

Wildlife Tracks

A Volunteer Guide to Learning the Tracks of Mammal
Species in the Beaver Hills

Snowshoe Hare

Lepus americanus



Look for the extremely large hind feet in front and the much smaller front feet behind



Red Squirrel

Sciurus vulgaris



Look for smaller front feet with four toes and larger hind feet with five toes arranged in a rectangular or bounding pattern.

Squirrel tracks will often lead straight to tree trunks.



Mice/Voles

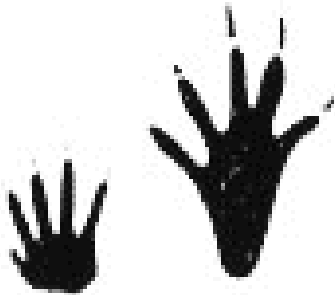


Look for very small prints arranged in a rectangular shape, often with tail-drag marks.



Muskrat

Ondatra zibethicus



Look for large, webbed hind feet and a side-to-side walking pattern.

Tail drag marks are present.



Beaver

Castor canadensis

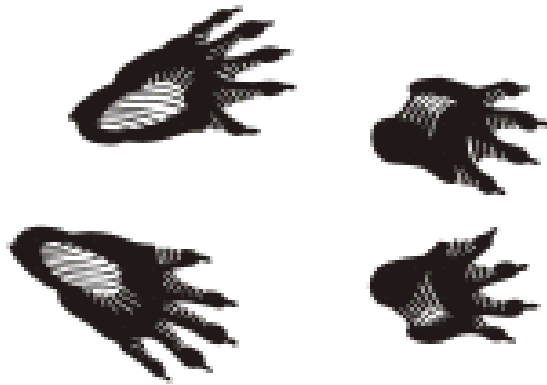


Similar to muskrat tracks, but much larger. Webbing is also more distinctive in beaver tracks, and the tail drag mark is thicker.



Porcupine

Erithizon dorsatum

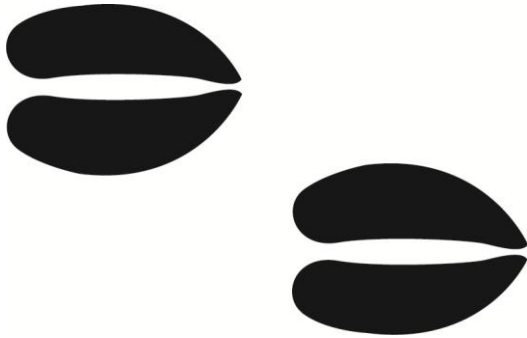


Look for large, oval shaped prints with distinct claw marks. In medium - deep snow, porcupine trails will show belly-drag and quill marks.



White-tailed/Mule Deer

Odocoileus sp.

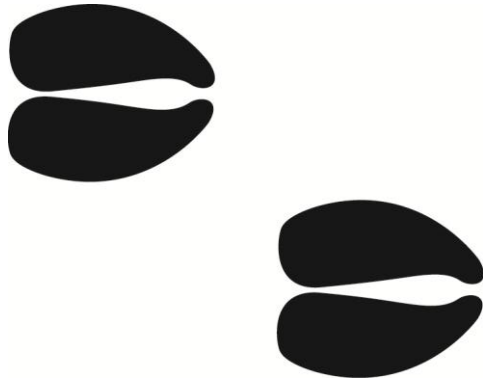


Smaller than moose or elk tracks, deer tracks have two distinct pointed toes. In deep snow, the hoof points drag across the top of the snow, leaving thin lines between tracks.



Elk

Cervus elaphus



Elk tracks are similar in shape to deer, but are nearly twice the size. Footprints are more spread out due to the elk's greater size, and will rarely show hoof-drag marks on top of the snow.



