole for example use the snow to keep warm. Search online for tips on how to build an Quinzee.

Read Children Book

In the Snow: Who's Been Here?

By Lindsay Barrett George

Trails; Open 7 days a week from dawn to dusk; donations appreciated.
For more information on our summer camps and public programs for adults, families, and preschoolers check out our seasonal calendar of events on our website.

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And Check Us Out On Facebook!

