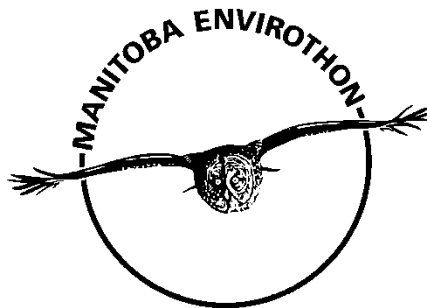


Scat Identification



A VISUAL AID TO IDENTIFYING SCAT

JENNIFER BRYSON



Why do we study scat?



Collecting animal scat is a non-invasive way to study animal populations and communities.

Using DNA extracted from scats, scientists can find out:

- What animals eat
- Where animals go
- What habitats animals use
- How much space animals need
- How animals overlap in space



Why do we look at scat?



Scats Provide Insight On Diet And Activity

- Scat collection is one of the best methods available to study animal diets.
- Scats not only tell us what animals eat, but also where and when they eat different things.
- No other technique can span such a broad range of space and time to give precise data on animal diets.
- New genetic techniques make scat analysis even better than before, allowing us to identify species in scats that have no remaining physical parts.
- As an example, scat samples of carnivores in the Santa Cruz Mountains are used to understand how pressures from human development impact what carnivores eat and how much they compete for the same resources.



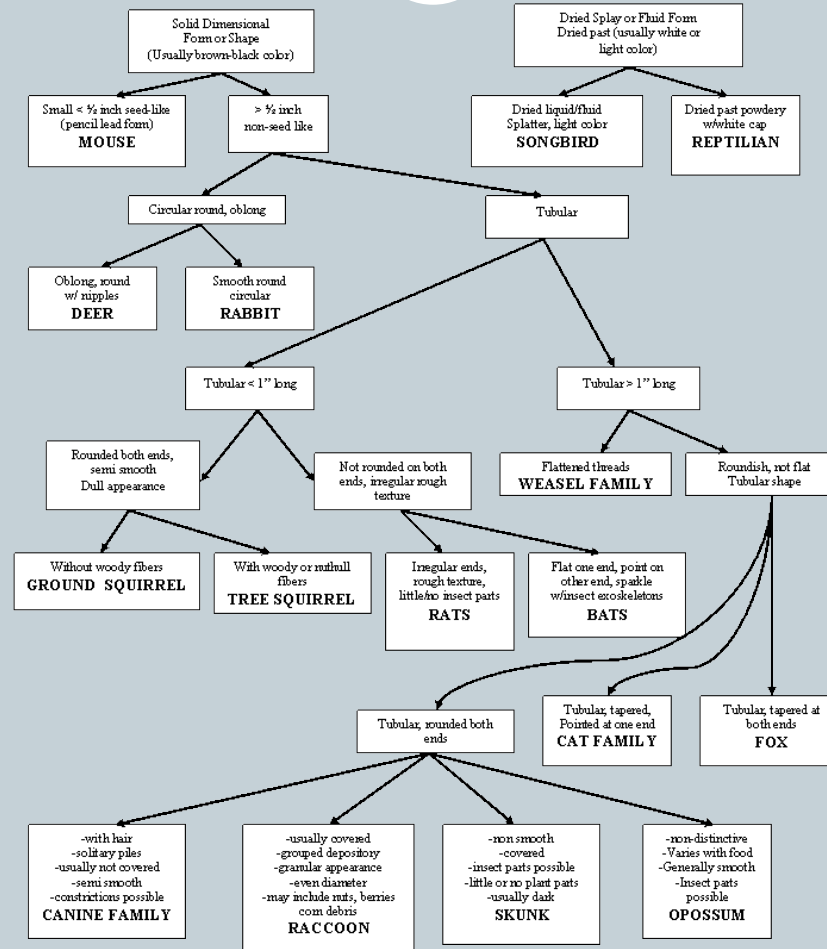
Identifying Scat



- **Observe the location and placement of the scat**
 - Where are you geographically (would this species be found here at all?)
 - Is it in the open, buried, near waters edge, at trail crossing, bottom of tree, etc
- **Note the size of the scat**
 - Its is good to have a measuring tool with you in the field
 - Some scat will look identical to others from the same family, and size may be the only distinguishing feature.
 - If the scat is similar to another species and size is questionable (adult elk or sub-adult moose), search for nearby tracks to confirm species.
- **What is the shape**
 - Tapered at ends, tubular, pellets, twisted, plops
- **What is found within the scat**
 - Berries, hair, seeds, sawdust

