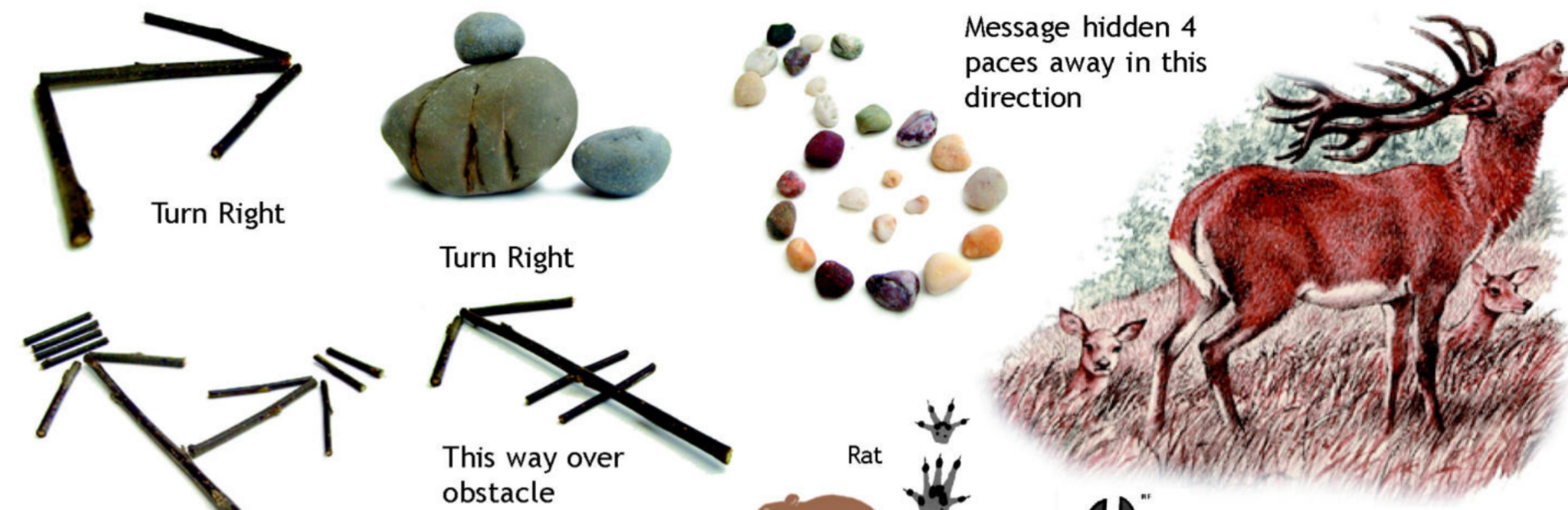
