



Trackers and would-be wildlife trackers are invited to join us for the 12th annual (and first-ever virtual) Northeast Wildlife Trackers Conference. In moving online, we are welcoming presenters and attendees from around the world to join us for a week of presentations and activities celebrating all aspects of animal tracking.

Conference admission grants you access to all of the following live events (hosted on Zoom), as well as a library of recordings which will be available through the end of October. See below for full workshop descriptions and presenter bios.

Oct 13-16 Conference Week Webinars:

- Tues 10/13, 7 pm - The Process and Practice of Wildlife Tracking: an Orientation (Sophie Mazowita)
- Wed 10/14, 5 pm - Talking with Birds: How to Use Bird Sounds to Locate Wildlife (Dan Gardoqui)
- Wed 10/14, 8 pm - Looking at Domestic Dog Tracks (Linda Bittle)
- Thurs 10/15, noon - Tracking Where You Are (Dan Yacobellis)
- Thurs 10/15, 7 pm - Trusting the Process: Travels with Charlie Tracking (Charlie Perakis)
- Fri 10/16, noon - Studying Animal Communication with Camera Traps (Janet Pesaturo)

Oct 17 Main Event:

A full day of activities from 10 am to 4 pm, featuring keynote speaker Casey McFarland. Our full, tentative schedule is as follows:

- 10 am - Welcome, networking and introductions
- 10:45 am - Keynote Address (Casey McFarland)
- 12 pm - Lunch roundtable discussions
- 12:45 pm - OPTION A: Field Time (at-home tracking challenge)
- 1 pm - OPTION B: Drawing Animal Tracks Workshop (Jonathan Poppele)
- 2:45 pm - Reconvene for stories and reflection
- 3:15 pm - Ask an Expert (sharing of the day's top tracking mysteries)
- 4 pm - Closing Remarks

Visit www.northeastwildlifetrackers.org for full conference details and updates.

All events are online. Zoom meeting links will be posted the day of each event, and recordings will be posted to the Online Event Page on Eventbrite within 24 hrs of each event.

Keynote Address (Casey McFarland)

A Few Million Years and a Century Later: Wildlife Tracking Past and Present

This begins as a meandering exploration of our evolutionary relationship with wildlife, how our early hominin ancestors may have begun to “Read Earth” so astonishingly well, and how we continue to embody that original practice and perspective in the modern world.

We’ll discuss the field of wildlife tracking and where it stands today, and ways “trackers” are currently perceived in the eye of broader society. There is much work to be done to keep this skillset alive and developing ... How can we as individuals be most efficient in developing our craft, and communicating what it is we do and why it’s so important?

Casey McFarland is a Senior Tracker and CyberTracker Evaluator working internationally to train and certify biologists, research teams, eco-tourism guides and the general public. Casey runs Track & Sign and Trailing Evaluations, as well as a variety of backcountry expeditions and courses on bird life, tracking and wildlife ecology. In 11 years as an evaluator, Casey has run over 130 evaluations and given trainings in 8 countries and 14 US states. As an External Evaluator, he oversees Track & Sign Specialist Evaluations. He was integral to the establishment CyberTracker Europe and currently sits as President of CyberTracker North America.

Casey is co-author of [Bird Feathers: A Guide to North American Species](#) (Stackpole 2010), co-author of the new [Peterson Field Guide to North American Bird Nests](#) (Houghton Mifflin April 2021), and a contributing author to the 2nd edition of [Mammal Tracks and Sign: A Guide to North American Species](#).

Workshop Descriptions (ordered by date/time)

The Process and Practice of Wildlife Tracking: An Orientation (Sophie Mazowita)

Tuesday October 13, 7-8:30 p.m.

What does it mean to be a tracker? Where do you start? How can you build up a tracking routine? This presentation will offer insights into the art and science of wildlife tracking and the many ways to practice it. We'll discuss what it means to track, the different aspects and applications of tracking knowledge, routines and tips to deepen your tracking practice, recommended resources, identifying tracking locations, and connecting with other trackers. We'll also touch on track and sign ID of common northeastern mammals and how to investigate a set of tracks. Geared towards beginners but open to anyone who wants to reflect on their tracking process and routines.

Talking with Birds: How to Use Bird Sounds to Locate Wildlife (Dan Gardoqui)

Wednesday October 14, 5-6 p.m.

I've been teaching wildlife trackers for over 20 years. Very few trackers exhibit the kind of awareness necessary to be successful at detecting and observing wildlife. Sometimes, the desire to track itself is an impediment to connecting with animals. This presentation will share perspectives, practices and pitfalls for trackers relative to using birds to tune us into other wildlife species. Our time will be split between a powerpoint and a discussion.

Looking at Domestic Dog Tracks (Linda Bittle)

Wednesday October 14, 8-8:45 p.m.

They may not be the most sought-after wildlife tracks, but they're ones that every tracker should be familiar with- and the prevalence of domestic dog tracks and trails makes them a great teacher for the many arts of tracking. Linda Bittle will be sharing an updated PowerPoint presentation with new photos and thoughts about domestic dog tracks. She will talk about why dog tracks don't often look like coyote tracks, describe canine foot morphology (cat and hare-footed dogs), and talk about what following her own dog has taught her about substrate.

Tracking Where You Are! (Dan Yacobellis)

Thursday October 15, noon-12:45 p.m.

A look at animal activity in a variety of settings including urban and suburban areas. Exploring other opportunities for tracking when a vast wilderness area is not on your plate for the day.

Trusting the Process: Travels with Charlie Tracking (Charlie Perakis)

Thursday October 15, 7-8 p.m.