Scat contains many parasites and pathogens that could potentially make you sick. Do not touch with bare hands, use a stick or gloves to move scat and do not inhale scat scent.

Scat Identification Key



Diet and Scat Morphology



DIET

SCAT MORPHOLOGY

Fruit



Shapeless or loose tubes of crumbly material
Blunt ends

Meat and Organs



Tubular
Little to no twisting
Smooth
Blunt or tapered ends

Hair and Bone



Twisted, tapered ropes
Pointy Ends

Pellets



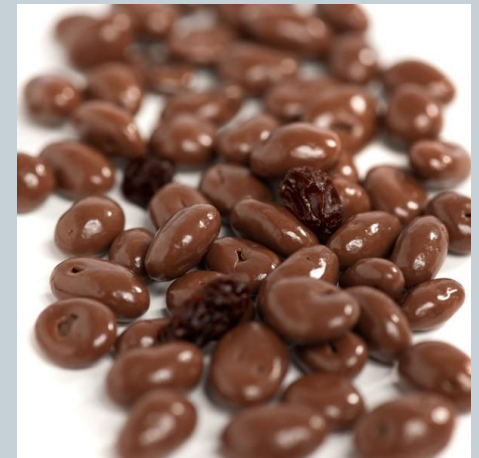
- Ungulates (Deer, Elk, Moose)
- Rabbits
- Squirrels
- Chipmunks
- Porcupines
- Beaver



Whitetail Deer



- High moisture in diet will cause scat to clump
- Similar in size to chocolate covered raisins



Elk



- Similar in size to chocolate covered almonds



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Moose



- Larger than elk
- Summer diet of aquatic vegetation and herbaceous plants results in large plops



Beaver



- Look like clumps of compressed sawdust
- Found in or very close to water



Chipmunk



- Similar in size to long grain rice



Squirrel



- Similar in size to tic tacs



Cottontail



- Similar in size to m&m's
- Initial scat is darker and wetter looking, re-digested scat will be dry and look like it contains fibrous material



Porcupine



- Similar in size to macaroni
- Found in large piles at base of trees



Tubular



- Canines
- Felines
- Racoons



Red Fox



Omnivore Diet



Rodent Diet

- Small in size
- Tubular, tapered at one end
- With meat diet is twisted
- Fox musky scent

Coyote (omnivore diet)



- Tubular
- Tapered
- Often full of bones/hair
- Often on trails and trail crossings
- Multiple scats deposits are common

Wolf



- Large
- Tubular
- Tapered on one or both ends
- Often found on trails and trail crossings



Black Bear

- Very Large
- Multiple tubes dropped
- With a fruit diet the scat becomes a seed filled deposit either lightly packed or loose



Bobcat



- Usually segmented
- Often found middle of trail or at trail intersection
- Rarely find bones and hair in scat (excellent digestive system)
- May be accompanied by scrape on ground



Cougar sub-adult (deer fur)



- Segmented, tubular, dense
- Tapered on one end
- Smooth surface
- Strong odor
- Hair and bones present
- May be accompanied by a scrape the ground
- Covered with debris

Raccoon



- Segmented, tubular
- Found at base of trees and on trails
- With a fruit diet the scat becomes a seed filled deposit either lightly packed or loose
- Scat is known to carry parasitic roundworms which, if inhaled, can cause serious harm to humans



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Skunk



- Small
- Tubular
- Skunky scent
- Midst of trail
- May be made up of insect parts, contains seeds or be smooth.



Sources



- <http://www.bear-tracker.com/>
- [Z](http://www.conservationcats.com/#!whyscat/c6g)