

Awareness Quiz by Tamarack Song

Thanks to all who sent me words of appreciation for the Quiz column. More and more of you are participating, which I enjoy because of the great variety of answers. I'm getting to know a few of you quite well, and I always like hearing from new people.

A couple of you said you liked the new one-word-answer questions, and yet you missed the additional information that used to come with the long answers. I think you have a good point, so I'd like to try a combination: one-word answers along with commentary. You'll see five new questions this time rather than ten, to leave room for including more information, so feel free to elaborate on your answers.

Here are the answers to the questions posed in the last column:

1. Which large bird's track leaves no thumbprint? Turkey is the common one. Dan Ward adds Sandhill Crane, and a few of you mentioned large waterfowl such as geese and swans.
2. What at a glance distinguishes a Raccoon track from an Opossum's? The Opossum's back-foot opposable thumb. Don Stone and four others knew this one. Also, the fingers of the Opossum's front foot are usually more spread than the Raccoon's.
3. Which hoofed animal typically leaves point-tipped tracks when living on soft ground and round-tipped tracks when dwelling in a rocky area? Mule deer, because rock wears the tips round. This was a tough one, which many of you took stabs at anyway. Mule Deer might be our only hoofed animal who can range exclusively in either rocky or soft-ground habitat.
4. The foot of which member of the Rabbit-Hare family can leave a track wider than a man's hand? Snowshoe Hare. Just about everybody got this one, with Ron Hughes commenting on how he's always been impressed by such a track from a little animal.
5. Which animal's track shows a V-shaped depression across the heel pad? Red Fox. Jeff Gottlieb and most others knew this one; however, other answers ranged from Beaver to Horse, which show how differently people can see things.
6. What at a glance distinguishes Canine from Feline scat? The Feline's Tootsie Roll look. Tootsie Rolls must be Ron Hughes' favorite candy, because he's the only one who got this one. There are other differences, but they are often not reliable because of the variability of diet, especially with Canines. Bear scat is also sometimes confused with the two.
7. The tail of which member of the Weasel family leaves a drag mark? Otter. About half of you said Otter, and Andy Dubos mentioned that he has seen Mink drags also, and occasionally Fisher.
8. Which letter of the alphabet can often be seen inside a canine track? X. Tim Johnson added that with Gray Foxes and Domestic Dogs it looked more like an H.
9. The partially-retractable claws of which Canine leave stubby-looking claw prints? Gray Fox. Brian Manning adds that this is the feature which enables Gray Foxes to climb trees. And they do so with ease, both to escape predators and hunt-forage.
10. Which woodland bird walks with so little straddle that her track looks like a line running through a string of widely-spread Vs? Ruffed Grouse. Only Loren Zaruba and two others got this one. Quail can also leave a similar looking track.

My gratitude to all who participated, and I hope everyone has fun with these new brain-ticklers!

New Questions:

1. What is stronger than steel and light as a feather?
2. Does heart wood or sap wood generally make the best bow?
3. What common Spider has a deadly-poisonous bite but not the mouth parts to bite humans?
4. Who has the largest brain, a Dog or a Wolf?
5. Members of what animal family eat their own excrement?

Send your answers to tamarack@teachingdrum.org or Quiz, c/o Teaching Drum Outdoor School, 7124 Military Rd, Three Lakes, WI 54562).