

TRAIL OF CLUES:

Animal Tracks Adventure



Who goes there?

Step into nature and uncover the stories written in the ground!

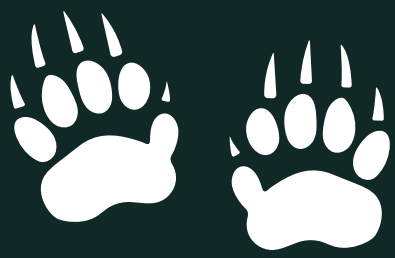
Follow the track signs along the Discovery Pond Trail to learn about eight fascinating species, the habitat they live in and the “evidence” they leave behind.



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PRAIRIE

American Badger



- 3-4" long
- Front prints broader and more rounded
- Five toes with visible claws
- Hind prints slightly narrower



Look in areas with loose soil where they dig extensive burrows and search for small mammals to eat.

Fun fact: Known for their powerful digging skills, they can dig up to 5-feet deep in search of prey!

Coyote



- 2.5-3" long
- Front prints slightly smaller than hind
- Four toes with visible claws



Look for their tracks in open areas or along trails where they hunt for small mammals.

Fun fact: Coyotes can run up to 40-miles per hour, allowing them to chase down prey with impressive speed!



POND

Muskrat



- 2-3" long
- Front prints smaller and more compact than hind
- Four toes on front feet, five toes on hind
- Tracks often accompanied by tail drag marks



Look for their tracks near muddy banks or in shallow water.

Fun fact: Muskrats can hold their breath for up to 15 minutes while swimming underwater!

Mink



- 2-3" long
- Front prints slightly smaller than hind
- Five toes with visible claws



Look for their tracks near water or along dense vegetation where they hunt for fish and small mammals.

Fun fact: Minks are excellent swimmers and can dive underwater to chase prey, holding their breath for up to a minute!



WOODLAND

Bobcat



- 2" wide
- Rounded prints
- Four toes with no claw marks due to hidden retractable claws



These are secretive and nocturnal cats. Their tracks are often the most you will ever see of them in woodlands and prairies.

Fun fact: A bobcat's distinctive "bobbed" tail gives this wild feline its name!

Virginia Opossum



- 1.5" wide, 2" long
- Five toes
- Hind prints resemble a hand due to an opposable thumb



Look for their tracks near water or under trees where they forage for food.

Fun fact: Virginia opossums are North America's only marsupial, carrying their young in a pouch like kangaroos!



Striped Skunk



- 1-2" long
- Hind prints slightly larger than front
- Five toes with visible claws



Look for their tracks near burrows or places where they can dig for insects and grubs.

Fun fact: Striped skunks do a warning “stomp dance” before spraying to give predators a chance to back away!

Raccoon



- 2-4" long
- Front prints smaller and more rounded
- Hind prints larger and elongated
- Five finger-like toes



Look for their tracks in mud or sand near streams and ponds.

Fun fact: Raccoons rinse their food in water, a behavior thought to enhance their sense of touch!



ANIMAL TRACK PATTERNS

Identifying animal tracks can be tricky. Look at the overall pattern of the tracks to help you determine who made them.

There are four main types of track patterns:

Walker - Badger, Coyote, Bobcat, Fox, Deer



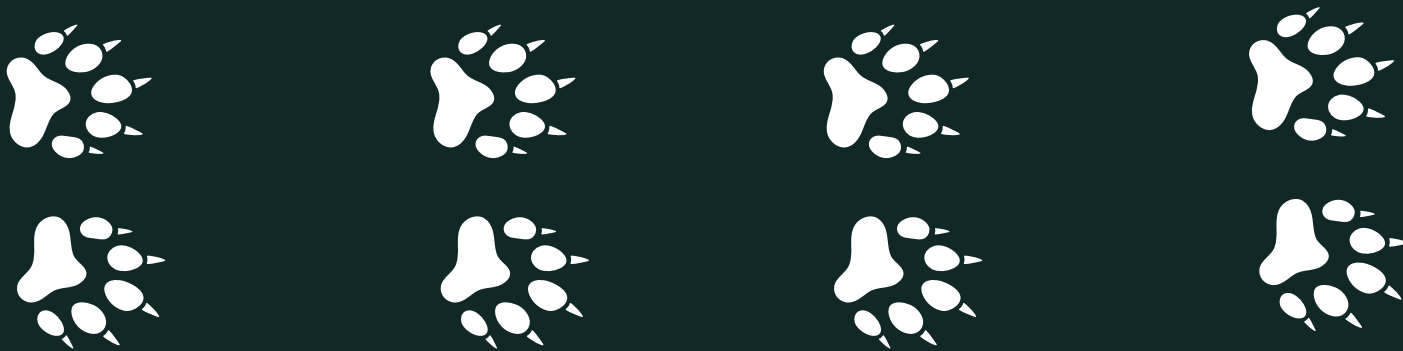
Waddler - Raccoon, Skunk, Muskrat, Opossum



Galloper - Rabbit, Squirrel, Mouse, Chipmunk



Bounder - Mink, River Otter, Weasel



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