



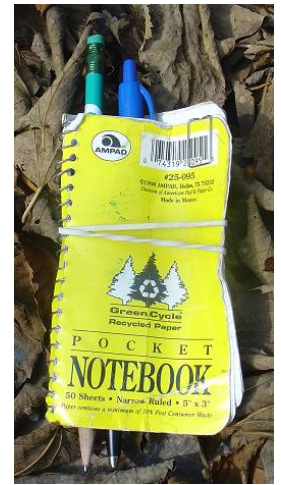
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March 10th '05

Yesterday's mid-March sun warmed up a few inches of fresh snow. By nightfall it was cold again and starry clear...perfect for bobcat courtship!

...This morning I tracked "Mystery", the tom, and his tracks showed where he abandoned his napping spot high on the cliffs... Along the way the sometimes hurrying tracks frequently stopped, backed up and paused beside rotten stumps, the undersides of logs or cliff walls. If you kneel down at such places and sniff the surface facing the hindfoot tracks you'll detect the distinctive odor of cat urine!

From the Field Notebook of Susan Morse
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Day by day, year by year my data have given me the opportunity to transcend mere moments in time and comprehend whole patterns over many years, across vast expanses of habitat.

Today's bear mark trees add themselves to years of similar observations and cumulatively my data have taught us how to predict where to look for bear scent marking in the first place...a kind of search image. We're not just blundering through the forest bumping into these things! Thousands of these scent marking data entries have helped us appreciate that in northern New England black bears most often select to scratch, bite, and rub themselves on certain species of trees, and in certain specific situations within their habitat.

In this way we have learned that bears mark white birches along ridge line travel routes, balsam fir by the wetlands, and red pines along eskers. One simply has to look for these tree species within these specific habitats and "BINGO"- you will find evidence of scent marking bears. Half of tracking is knowing where to look and the other half is looking!