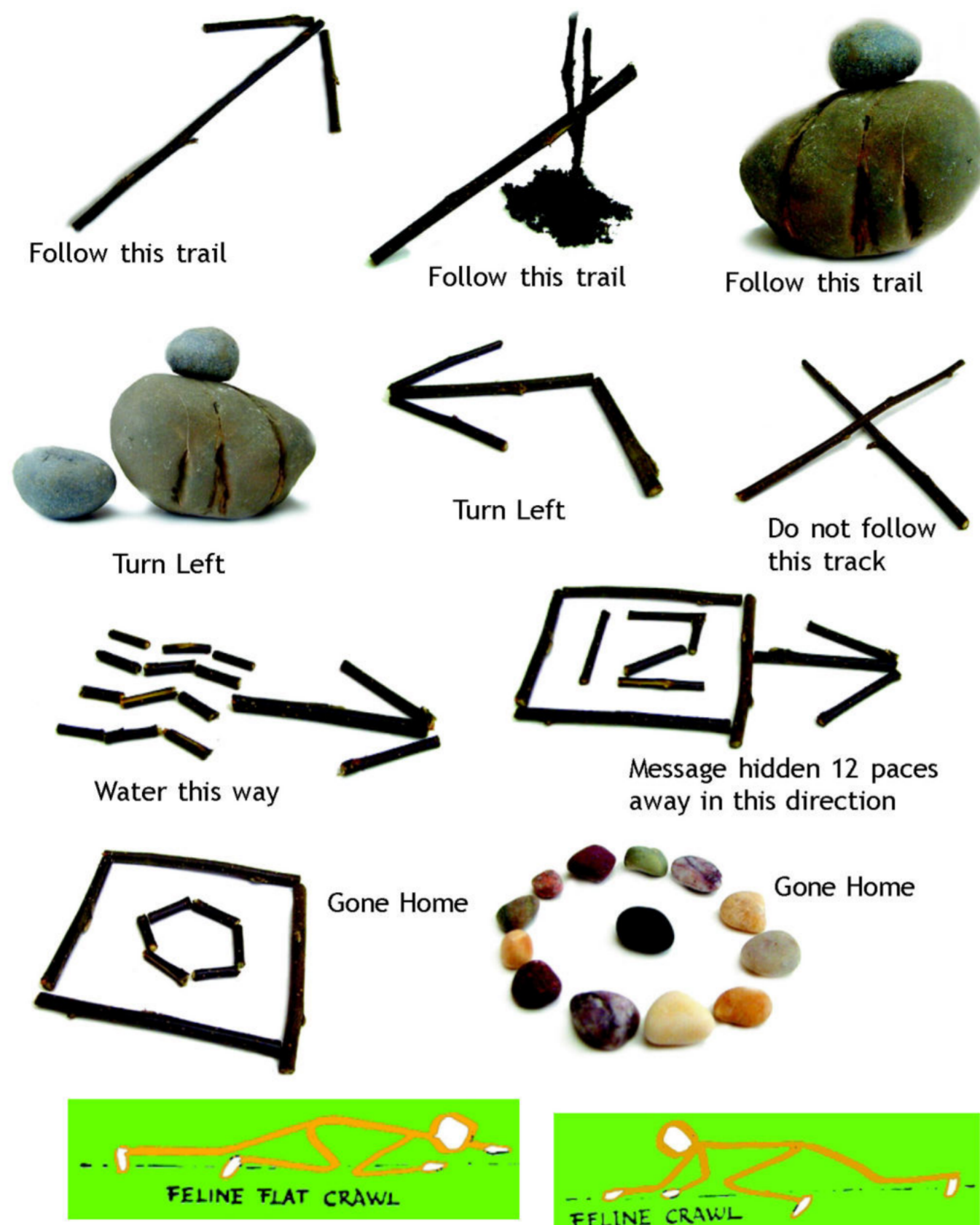


