

TRACK FAST FACTS

Compare trackways:

- walkers/trotters, waddlers, hoppers, bounders
- wild animals walk with purpose
- dogs meander

Look at several tracks of the same animal to determine the species.

Felids will walk on elevated objects – logs, rocks, ledges, hills.

Bobcats will travel from cover to cover.

Bobcats will not emerge from dens immediately after a snow.

Deer beds may show leg joints, hoof marks.

Porcupines may leave a trough in the snow.

- it may be wavy
- it may show quill marks
- it will most likely show a tail drag

Otters and sometimes mink will leave slide marks

Otters will slide during travel, and also just for fun

Some animals double register – the hind foot placed in the front foot track.

Look for four as opposed to five toes registering.

Different substrates will register differently for the same animal.

Felids will register four, asymmetrical toe pads, like the alignment of our fingers.

- most always without claws
- the back pad will appear as a chunky “M” – think “meow”

Canids will register four, symmetrical toe pads.

- most always claws will appear
- an “X” may be drawn in the portion between the toe pads and the back pad

Dogs will most always display a rounder track with short, blunt claws.

- the track will be spread or splayed

Coyotes will most always display a more oval track with long, sharp claws.

- the outer two claws may not register

Rabbit and squirrel tracks may appear similar.

- some rabbit tracks will show only three tracks, whereas squirrels will most always show four tracks

- squirrel tracks may disappear in the snow as the squirrel leaves the ground to climb a tree

- some squirrel tracks will lead to a dig in the snow as they search for nuts, rabbits are eating what is above the snow