

Animal tracks

Identifying animals from their tracks isn't as difficult as you might think. It's possible to learn how to do this really quickly using these few tips to help you.

The best place to look for animal tracks is on soft ground. After rain or snow is a good time, or try looking close to a river where soft mud can be found even in dry conditions.

Once you have found the right area take a close look around for prints. The main pad and digits of a pawprint might be clearly in view.

Badger

A badger track is quite easy to recognise. Look for five digits and a large kidney-shaped pad.

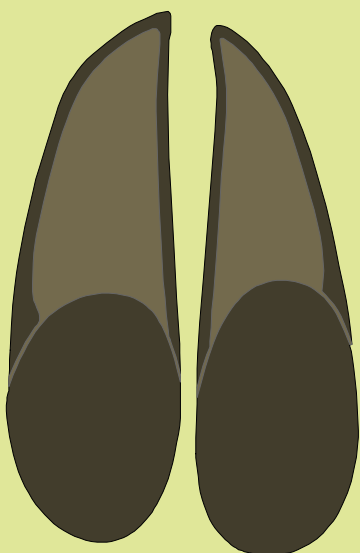
Badgers keep to well-worn trails, so it should be easy to make regular tracking sessions.



right rear

right front

Deer



Fallow deer (buck)



Red deer (hind)

A deer gives itself away as it is cloven hoofed, and so only has two toe digits.



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Fox



right front

The fox does not keep to regular trails. A fox track is very dog-like, but far more compact. The print has four digits with the outer two curved towards the inner ones.



Otter

A close inspection of the ground near a river or waterway might reveal another five-digit mammal with an almost round pad. In very soft soils you might see evidence of webbing between the digits.

If you see this then you have found an otter track.



right front



right rear

Animal tracks

Small mammals

Small mammal and rabbit tracks are most easily found close to their burrows or feeding areas. The rabbit track is easy to identify as the hind legs leave long exaggerated imprints.

Have a look and study the differences between the tracks left by the brown rat, grey squirrel and rabbit.