Tracking & Trailing



Group split up two along one track four along the other track

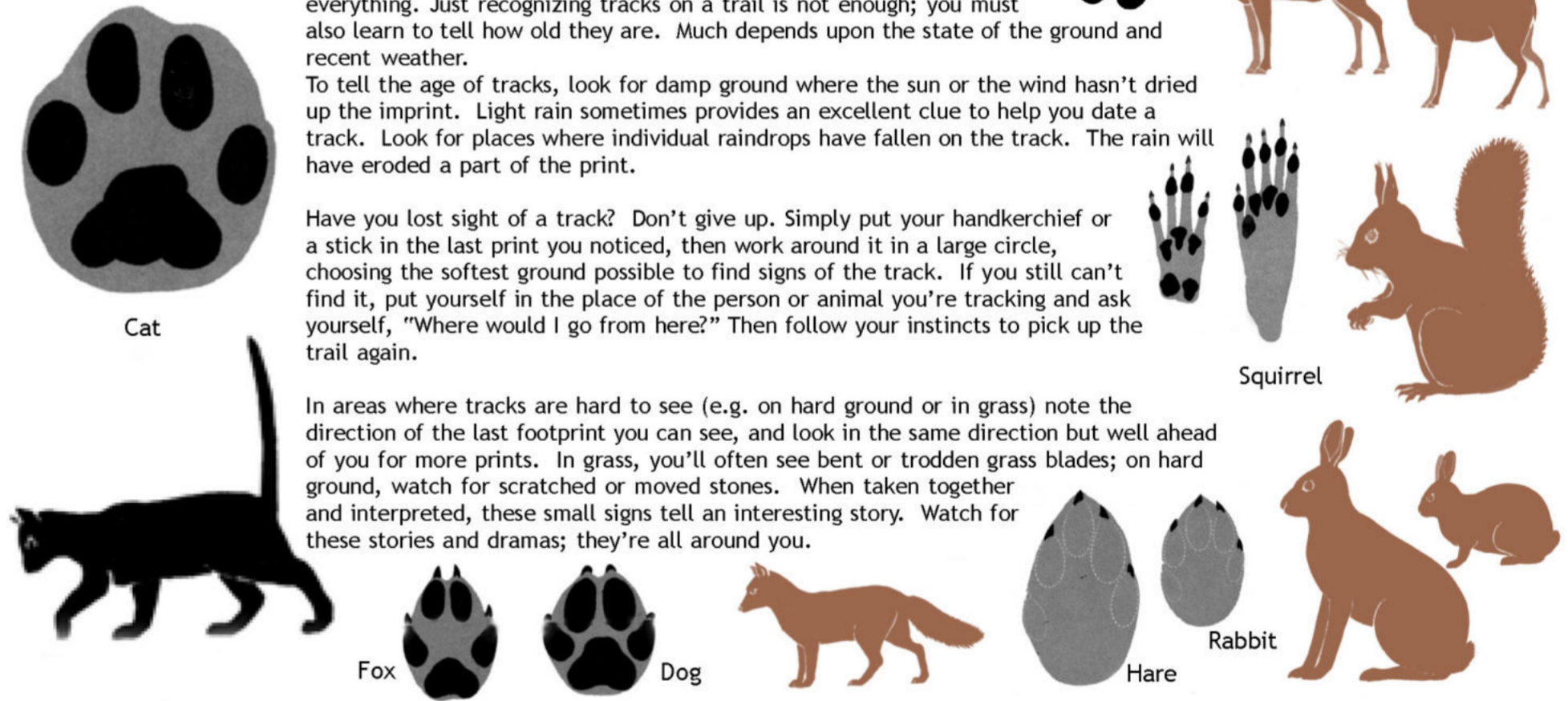
Tracking Animals

Baden-Powell said, "One of the most important things a Scout has to team is to let nothing escape his attention. He must notice small points and signs and then make out the meaning of them."

It takes a lot of practice before a person can really start noticing everything. Just recognizing tracks on a trail is not enough; you must also learn to tell how old they are. Much depends upon the state of the ground and recent weather. To tell the age of tracks, look for damp ground where the sun or the wind hasn't dried up the imprint. Light rain sometimes provides an excellent clue to help you date a track. Look for places where individual raindrops have fallen on the track. The rain will have eroded a part of the print.

Have you lost sight of a track? Don't give up. Simply put your handkerchief or a stick in the last print you noticed, then work around it in a large circle, choosing the softest ground possible to find signs of the track. If you still can't find it, put yourself in the place of the person or animal you're tracking and ask yourself, "Where would I go from here?" Then follow your instincts to pick up the trail again.

In areas where tracks are hard to see (e.g. on hard ground or in grass) note the direction of the last footprint you can see, and look in the same direction but well ahead of you for more prints. In grass, you'll often see bent or trodden grass blades; on hard ground, watch for scratched or moved stones. When taken together and interpreted, these small signs tell an interesting story. Watch for these stories and dramas; they're all around you.

