

# Reading Tracks through Foot Patterns

**DEEP NATURE GUIDES**

Tracking, Tending and Questing in Community

## **What's the overall shape of the track?**

Round, oval, boxy, etc

## **How many toes do I see?**

This refers to what normally shows up in tracks. This is different often than actual foot morphology. Many mammals' fifth toe and some birds' fourth toe is vestigial and does not imprint in tracks. This list is not necessarily a list of anatomical toes, but a list of typical track imprints.

## **What's the shape of the toes?**

Round, oval, long, short, and the shape of how the toes imprint together: parallel, star-like, arch, etc.

## **What's the size and shape of the palm pad?**

Fused pad or multiple pads? Lobes, geometric shape?

## **Is there a heel pad showing?**

If yes, one or two? Heel shape?

## **What is the ratio of area of all toes to area of palm pad?**

Proportionally large palm pad, or relatively small like a toe pad?

## **How would I describe the shape of the space between toes and palm pad, the negative space?**

C shaped, X shaped, etc?

## **Asymmetry?**

Basically symmetric, or clearly asymmetric?

## **Do I see claws?**

Describe them. Sharp or blunt? Straight or curved? Long or short?

## **Is there hair or webbing present in these tracks?**

Lots of hair between toe and palm pads will imprint with more negative space, as in red fox. Fully hairy feet, as in hares and rabbits, leave tracks with no clear toe or palm pads. River otters sometimes show webbing in rear.

## **Starter for Toe List Project:**

**1 Toe:** Horse

**2 Toes:** Black-tailed Deer

**3 Toes:** Game Birds such as quail

**4 Toes Front and Hind:** Coyote

**4 Toes Front, 5 Toes Hind:** Deer Mouse

**5 Toes Front & Hind:** Raccoon