

## Mammal Outside Activity

### Animal Tracks

Many mammals are big, but we still struggle to see them in the wild because they are excellent at being sneaky. Instead of trying to look for the animal itself, we can look for signs that the animal has been visiting our yard. Sometimes they leave feathers, fur, or even...poop! Most of the time, they will leave nothing but footprints, or tracks. We can look for these tracks and identify what animals are around!

In this activity, you will learn what the tracks of different mammals look like and have a chance to see if they have been visiting your backyard.

#### Materials:

- Chalk or paper and markers
- Ruler
- Magnifying glass (optional)

#### Directions:

- Look at the animal tracks included here. See if you can point out different features of each one. How many toes are there? Do they have claws? Do they have paws or hooves? How big are they?
- See if you can draw the tracks on your driveway with chalk or on a piece of paper. They don't have to be perfect!
- Take turns drawing tracks and see if another person can guess what animal made the track you drew.
- Head out into your backyard and walk very carefully. Look for tracks in the mud and dirt! If you have a magnifying glass, bring it along. It could help you identify different tracks.
- Take picture of what you find to compare to the tracks you have been drawing. Who has been visiting your yard?

# IDENTIFYING ANIMAL TRACKS

An illustrated report by Craig Schaffer

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**Not an exact science**  
Animal tracks may vary depending on size, shape, conditions on the ground and movement of the animal. The tracks are not shown to scale.

TRACK PATTERN	TRACK	TRACK	TRACK PATTERN	TRACK	TRACK	TRACK PATTERN	TRACK	TRACK
	<b>White-tailed deer</b> 2 1/2-3 inches			<b>Raccoon</b> 4 inches 2 1/2			<b>Striped skunk</b> 1 1/2 inches	
								<b>Beaver</b> 6 inches 3
	<b>Dog</b> 2 1/2-4 inches			<b>Porcupine</b> 3 inches 2 1/2				<b>Opossum</b> 1 1/2 inches 2
								<b>Muskrat</b> 1 1/2 inches 1
	<b>Red fox</b> 2 inches 2 1/4			<b>Black bear</b> 7-9 inches 4 1/2				
	<b>Bobcat</b> 2 inches			<b>Woodchuck</b> 2 1/4 inches 2				
								<b>Gray squirrel</b> 2 1/4 inches 1 1/2
	<b>Coyote</b> 2 1/2 inches 2 1/2			<b>Snowshoe hare</b> 5 inches 1 1/2				<b>White-footed mouse</b> 1/4 inches 1/4
								<b>Cottontail rabbit</b> 4 inches 1
	<b>Cat</b> 1-1 1/4 inch							
	<b>Mink</b> 1 1/2 inches							
	<b>Fisher</b> 2 1/2 inches							
	<b>Weasel</b> 1/2-1 inch							

Source: Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife

<https://www.greenbelly.co/pages/animal-tracks-identification-guide>