

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.

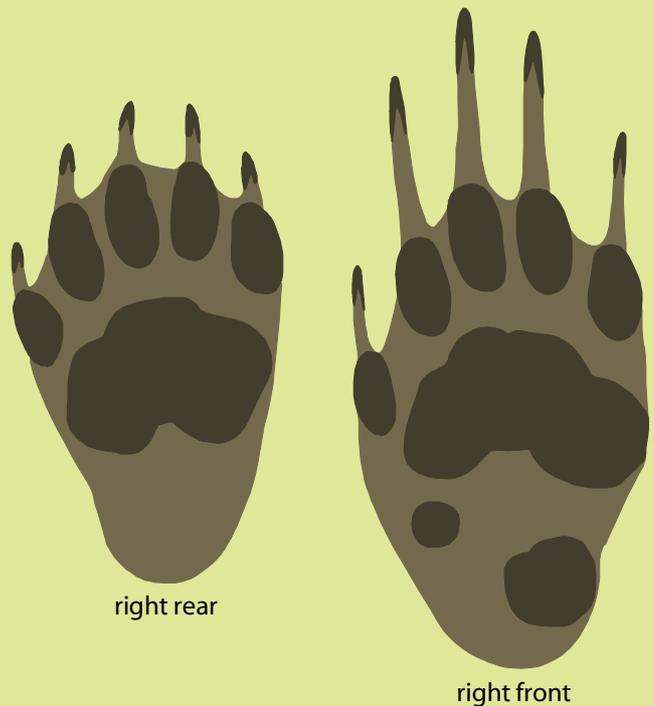
The best place to look for animal tracks is on soft ground. After rain or snow is a good time, or try looking close to a river where soft mud can be found even in dry conditions.

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.

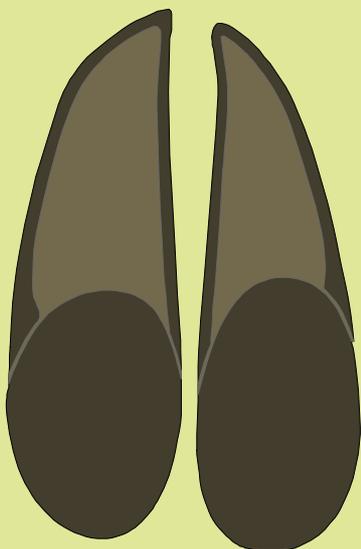
Badgers keep to well-worn trails, so it should be easy to make regular tracking sessions.



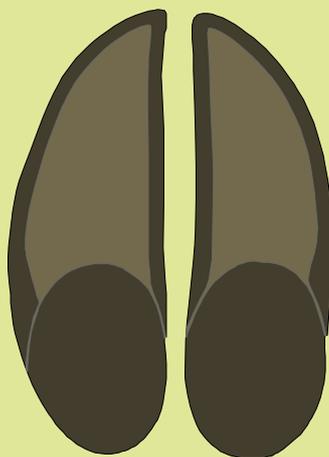
right rear

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.



Animal tracks

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



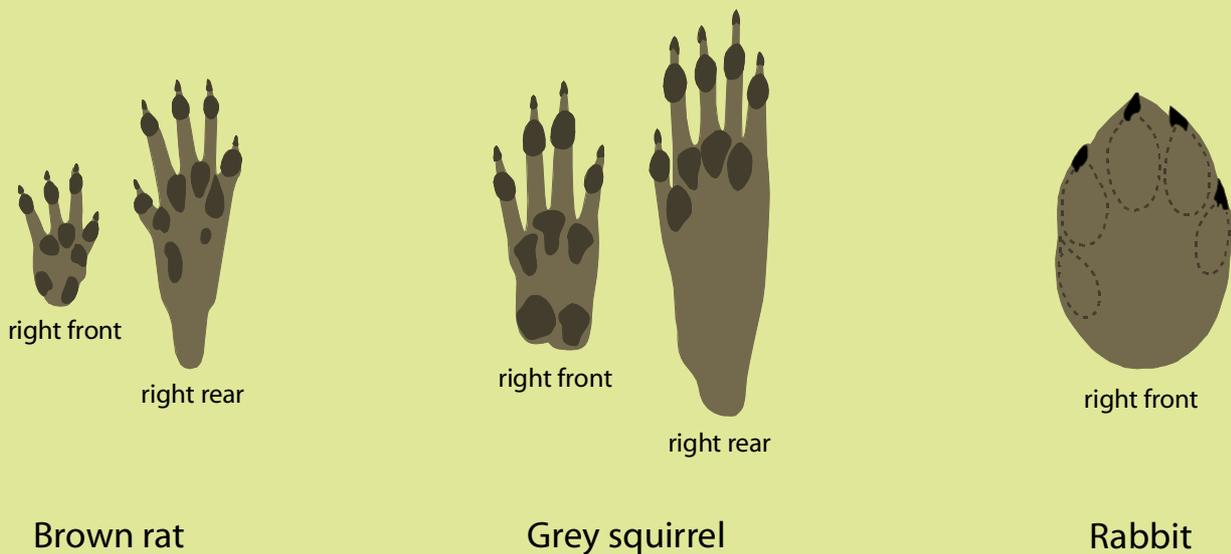
right rear

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.