Moose

Alces alces



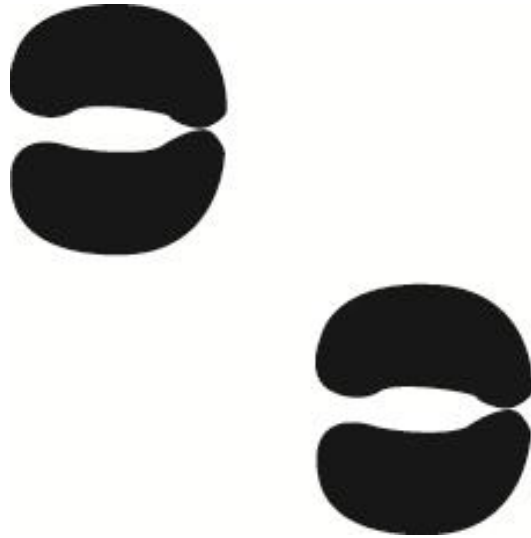
The largest deer-type tracks. Moose will have 2 dew-claw markings behind their main hoof in all but the thinnest layers of snow. Look for a track that is roughly the size of a human hand.

Footprints will be extremely spread out, owing to the species' long legs.



Bison

Bison bison



Look for large, round tracks about the size of a human hand.

Bison tracks will only be found in Elk Island National Park.



Weasels

Mustela sp.



Look for small prints with 5 toes on each foot and distinctive claw marks. Weasels will often move in a wandering pattern, or a rectangular-shaped bounding pattern if moving fast.



Marten

Martes americanus



Marten tracks resemble weasel tracks, but on a larger scale (though not as large as the fisher). The pad marks are distinctive if clear; if not, however, look for the overlapping track pattern and track size together.



Fisher

Martes pennanti



Look for similarly-sized front and hind paws, roughly as wide as a human hand and with distinctive claw marks.

Fishers are the largest weasels, and are very rare.



Mink

Mustela vison



Mink tracks have thicker pads than any other weasel, as well as longer toes. They are similar in size to marten tracks.



Skunk

Mephitis mephitis



Skunks have long hind feet and slightly smaller front feet. Look for the large claws on the front feet.



Badger

Taxidea taxus

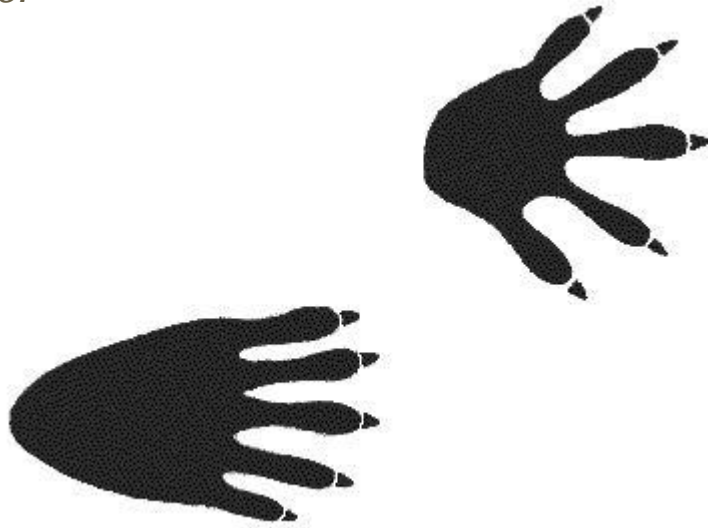


Both the front and hind paws of the badger are similar sized, but the extremely long claws on the front are the best way to identify this species.