Dr. Perakis will illustrate his experiences connecting with wildlife and their track and sign around the world. He will share photos of tracks and sign of wildlife from South Africa, Romania, Spain, Costa Rica, Poland and Chile and many places in the United States. He

has stories of unexpected happenings and many obstacles he encountered and the lessons he learned from trusting the process. He will share tips on trip selection, pre-travel preparation, facilitating transportation, potential obstacles, and advice on having a successful trip.

Studying Animal Communication with Camera Traps (Janet Pesaturo)

Friday October 16, noon-1:30 p.m.

Animals communicate through a variety of modes, including olfactory, visual, and auditory. We can study this by examining and interpreting the sign they leave behind, and by capturing their behavior with trail cameras. In this workshop, we will explore how animals communicate using photos of sign created by a variety of species, and correlate that to trail camera photos and videos of them engaged in these behaviors. Seeing is Believing!

Drawing Animal Tracks (Jonathan Poppele)

Saturday October 17, 1-2:45 p.m.

Drawing is one of the most useful practices for learning animal tracks. Drawing helps us look closely at fine details, recognize subtleties of proportions, and notice nuances of shape. Accurate illustrations of tracks are often clearer than photographs, and are the primary images used by most field guide authors. In this workshop, we will practice techniques for creating highly accurate track drawings for personal study, and learn how to turn these into field-guide quality illustrations.

About the Presenters

Linda Bittle made a study of domestic dog tracks for her class project in the 2008/2009 Tracking Intensive program at Wilderness Awareness School in Duvall, WA. She earned a level III certification in Track & Sign from CyberTracker Conservation in 2013. She now lives in West Plains, Missouri, where she tracks wildlife for fun and writes about her adventures in Washington and Idaho. She creates nature and tracking related articles for her own blog, *This Is Not Where I Thought I Was Going*, and as Pro Staff for the *ReelCamo Girl website*. She offers tracking classes for women's outdoor groups and youth programs. Tracking domestic dogs continues to be a captivating pastime.

Dan Gardoqui is a former Northeast Wildlife Trackers Conference keynote speaker, certified tracker and bird language expert. Dan served as Science Editor of *What the Robin Knows: How Birds Reveal Nature's Secrets* and helped design the popular "A Bird's World" exhibit at the Boston Museum of Science. Dan has a M.S. in Natural Resources, served as science faculty for multiple colleges. He co-founded and led a successful nature connection nonprofit for 20 years. Today, Dan runs Lead with Nature, where he does nature-based consulting, guiding and training for businesses, communities and

individuals. He lives in the coastal foothills of Southern Maine with his family where he enjoys hunting, foraging, running & cycling.

Sophie Mazowita is a professional naturalist, outdoor educator, and wildlife guide. After dabbling in tracking for a decade, she took a deep dive in 2015 and has since oriented her life around teaching tracking, networking with trackers (including serving on the tracker conference planning committee) and applying tracking knowledge towards wildlife conservation. She leads week-long polar bear and wolf-watching trips with Natural Habitat Adventures (travel partner of the World Wildlife Fund) and- when home in Seattle- contributes to local carnivore conservation and wildlife monitoring initiatives. She earned her Master's degree in the University of Vermont's Field Naturalist Program and holds a Level III Track & Sign certification from CyberTracker North America.

Charlie Perakis gained some understanding of the human condition while practicing family medicine in a rural, underserved community in Maine for 20 years. He spent years researching the use of the humanities in medical education, catalyzing and integrating creativity, storytelling and holism into clinical practice. Now he spends much of his time in spiritual connection with Nature through observing the signs of wildlife and sharing his passion with others. He is married and lives with his wife, LuAnn, and two cats (Holland and Finland) in Pine Point, Maine. He spends a good deal of time at his island cottage off the coast of Maine. He loves to share and tries to catalyze stimulating and fun experiences.

With a master's degree in conservation biology and a Level III CyberTracker certificate, **Janet Pesaturo** teaches wildlife tracking and camera trapping at Winterberry Wildlife in Massachusetts. She is the author of "Camera Trapping Guide: Tracks, Sign and Behavior of Eastern Wildlife" and chronicles her nature discoveries and adventures in a blog at WinterberryWildlife.OurOneAcreFarm.com. She manages the popular Facebook group "Trail Camera Photos and Videos" where members can share their own material or simply follow along and enjoy other postings.

Jonathan Poppele is a naturalist, author and educator who works to help people connect more deeply to themselves, to others, and to the natural world. He is the author of a series of regional guidebooks to animal tracks. His current project is creating new illustrations for the second edition of Animal Tracks of the Midwest and a forthcoming guide to bird tracks. Jon holds a master's degree in Conservation Biology from the University of Minnesota and taught both Biology and Technical Writing at the U of M for many years before leaving to focus on his own projects. He is the founder and director of the Minnesota Wildlife Tracking Project, and a guest tracking instructor for North House Folk School, the White Pine Wildlife Tracking Apprenticeship, and Wild Harvest Nature Connection.

Dan Yacobellis has been working with school children, teens and adults since 1997. Dan runs programs including tracking, friction fire making and other primitive skills for centers and organizations throughout New York's capital district, western Mass., the Adirondacks and Vermont. He also teaches a Winter Study course on Animal Tracking at Williams College. Dan has been a naturalist, tracker and student of native lore, culture, and life for over 25 years.



Questions?

Please contact trackerconference@gmail.com if you have any questions, and be sure to add that email address to your contact list in order to receive all conference communications to your inbox.