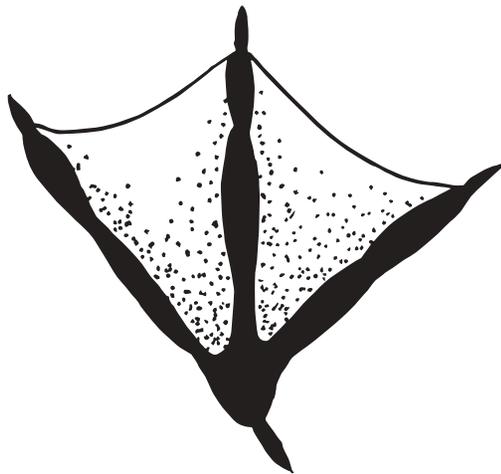




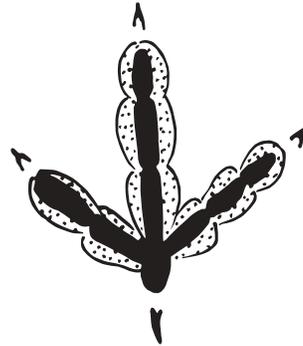
Wildsquare

animal tracks

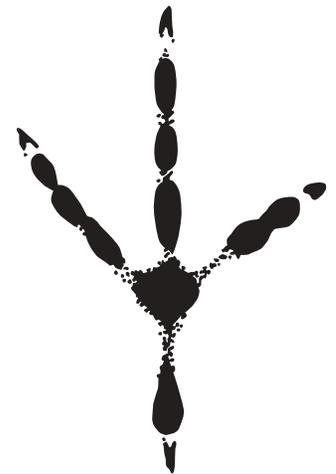
MALLARD DUCK



COOT



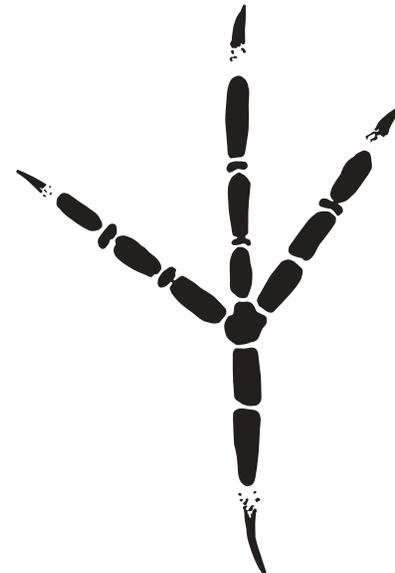
WOODPIGEON



HOUSE SPARROW



CARRION CROW



RSPB Wildlife Explorers is the junior membership of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds



