



Backyard Tracker

Kia ora team. Let's delve into the realm of the Atua Tāne Mahuta and find out who's living in your yard.

Let's find out what they eat and what their tracks look like.

“Who is Tāne Mahuta?” I hear some of you say

He is the Atua (God) of the forest and all the animals and birds, small herb plants, big, towering trees, lovely bugs, and all else that fly, crawl, walk and live in that realm.

Gratitude (Extension Activity for older kids)

First let's acknowledge all parts of life that came before us ... all the energy's that support us being able to live on this beautiful country and planet.

I do this (You do it however it feels right to you) ...Kia ora koutou , hello to all good energies hello to the mountains that provide us with so many things hello to the waters that bring us life hello to those that live in the waters and keep them clean hello to the tall standing trees and their smaller cousins that give us medicines and food and homes and oxygen to fill our lungs hello to the animals that feed us and the birds that sing awake our days ..and hello to all those good things I have forgotten

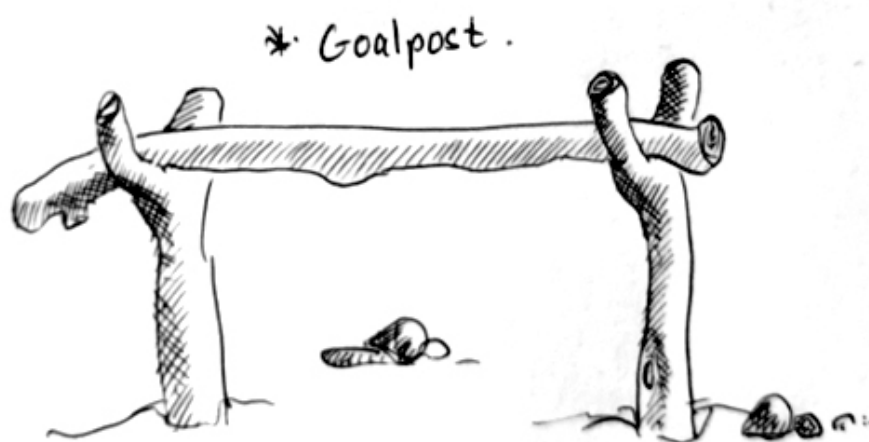
(There is so much more we can add in, think of all the parts of life that you are grateful for...)

Then I say I am (my name) thank you for my life.

Task:

OK, down to the exciting stuff...

1. Make a small goalpost from sticks you find on the ground or in your garden waste



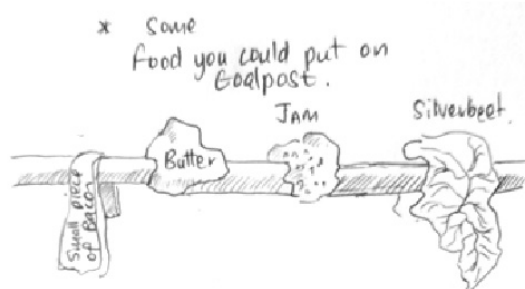


2. Prep your spot

Find an area that has a light covering of sand or loose dirt - something you can leave a light finger mark on. The easiest animal prints to see will be seen on smooth fine sand (a little wet). Push your goalpost into the ground at that spot.

3. Attract animals with some food.

You can also sprinkle things onto the ground around your goal posts - seeds, salt...Put a variety of food on the goal posts - some butter, meat, jam, something from your lawn (are there any seeds around?) (those are cat prints in the sand!)



4. Leave your tracker there for a whole day or overnight

5. What tracks did you find?

Come back and check what tracks are under the goalpost



Extension activities

1. Go to <http://www.pestdetective.org.nz/clues/footprints-and-tracks/> and <https://nztracker.org> and see if you can identify the tracks.....
2. When you have identified your creature play around, put more food out at a different time what foods do they like best? Do these different foods attract different animals/birds?

Questions to explore:

- Does the cat/dog always turn up and eat everything? How could you cat proof the goal posts?
- Who turned up and when?
- How did they get there?
- Where do they live?
- Why did they eat that food but not that food?
- Are they nocturnal or diurnal? (Nocturnal...nighturnal, or diurnal...dayurnal)

And best of all stay curious and have fun!