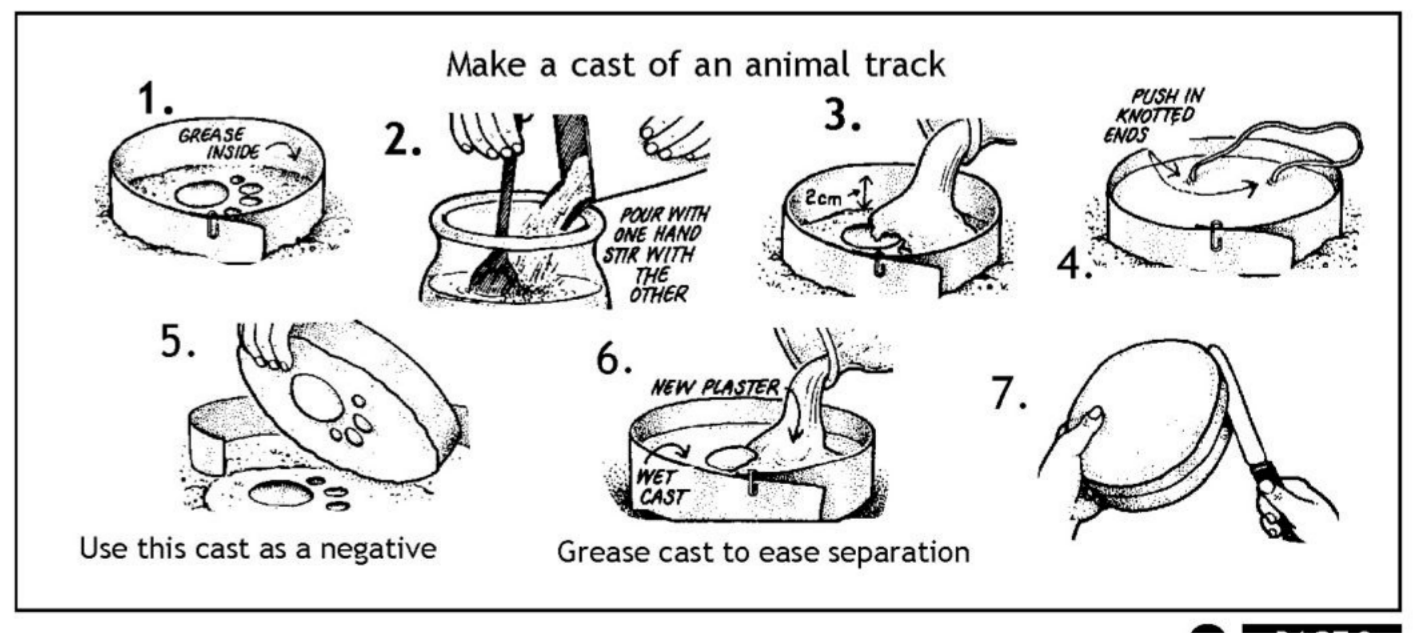


Some Tracking Hints

Here's an old tracker's rule. Face the sun when tracking; you'll often be able to see imprint shadows that will give valuable clues. When you've found a track, 'fix' it in your mind.

After you've identified an animal track, try to put yourself into the animal's mind. Ask yourself. Why was it going in this direction? Was it in a hurry, or was it taking its time? Was there a possible attack from a predator from the ground or the air?

The ground's condition - pebbles or stones overturned, damp or dry - may give clues when the animal passed by. In winter, a light fall of damp snow provides the best tracking conditions. In very light snow the wind will soon erase tracks, so with this kind of weather condition you'll have to move quickly after the snow has stopped falling.



Trail Signs and Tracking

Trail marking and trail reading are both useful and interesting skills to learn. Start with simple trail signs when hiking and playing games, and then advance to reading and following the tracks of birds, animals, and humans. Can you interpret the stories they tell?

Trail signs can be made with chalk, stones, twigs or grass. When you are finished with your signs, "erase" them.

Stalking Animals

Move slowly staying down wind. Use cover such as high grass, trees and logs. Take your time. Try to wear dull colours or colours that match surroundings



Common wild flowers you will find along the trail

