

Scat: An Investigation of Poop

Introduction

We will tell you about the world of scat. We have been knee deep in this topic literally.

Background Information

We went to the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary here in Calgary and learned many cool things about scat. Scat is the scientific word for poop. Guess what? We saw raccoon scat at the Inglewood Wild Lands and we saw grey squirrel scat at the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary. Scat can tell you a lot of things about animals. Our job at the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary was that we had to be an ecologist. An ecologist is someone who studies an ecosystem. We had to learn a lot of things about the ecosystem and animals coming to the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary.

Factual Information & Supporting Research

What is scat made out of?

Scat is made out of what the animal eats for example: herbivores are animals that eat plants. Their scat may contain leaves, grass and plant chewed up. Carnivores are meat eaters their scat might have feathers and fur and it is larger than herbivore scat.

Omnivores are plant and meat eater their scat may contain

berries, seeds and may have parts of animals. Scat is made out of 75% water and 25% percent solid matter.

How can scat help an ecosystem?

Scat contains 50% of the energy of original food so it gets decomposed and becomes part of the soil. Scat is also important to the ecosystem because its nutrients provide food for the plants and trees. Different scat would help in different ways. For example, herbivore scat may contain seeds. It helps to populate the plants. Carnivore scat would make the soil rich for producer.

What can scat tell you about an animal?

Scat will also tell you about the food chain. For example: Fox scat has tapered ends and hair. It can be thicker or thinner depending on what the fox eats. A rabbit eats plant material. The scat color depends on what it eats. It can be dark brown, tan or black and raccoon scat has blunt ends like a tootsie roll it may also contain seeds corn berries and may contain crayfish parts. It is able to tell you about the size of the animal. By the size of the scat and it will also tell you how long the scat has been out in the wilderness.

How is scat created?

Scat is created by an animal eating food and the food going down to the animal's digestive system. The digestive system separates the food and nutrients a body can digest. Anything that cannot be used by the animal is used to create scat.

What scat can tell you about an ecosystem?

Scat can tell you what type of animal it is from and it will tell you what ecosystem the animal lives in. Scat can tell you about what an animal ate and what the climate is. For example, it will indicate what types of migratory (travelling) animals exist in an ecosystem. Health of animal can tell you the health of the ecosystem. If there is an oil spill and an animal might drink it and you might see evidence of oil in the scat. A healthy ecosystem has lots of biodiversity, which means animals are able to easily find food.

What does scat look like when the animal has diarrhea?

If an animal is sick it might have diarrhea. It looks squashed and would be wet so instead of being 75% liquid, it would be around 85% and there would only be around 15% solid matter left instead of 25%.

The "So What" - Opinion & Recommendations

Our group has thought that we shouldn't pick up the animal scat. Because scat can help the ecosystem in lots of different ways. First by being decomposed, scat can help farming because when the scat goes into the soil it'll make the soil richer. Second, by decomposing, scat helps to make new plants and provides nutrients to the soil. Last it will also help the food chain by making the producers healthier because the herbivore eats the producer the carnivore would eat the herbivore. Then all the animals would have more food. For these reasons, scat should be left in the soil and not be touched by humans.

Conclusion

Now you know how much we have been knees deep in scat. Thank you! We hope you know how much scat is important to the biodiversity of an ecosystem.

Sources: www.bear-tracker.com/animalscat

http://events.nationalgeographic.com/media/files/Animal_Grossology_Teacher_Guide.pdf

www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/feces

Our self

www.britannica.com

Steward from the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary