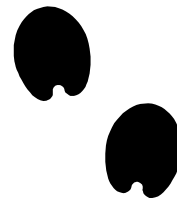




Watch Your Paws!

A Young Person's Guide to
Respecting Nature

Written and Illustrated
By Steve Reid



Watch Your Paws

It can be fun to play outdoors. There is lots of room to run around, and there is so much to do out in nature. There is also so much to see, if you stop and look. There are many types of trees, flowers, animals and birds that you might find if you look very carefully.

It is a beautiful and interesting world



outdoors, but it sometimes needs your help to stay that way. That is what I want to talk to you about. I want to share with you some ways that you can help the outdoors stay healthy and beautiful. So, you ask, how can you help? The answer is simple ... **watch your paws.**

What are paws? Well, everyone knows that animals have paws. Sometimes we call them feet. Sometimes we call them hands. But they are all paws, and you have them, too. And one of the secrets of helping nature is

paying attention to what you do with your hands and feet when you are outdoors. And that is why I want you to watch your paws.

Flowers

Wildflowers are pretty. They come in a wide variety of colours, sizes and shapes.

Sometimes they grow in large groups, and sometimes they are found all by themselves.

Did you know that wildflowers are important to nature? Birds and insects (and butterflies, too) sometimes use flowers for food. So, what

should you do when you see flowers outside?

Watch your paws!

Be careful where you step. If you step on a flower, it might die.

Then, nobody else will be able to see that flower, and the bees will be hungry.



And please don't pick it. You might think it would be nice to take it home and show it to your parents. If you do that, it might not grow there again. Instead, go get your parents and bring them to the flower. Then everyone can enjoy the flower, and the flower can stay where it is. (Maybe you could tell your parents that they should watch their paws, too.)

Berries

There are lots of different types of fruit and berries growing outdoors. There are the ones you are familiar with - things like apples and wild strawberries. Then there are the ones that you don't know what they are. And what should you do when you don't know what it is?



Watch your paws!

Wild berries may grow on the ground or on trees, and you may see birds and squirrels eating them. Some of these berries, however, may make you sick if you eat them. So don't pick them,

and don't eat them. Leave them in the trees for the animals to enjoy, and then everyone will be safe and happy.

Mushrooms

Maybe you have had mushrooms in your spaghetti. They can be really tasty, if cooked right. And maybe you have seen mushrooms outside, growing on the ground or on the sides of trees. What you should know, however, is that the ones you see outside are not the same type of mushroom that you have eaten for supper.

Mushrooms have an important job to play in nature. They help by recycling the dead material in old trees. They are also food (and sometimes homes) for some types of animals.



If you see mushrooms outside ... **watch your paws!**

Do not pick and eat wild mushrooms. Some of them can make you very, very, VERY sick. Leave them alone and let them do their job. [Let your parents choose which mushrooms you eat.]



Trees

There are more types of trees growing around us than you can shake a stick at. Tall trees. Short trees. Trees with big, green leaves. Trees with prickly needles. Fruit trees. Nut trees. The list goes on and on. Trees are some of the most important things in nature. They help keep our air and water clean and fresh. They provide shade for plants and animals (and humans, too). They

make food, like berries and nuts, for many animals. Many animals and birds make their homes in trees, sometimes on the branches and sometimes inside the tree trunk itself. So, when you see a tree ... **watch your paws!**

Sometimes it is fun to have a stick in your hands, for playing or to help you walk. Look on the ground for a good stick - don't tear a living branch off a tree. Taking branches off trees in the wrong way can hurt the tree (and nobody likes to hurt). Also, if you do have a stick in your hand, be careful what you do with it.

Leaf collecting can be interesting, and so is collecting nuts and pinecones. But you don't have to try to climb a tree to get them. Look under your paws and I'm sure you can find some good ones already on the ground.



Have you ever seen a birch tree? Those are the large ones that look like they are all

wrapped up in white paper. That white paper is called bark, and it protects the tree, in the same way that your skin protects you. If you see a birch tree, take a good look at it, but don't take off its skin.

If you watch your paws around trees, they will grow big and healthy, and help you grow big and healthy, too.

Animals

Animals are fun to watch, whether they have feathers, fur, or scales. Always remember, however, that no matter how big or small they are, you should be careful around them. It is easy for you to hurt them, and it is also easy for them to hurt you.

If you ever get close to a wild animal, **watch your paws!**

Baby animals are really cute, but you shouldn't get too close to them. If a baby bird falls out of a tree, tell one of your parents. Maybe they can help you put it back into its nest. And if you see a baby deer or

bear, don't go near them, because their mothers don't like them to play with humans.



Good things to do with your paws

Walk on your paws.

Walking is good exercise, and can be fun. Take your parents for a hike. Explore parks and other places, maybe even in your own back yard. You will feel better and you might even see some interesting animals and plants.

Use your paws

When you are out walking, sometimes you see that someone has dropped some garbage on the ground. If you see bags or cans or other

stuff that doesn't belong, pick it up and find a garbage can to put it in. The animals will thank you for it.



Count on your paws

There are many different types of plants and animals to be seen outside. Try counting the different types of birds you see, or count the flowers and trees.

Write with your paws

Write a story about a walk you have taken and about something you have seen or done. Did you talk to a bird, and did it talk back? Did you watch a pair of squirrels play tag? Tell me a story.

Draw with your paws

Draw a picture of what you have seen outside. Your drawing could have animals, or trees, or rivers and rocks, or maybe other things. Use your imagination and make a nice picture that you and your family can enjoy, to remember your adventures in nature.

And finally, there is one thing that I want you to remember - nature is a wonderful thing, but it needs your help to stay the way it is.

So ...

Please watch your paws!

Thank you.





This booklet has been produced as part of the ParkWatch program of CPAWS NB. For further information about us or any of our programs, please contact us at:

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