Raccoon

Procyon lotor

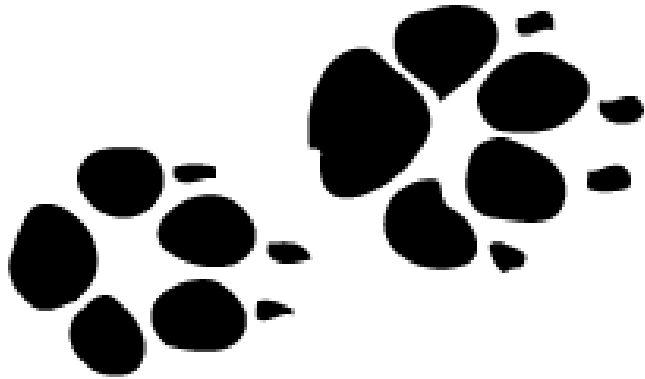


Raccoon tracks are easily identifies by the long fingers and toes on the paws. Look for distinct claw marks on both the front and hind prints.



Red Fox

Vulpes vulpes



Much smaller than coyote tracks, red fox prints also have a thinner hind pad than other members of the dog family.



Coyote

Canis latrans



Roughly the size of a medium-sized dog track, coyote tracks can be distinguished by their movement in mostly straight lines.

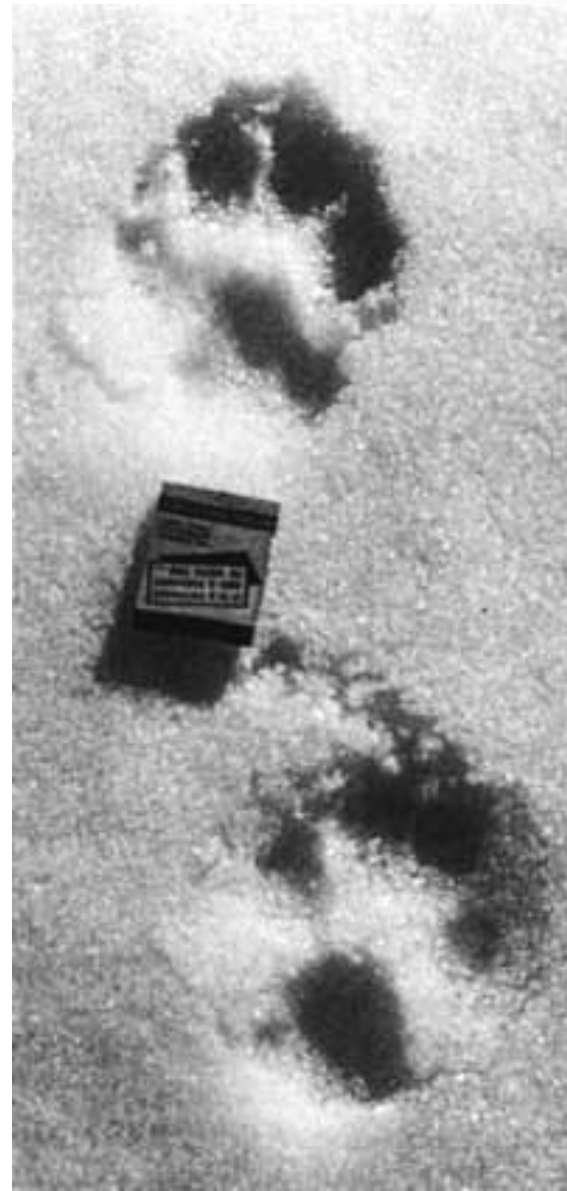


Wolf

Canis lupus



Similar in size and shape to the largest breeds of dogs, wolf tracks can be almost as large as a human hand. Unlike dogs, wolves will travel in a nearly straight line.



Lynx

Lynx canadensis



Lynx tracks are also roughly the same size as a large dog. They can be told apart due to the lack of any clawmarks and the blurry appearance of the track



Cougar

Puma concolor



FRONT



HIND

Cougar tracks, like lynx, will not have any claw marks, and are a more rounded shape than dogs. The tracks are extremely large, though very rare.



Black Bear

Ursus americanus



Bigger than any other track in the region, black bear tracks show a thick main pad with distinct toe and claw marks.



Safety First

- Travel in pairs
- Carry a cell phone
- Emergency no. 780-992-6389
- Ross Chapman's no.(Conservation biologist) 780-992-2975