Wildsquare

animal tracks

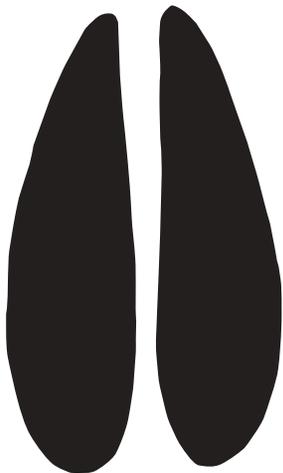
DOMESTIC DOG



DOMESTIC CAT



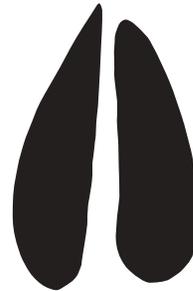
FALLOW DEER



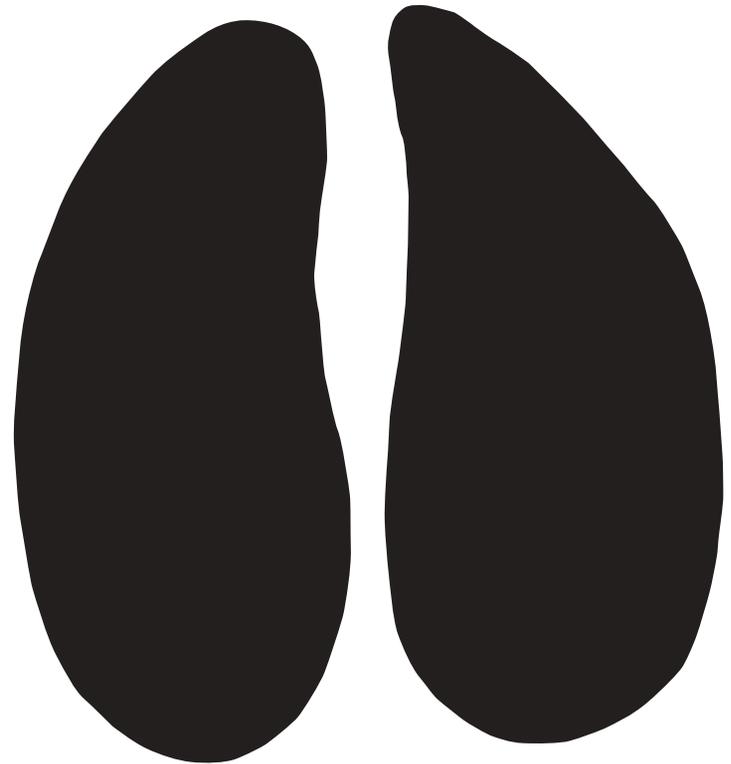
FALLOW DEER
THEIR FEET SPLAY
OUTWARDS WHEN THEY
RUN - OR WHEN THEY
WALK ON SOFT MUD



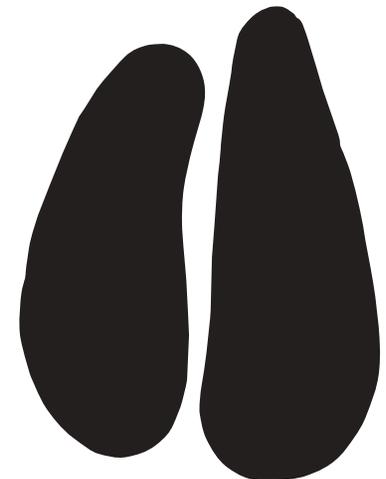
MUNTJAC



COW



SHEEP

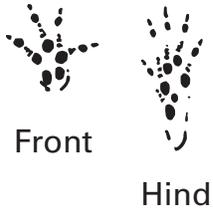




Wildsquare

animal tracks

WOOD MOUSE



Front

Hind

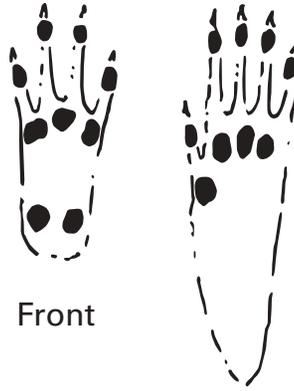
HEDGEHOG



Front

Hind

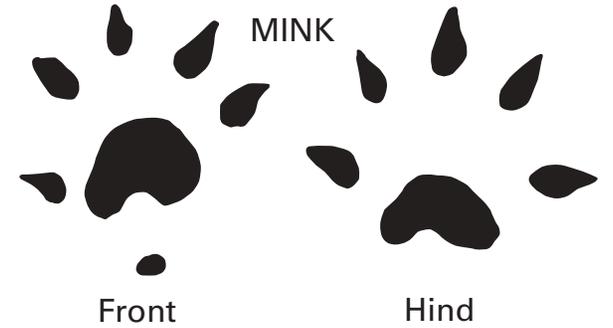
SQUIRREL



Front

Hind

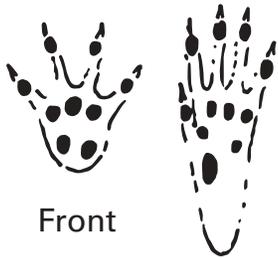
MINK



Front

Hind

RAT



Front

Hind

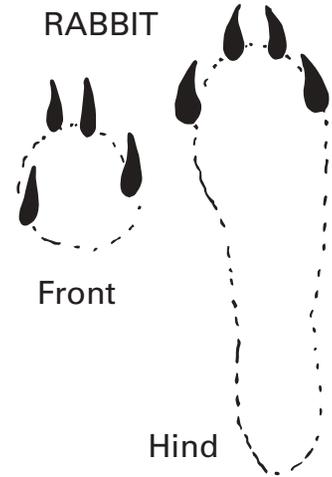
WEASEL



Front

Hind

RABBIT



Front

Hind



Front

OTTER



Hind

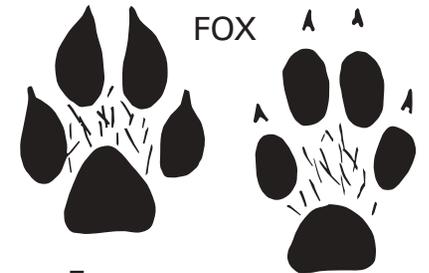
BADGER



Front

Hind

FOX



Front

Hind