MAINE ANIMAL TRACKS
(Direction of travel of all tracks is to the right)

1. CANADA LYNX
2. BOBCAT
3. HOUSE CAT
4. RED FOX
5. DOG
6. COYOTE
7. BLACK BEAR
8. GRAY SQUIRREL
9. RED SQUIRREL
10. CHIPMUNK
11. WEASEL
12. FISHER
13. MARTEN
14. MINK
15. BEAVER
16. COTTONTAIL RABBIT
17. SNOWSHOE RABBIT
18. RACCOON
19. SKUNK
20. PORCUPINE
21. WOODCHUCK
22. OTTER
23. MUSKRAT
24. WHITETAIL DEER
25. MOOSE
26. WILD TURKEY
27. PHEASANT
28. RUFFED GROUSE

Originally prepared by Klir Beck
Revised by Cindy House; 1975
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All in for the Maine Outdoors
mefishwildlife.com
All animals must eat to survive. After digesting their food, they rid their bodies of waste by leaving droppings, called scat. Scat is a sign that gives us clues about local animals.

### Herbivores
- Coyote and bear scat often contain plant material and berries.

### Carnivores
- Some have hair and fur in their scat. Coyote and bear scat often contain plant material and berries.

### Raptors
- They often leave scat piles that are larger, in clumps or cords, and may contain hair and fur. Coyote and bear scat often contain plant material and berries.

Tracks can tell a story about where the animal travelled from and where it is now going. It gives us clues about where the animal makes its home.

#### Hints to identifying a track:
- Does the track show claws?
- How many digits?
- What is the overall shape of the track?
- Measure the Stride: distance from heel of one foot to heel of the other foot
- Measure the Straddle: the width of the track pattern between left and right heels
- What is the Direction of the track?
- Type of substrate (soil, mud, sand, snow) in which the track was made
- Identify the Habitat in which the track was observed
- If you photograph the track, put an object of a known size or length next to the track (a pocket knife, pen, quarter, pack of gum) to give size reference to the track in the photograph

Then, if you can identify the gait by the appearance of the trail, i.e., trotting, bounding, galloping, etc., you are already on your way to identifying the maker!

### Make A Plaster Cast

Track casts of many animals are now available from commercial supply houses that deal in scientific and natural history equipment models, but many people prefer to make their own. The standard procedure is outlined below and should be varied according to air temperature and the amount of time you have.

1. Find a sharp, clean-cut footprint of an animal in mud, sand, or snow and stand a cardboard collar around it. Mix plaster of Paris and water until just thin enough to pour, and fill the track to the top of the cardboard collar. Sink a couple of small twigs lengthwise into the plaster to help hold it all together. If the temperature is below freezing, mist the track with a water spray bottle so it freezes and hardens before you fill it with the plaster. Allow the plaster to stand about fifteen minutes to harden, then pick the plaster up, collar and all, and wrap it carefully in newspaper to prevent damage while it is still slightly soft. When it is thoroughly dry and hard, brush off any sand or mud that may be clinging to the track, and you will have a raised cast of the foot print.

2. To make the reverse, grease the first cast, mist the track with a water spray bottle so it freezes and hardens before you fill it with the plaster. Fill the track to the top of the cardboard collar. Sink a couple of small twigs lengthwise into the plaster to help hold it all together. If the temperature is below freezing, mist the track with a water spray bottle so it freezes and hardens before you fill it with the plaster. Allow the plaster to stand about fifteen minutes to harden, then pick the plaster up, collar and all, and wrap it carefully in newspaper to prevent damage while it is still slightly soft. When it is thoroughly dry and hard, brush off any sand or mud that may be clinging to the track, and you will have a raised cast of the foot print.

3. The gallop is typical of most rabbits, hares, squirrels, and mice. These animals touch down with their front feet, and then follow through with their hind legs landing in front of the forefeet. The action looks like that of “leapfrog,” and the trail would look like this:

4. Wide-bodied, heavy animals such as bear, raccoon, skunk, muskrat, beaver, opossum, and porcupine tend to lumber or waddle by placing each foot in its own distinctive spot. Their tracks would look like this:

5. The ability to interpret animal tracks and traces takes practice. Here are some tips to help you hone your powers of observation and instincts as a nature detective:

- Canines, felines, and members of the deer family generally walk or trot. The trail looks like an almost perfectly straight line of prints, because the animal places its hind foot into the print just made by the front foot. The tracks should look like this:

- Members of the weasel family generally bound, a gait in which they place both forefeet together on the ground, then swing their hind feet into nearly the same prints. The trail made by a weasel would look like this:

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