

## Scent Station

Wildlife professionals use scent stations to determine what potential predators of quail are in an area. Scent stations are typically used in June. A scent station is made up of flour spread in a circle on the ground. A scent is placed in the center of the flour. Predators are attracted to the bait and leave their tracks on the floured surface. The station is checked for tracks the next morning. The tracks are used to identify the animals. Scent stations are checked for two consecutive mornings.

### Materials:

Flour 3 -5 pounds of white baking flour  
Bait (canned salmon or tuna fish)  
Hula hoop (or other circular frame about 1 yard in diameter) for a template  
(Optional) Small whisk broom or rake  
Latex gloves (for handling the bait)  
Track identification guide  
(Optional) Camera

### What to do:

1. Check the weather forecast before creating scent stations; even a small amount of rain or heavy dew will make the station unreadable.
2. Establish a scent station near a path or trail in an area large enough to lay down the hula hoop. Lay down the hula hoop and clear the area of all grass, rocks, leaves and debris that may interfere with a track being made or identified. Pull up grass by hand, use a rake, or ask an adult to use a weed eater. Bare ground is preferred, as it will provide the best tracking surface.
3. Sprinkle the flour over the area included within the hula hoop, trying to make it as smooth and even as possible, about one-half inch deep. This will take 3 to 5 pounds of flour per station. Use a whisk broom to smooth the surface if needed. Carefully remove the hula hoop from the area.
4. Place a small amount of bait near the center of the circle. Make knuckle imprints with two of your knuckles near the bait before leaving the site. This ensures that your surface is capable of imprinting any tracks.
5. Check the station for 2 consecutive mornings; refresh the flour and smooth out the surface as needed. The bait should only be replaced if it has been removed.
6. Record and identify any tracks observed each morning. Are they predators, rodents, or domestic animals? You are trying to evaluate the presence or absence of potential quail predators in the area. However, you may also get small lizards, rodents and even birds making tracks in your flour. It is fun to see how many of these you can identify as well.
7. Take photographs if needed to look up the tracks online or in a book. You can also submit your photos to our Facebook page for identification assistance at [www.facebook.com/wfscextension](http://www.facebook.com/wfscextension).
8. After checking for two mornings, note any changes in tracks and post your results or photos on our Facebook page. Or you can create a scrapbook to share with your friends, family and even landowners and wildlife biologist in your area.
9. Remember to clean up after your experiment and dispose of any remains in the trash.