

# Follow that footprint, paw print, hoof print ...



Follow that footprint, paw print, hoof print...Have you ever tracked someone's footprints in the sand or snow? It can be kind of a mystery figuring out where someone was going and what they were doing. By looking carefully at animal tracks you can learn more about their comings and goings too.

Winter is the perfect time to put on your detective hat and follow some animal tracks. Try tracking in the Habitat today and see how many different types of tracks you can find.

Here are some hints to get you started.



Think about what kind of animals live in the area. This will help you narrow the field of identification. It's a pretty good bet you'll find squirrel, bird, and maybe rabbit tracks but not bear or moose!!



Four toes on each of the front and hind feet means you're looking at a track from the dog family (fox, wolf, coyote and the neighborhood dog), the cat family (the neighborhood cat) or the rabbit family (cottontail in our area). Does the paw print have small triangular marks in front of it? If yes, those are claw marks. Raccoons, skunks, coyotes, foxes, and dogs will often leave claw marks. Cats, on the other hand, retract their claws when they walk or run. So, you won't usually find claw marks with house cats.



Four toes on the front foot and five toes on the hind foot means it's a rodent (mice, voles, chipmunks, squirrels, woodchucks).