Small mammal Investigation Footprint Tunnels

Field Studies Council
Outdoor Learning Experiences

Footprint tunnels offer an accessible and non-invasive way of monitoring small animals in an area.

- Cardboard
- Plain paper
- Masking tape
- Bait (seeds, fruit, casters)
- Twine or string
- Vegetable oil
- Charcoal (can be from firepit)
- Paintbrush

1. Fold cardboard into three even sections
2. Place a bit of paper at either end of the middle section of the cardboard- use masking tape to secure at each end
3. Place bait in the middle of either sheet of paper
4. Fill the space between the paper and the bait with masking tape. This won't absorb the ink so will act as an ink pad.
5. Combine charcoal powder with vegetable oil, this will make a non-drying, non-toxic ink. Paint this ink onto the masking tape between the bait and sheets of paper.
6. Fold up the sides of the cardboard to create a triangular structure and secure with twine/string/ masking tape.
7. Place your tunnel out and secure down with a tent peg or large stone.

Tunnels can be taught as a scientific enquiry.
→ What animals does different bait attract?
→ How do the footprints seen change based on habitat? Time of day?