# Southwest Wildlife Online Tracking Training

# ([https://www.swott.net](https://www.swott.net))

# Track & Sign Identification 3 (T&S 3)

Track & Sign Identification 3 is the third in a sequence of five courses offered by Southwest Wildlife Online Tracking Training. The topics covered are track and sign identification of rodents, reptiles, and amphibians.

Southwest Wildlife Online Tracking Training is a distance learning wildlife track and sign identification training resource. Its mission is to teach track & sign identification to beginning students in a way that assists them in achieving Cybertracker certification ([https://trackercertification.com](https://trackercertification.com)) within two years.

Applicants for admission must have some involvement in wildlife conservation. Examples of such involvement include but are not limited to the following.

- biological research
- wildlife monitoring
- public outreach
- education
- habitat restoration
- contributing observations or identifications to iNaturalist
- assisting with administration of a conservation organization

The involvement may be performed as a professional or as a volunteer. The ideal student is someone who intends to apply track & sign identification to some aspect of wildlife conservation and who has limited access to other tracking education resources.

The five courses offered by Southwest Wildlife Online Tracking Training focus on species from San Diego County because the principal author of the course materials has thousands of animal track and sign photos from that region. The courses teach a particular analytical approach to track and sign identification that has been used successfully on Cybertracker track & sign evaluations. The approach can be applied equally well to species from any region.

Facebook is currently used as the teaching platform but that may change before the course begins. Each course is conducted by posting study materials as files to the course Facebook page and then posting track and sign identification exercises and other kinds of questions on those materials a little later in the week. Student solutions to the exercises are posted as comments to the exercise posts and are due one week after the study materials have been posted. The instructors engage with the students in comment dialogs to discuss the solutions. This is where the real learning takes place. The instructors will try to address all posted solutions within 48 hours of the due date. Discussions via Facebook comments may continue for longer.

*Volume 1 : Track & Sign Notes for San Diego County - Mammals* and *Volume 3: Track & Sign Notes for San Diego County: Birds, Herps and Invertebrates* will be provided to the students to be used as study material for the exercises in Track & Sign Identification 3.

Students must also have access to at least one source of mammal track measurements.  There is a reasonably comprehensive list of tracking field guides for North America at "Nature Tracking" (http://www.naturetracking.com/books/). The *iTrack Naturalist* mobile phone app also has mammal track measurements and it has the advantage of being accessible on a smart phone.

Requirements

Beginning trackers must be willing to commit up to four hours per week to the course and should also devote least eight hours during the course in self-directed field study. It is anticipated that students will give wrong answers to many of the exercise questions but they must attempt to answer all questions, must respond to all instructor follow-up questions, and must complete any field exercises. Completion certificates will be awarded to students who meet these requirements and finish the course.

Cost

Students are expected pay for the course by using track & sign identification in some aspect of wildlife conservation. There is no monetary cost for this course.

Our Team

*Bob Ollerton*, Director and Instructor – Certified as a Specialist in Track & Sign for the desert biome by Cybertracker Conservation.

*Kim Cabrera*, Instructor – Certified as a Specialist in Track & Sign for the desert biome and woodland biome by Cybertracker Conservation. Kim is also the creator and administrator of the "Animals Don't Cover Their Tracks" and "Cybertracker Specialist Evaluation Study Buddies" Facebook groups. Kim's website is https://www.bear-tracker.com/.

*Kersey Lawrence Ph.D.*, Guest Instructor – Kersey is currently the first and only woman tracker in the world to earn a Senior Tracker qualification, which required her to achieve a Track & Sign Specialist (2011, South Africa) and a Trailing Specialist qualification (2016, USA). Kersey is a Track & Sign Evaluator in Africa where she has been assessing trackers since 2014, and a Trailing Evaluator in North America. She is a qualified guide on the FGASA (the Field Guides Association of Southern Africa). Kersey received her Ph.D. from U. Conn. in 2020 on trackers and tracking in Southern Africa. Kersey is also the owner of Original Wisdom (https://www.originalwisdom.com/).