



Anna Baize

Edible Scat

This activity is adapted, with permission, from Project WILD, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission. It starts with an “S” and it ends with “T”, it comes out of you and it comes out of me!!!

I’m talking about *scat*, of course. While the thought of making and eating scat may seem disgusting at first, hang in there, this will be fun. **Scat** is the scientific term for animal poop. Since every animal poop, scientists can learn so much from an animals’ scat; and you can too! Let’s be scientists!

Ages: 5-12

Activity Time

Approx. 30 minutes

Materials Needed to Make All Four Scat Representations

For each participant:

- 8 Tootsie rolls
 - Yellow, red, and green sprinkles
 - 3 Pieces of Shredded Wheat Cereal
 - 1-2 Wint-o-green mints* or pretzel sticks, crushed
 - 3-4 Dried berries/1 small box, raisins or cranberries, chopped
- spray water bottle

Optional

For a really fun and spooky alternative, try cupcake decoration sprinkles shaped like bones. For larger groups, instead of green and red sprinkles, use red and green food

Learning Outcomes



Students will understand the difference between what carnivores, omnivores, and herbivores consume.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What can we learn from scat? There are three kinds of animals; carnivores, herbivores, and omnivores. **Carnivores** eat animals, **herbivores** eat plants, and **omnivores** eat both plants and animals. What you find in an animal's scat can help you determine what kind of animal left it there. For instance, if you find scat with nuts, berries, and animal fur; most likely the animal is an omnivore, like raccoons and otters. However, if you find scat with only berries and some green plant material, most likely the animal who left it is an herbivore, such as a deer, moose, or elk. This activity is intended to spark curiosity in something we see every day!

Scientists use dogs' excellent sniffing skills to locate animal scat from wolves, cougars, bears, coyotes, bobcats, lynx and other animals. Scientists are turning thousands of bags of scat into useful information about what's happening in the woods and revealing wolf behavior patterns that involve people, too, leading the way to coexistence. Some dogs even find scat so small, like the highly endangered Pacific pocket mice. Some dogs even find the scat of killer whales floating on the wind-whipped waters of Puget Sound. To learn more about these amazing canine conservationists read "Conservation Canines: Sniff and Seek" by Jaymi Heimbuch at www.nwf.org.

Who poops what? Aside from the composition of the scat, its various shapes and sizes can also lend clues to what animal may have left it behind. The images below are just a few different carnivores, omnivores, and herbivores you may be familiar with along with the scat they often leave behind.

Food-Scat Representations

- Animal Fur = Plain Shredded Wheat Cereal-
- Plant Material = Green Shredded Wheat Cereal or Green Sprinkles
- Crustaceous Material = Red Shredded Wheat Cereal or Red Sprinkles
- Berries = Dried fruits (Raisins, cranberries, etc.)
- Undigested Bone Fragments = Broken Wint-O- Green Mints or pretzel sticks
- Fish Scales = Yellow Sprinkles

DISCLAIMER: Real scat found outside may contain parasites or otherwise harmfully affect humans in some way if handled improperly. Always wear protection and do not handle scat without an adult present.

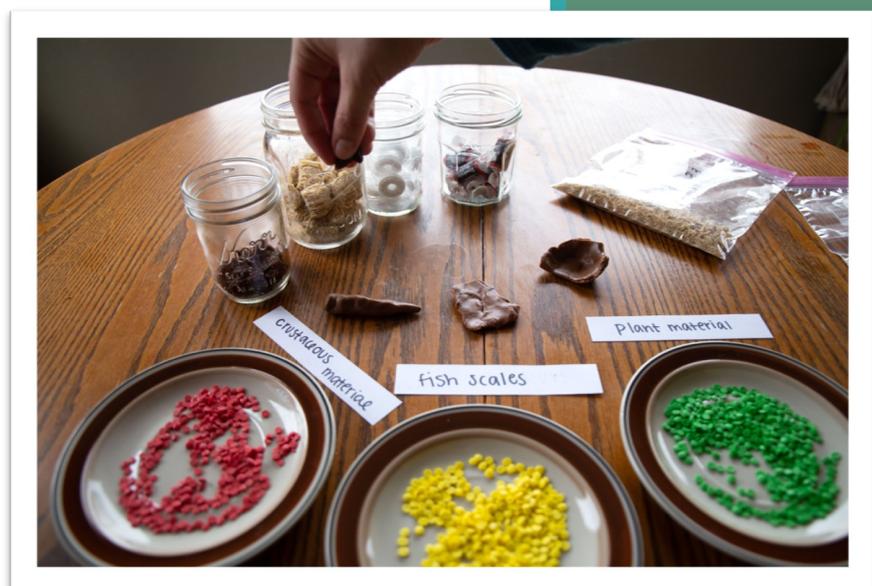


WHAT TO DO

- ◆ **Step 1:** Wash your hands!
- ◆ **Step 2:** Divide the shredded wheat cereal into three separate plastic bags and smash into little pieces. Label one bag “plant material”, one bag “crustaceous material”, and the third bag “animal fur”.
- ◆ **Step 3:** In the “plant material” bag add green food coloring, in the “crustaceous material” add red food coloring, and in the “animal fur” bag *do not* add any food coloring. Optional: Use red and green sprinkles instead of red-dyed and green-dyed shredded wheat cereal.
Step 4*: Label a fourth bag, “Bone Fragments” and fill it with Broken Wint-O-Green Mints or pretzel sticks.
- ◆ **Step 5:** Hold 2 tootsie rolls, unwrapped, in your hands to warm them up. Once they’re soft, roll them into one large glob. Then press your thumb into the center of the ball creating a sort of bowl.
- ◆ **Step 6:** Using the recipe and images on page 4, add your food items to your tootsie “bowl” and mix it all around in your hands and mold it based on what kind of animal scat you are creating.
- ◆ **Last step...eat it! Enjoy!**

*For a really fun and spooky alternative, try cupcake decoration sprinkles shaped like bones.

*For large groups, instead of green sprinkles and red sprinkles, use red and green food coloring mixed with shredded wheat.





Use the images and recipe below to create your edible scat!

Examples of Animal Scat	Picture of Animal	Drawing of Scat	Scat Recipe
Carnivore (Coyote)		 <p>Coyote (2x Actual Size)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Shredded Cereal or Red sprinkles • Yellow Sprinkles
Omnivore (River Otter)		 <p>River Otter (2x Actual Size)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Shredded Cereal or Red sprinkles • Yellow Sprinkles
Omnivore (Raccoon)		 <p>Raccoon (2x Actual Size)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain shredded wheat cereal • Wint-o-green mints or pretzel sticks • Green shredded wheat cereal • Dried berries, such as raisins or cranberries
Herbivore (Deer)	 <p>Photo: Richard Heise</p>	 <p>Mule Deer (2x Actual Size)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green shredded wheat cereal • Dried berries, such as raisins or cranberries

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