



Discover Tracks

AT WINNIE PALMER NATURE RESERVE
AT SAINT VINCENT COLLEGE



WHEN TRACKING ANIMALS, WE MUST FIRST COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS MEANT BY WHAT WE CALL "TRACKS AND SIGN." ESSENTIALLY, TRACKS AND SIGN INCLUDE ANY KIND OF MARK OR DISTURBANCE LEFT BY THE PASSING AND ACTIVITY OF AN ANIMAL ON A LANDSCAPE.



American Black Bear
Ursus americanus

2.5-8"
long
W



American Mink
Neovison vison

1-2"
long
B



Eastern Cottontail Rabbit
Sylvilagus floridanus

0.5-3"
long
H



Eastern Coyote
Canis latrans var.

2.5-3.5"
long
S



Eastern Grey Squirrel
Sciurus carolinensis

0.5-2"
long
H



Grey Fox
Urocyon cinereoargenteus

2-3"
long
S



Groundhog
Marmota monax

1.5-2.5"
long
W



Raccoon
Procyon lotor

1-4"
long
W



Striped Skunk
Mephitis mephitis

0.5-2.5"
long
W



Virginia Opossum
Didelphis virginiana

1.5-2.5"
long
W



White-Tailed Deer
Odocoileus virginianus

1-4"
long
S



Wild Turkey
Meleagris gallopavo

3-4"
long
W



Track Patterns

S-STRAIGHT WALKER:

REAR PAW/HOOF WILL LAND IN THE SPOT WHERE FRONT PAW PREVIOUSLY FELL, LEAVING A ZIG-ZAG PATTERN.

W-WADDLERS:

MOVING ONE SIDE OF THE BODY TO THE OTHER, THE REAR FOOT DOES NOT LAND IN THE PRINT OF FRONT FOOT.

B-BOUNDERS:

PLACE FRONT FEET DOWN AND IN ONE MOTION, LEAP FORWARD BY LIFTING UP THEIR FRONT FEET AND PUTTING THEIR REAR FEET IN THE EXACT SPOT WHERE THE FRONT FEET PREVIOUSLY LANDED. THEIR TRACKS APPEAR AS TWO PAWS THAT FALL SIDE-BY-SIDE.

H-HOPPERS:

PLACING REAR FEET SLIGHTLY AHEAD OF FRONT FEET AND PUSHING OFF SO THEIR FRONT FEET LAND FIRST AND THEIR BACK FEET LAND IN FRONT.



THERE ARE ALWAYS INHERENT RISKS IN NATURE. PLEASE BE RESPECTFUL OF WILDLIFE AND CAUTIOUS OF ALL DANGERS. PLEASE REPORT ANY AND ALL SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY, DANGEROUS TRAILS, AND CONCERNS TO WPNR STAFF AT 724-537-5284. IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY OR INJURY, PLEASE CALL 911 OR SAINT VINCENT COLLEGE PUBLIC SAFETY AT 724-805-2311.



Exploring Tracks @ WPNR

6 IN.

5 IN.

4 IN.

3 IN.

2 IN.

1 IN.

0 IN.

More Than Just a Footprint... !!

FINDING THE TRACK PATTERN HELPS YOU NARROW DOWN THE ANIMAL, BUT THAT IS ONLY THE FIRST STEP OF IDENTIFICATION. GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH THE PRINT AND EXAMINE DETAILS.

WIDTH/LENGTH:

WIDTH AND LENGTH HELP YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CLOSELY RELATED ANIMALS.

NUMBER OF TOES:

THE NUMBER OF TOES IS IMPORTANT TO TELL THE MAJOR GROUPS OF ANIMALS APART.

NAILS:

NAILS ARE A HUGE FIND WHEN YOU CAN SEE THEM! CANINES TEND TO LEAVE A NAIL PRINT WHILE FELINES DON'T SINCE THEY CAN RETRACT THEIR NAILS.

DEPTH:

DEPTH IS USEFUL WHEN COMPARING TRACKS LEFT IN THE SAME SUBSTRATE AT THE SAME TIME. THE HEAVIER THE ANIMAL, THE DEEPER THE PRINT IT WILL LEAVE. BE CAREFUL WHEN COMPARING PRINTS FROM DIFFERENT LOCATIONS AND TIMES.

FRONT/REAR:

FRONT AND REAR PAWS MAY HAVE A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT SIZE AND SHAPE, DEPENDING ON THE ANIMAL. MOST GUIDEBOOKS WILL HAVE MEASUREMENTS FOR BOTH PRINTS.

WEBBING:

WEBBING IS USUALLY FOUND ON ANIMALS THAT FREQUENTLY SWIM IN THE WATER.

STRIDE AND STRADDLE:

STRIDE IS MEASURED FROM THE HEEL OF ONE PRINT TO THE HEEL OF THE OTHER PRINT ON THE SAME SIDE. STRADDLE IS THE MEASUREMENT OF THE WIDTH OF THE TRACK FROM THE OUTSIDE OF THE RIGHT TRACK TO THE OUTSIDE OF THE LEFT TRACK.

Other Ways to Track Wildlife

SIGNS OF FEEDING:

CARCASSES, CHEWED LEAVES, DRILLING DUST, FEATHERS, FUR AND BONES, STORES OF NUTS AND SEEDS, NIPPED TWIGS, OPENED NUTS, STRIPPED LOGS

HOMES:

BEAVER OR MUSKRAT LODGES, BIRD OR SQUIRREL NESTS, DENS IN GROUND, HOLES IN BANKS, MATTED DOWN VEGETATION

TRACKS AND TRAILS:

DEER TRAILS, SLIDES, RUNWAYS, TUNNELS IN SNOW

MARKINGS:

ANTLER RUBS, CLAW MARKS ON TREES, DIGGING IN DIRT, DUST BATHS, WALLOWS AND SCRAPES ON GROUND

SOUNDS:

BIRD AND FROG CALLS, MAMMAL OR INSECT NOISES

BODY WASTE & CASTOFFS:

BONES, CLUMPS OF FUR, FEATHERS, PELLETS OF UNDIGESTED BONES AND HAIR, SCAT, SNAKESKIN, WHITEWASH



Tools of the Trade

-HAND LENS
-FIELD GUIDES
-CAMERA
-NOTEBOOK AND PEN
-RULER



Visit the Learning Center Barn during business hours to borrow field equipment, Allagash packs, and identification tools to use along with this guide and look for additional WPNR Discover and Explore Guides at the Wayside Exhibit next to barn!



Winnie Palmer
Nature Reserve
At Saint Vincent College

744 WALZER WAY
LATROBE, PA 15650

PHONE: 724-537-5284
FAX: 724-537-5286
WWW.WPNR.ORG

