

# TRACKING TUNNEL

*Put a tasty treat in a homemade tunnel to find out what little critters are roaming your yard at night!*

## DETAILS

- Age: Can be adapted for any age
- Time: 10 - 30 mins prep, Overnight

## MATERIALS

- Cardstock or manila folder
- small plastic lid
- paper towel
- food coloring and water
- spoonful of nut butter
- Small bottle cap
- *Optional:* substitute materials for any of the above

## PREPARATION

- Gather materials
- Dress properly for the weather.
- Find a safe outdoor space.

## SOURCES & BACKGROUND

- Kiwi Conservation Club: <https://kcc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/TrackingTunnel.pdf>
- Science Learning Hub: <https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/1171-making-a-tracking-tunnel>
- In New Zealand, small mammal predators pose a significant threat to native bird populations, which are on the decline. Tracking tunnels are a tool wildlife managers use to monitor and manage their populations.
- In MN, they are a great way to learn more about your local wildlife!

## OBJECTIVES

- CREATE a tool to find clues that you may not see otherwise
- OBSERVE and THINK CRITICALLY about clues found

## MAKE YOUR TRACKING TUNNEL

1. Fold the cardstock or manila folder into a tall triangle-shaped tube. Staple the edges together along the top.
2. Mix water and food coloring - use plenty of food coloring!
3. Pour the color mixture into the plastic lid, and place a folded up paper towel on top, letting it soak up the mixture.
4. Scoop a dollop of nut butter into a small bottle cap and place it in the center of the paper towel sitting in the plastic lid.
5. Push the lid (with towel and nut butter) into the center of your tracking tunnel.
6. Find a location outside to set your tunnel and leave it overnight.
7. Return in the morning to check on your tunnel and see if any visitors left tracks!



## OBSERVE, ASK, TRY AGAIN



### Observe any footprints left in your tracking tunnel.

- What size are they? How many toes do they have?
- Are they all the same? Front feet, back feet, different species?
- Use a field guide or look up tracks on the internet to find more information.
- Are there any other clues like scat or chew marks?



### Look around the area for any other evidence.

- Are there good hiding places or homes nearby?
- Do you see any other food sources in the area?
- Make a prediction about where the animals might be now.



### Reset your tunnel and try again!

- Try putting it in a different area.
- If some of your materials didn't seem to work well, try a substitute. Just make sure you don't use anything toxic!
- Keep track of the weather, things you try and your results, so you can compare later.