

Animal Tracks

Animals are so fun to watch! You can learn so much from just watching them. Some animals are tricky to watch, which makes it hard to learn about them. Looking at tracks is a way to learn about animals without seeing them.



What is a track?

A track is another word for footprint. Tracks can also be made by tails and other parts of the body. See below to find out more!

Photo by Zachary Cullen



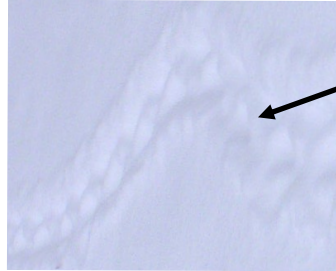
Tracks can also be slide marks. Otters often lay on their bellies and slide on snow or mud! Otter slides are often close to water.

Take a closer look at this otter track in the slide!

Otters have five toes but sometimes you can only see four.

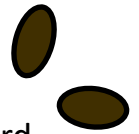
This owl found a safe place for his leftovers under a fallen tree!

Photo by Zachary Cullen



Porcupines drag their tails and bellies in the deep snow. This will leave a big trench with drag markings along with their footprints.

They are also pigeon-toed, which means their toes are pointed inward.



This will cause them to wobble as they walk. Footprints left in the snow will show the toes pointed at each other.



When owls hunt bigger animals such as rabbits and skunks, they often have leftovers they can't finish.

They will find a good hiding place so they can save them for another meal.

Take a closer look!

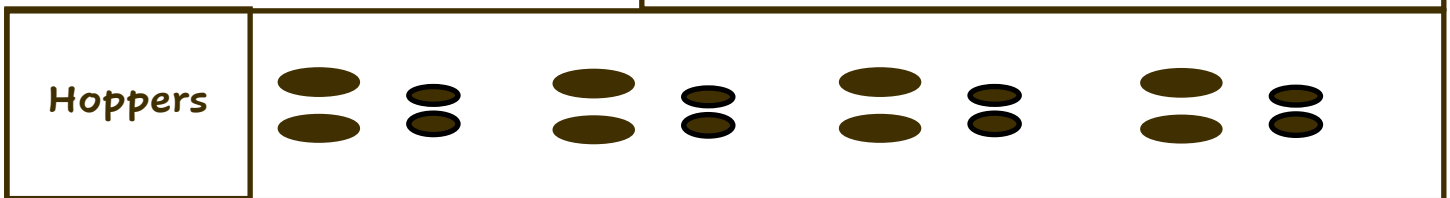
Left behind in the snow are drag marks and wing prints from the owl.

Deer sleep on the ground to keep warm. This picture is showing a deer bending on its knees.

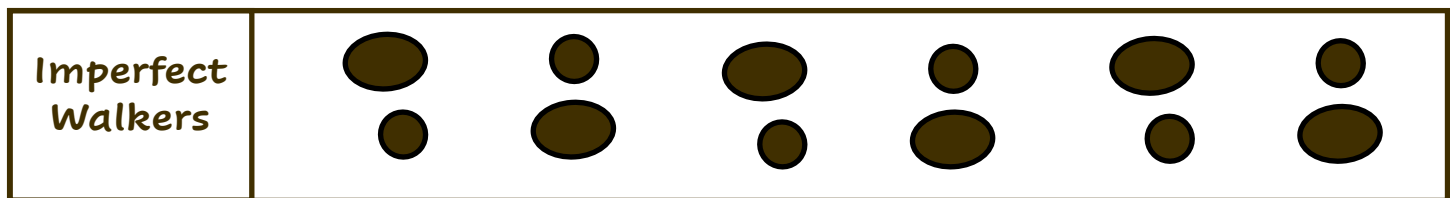


What Track Is That?

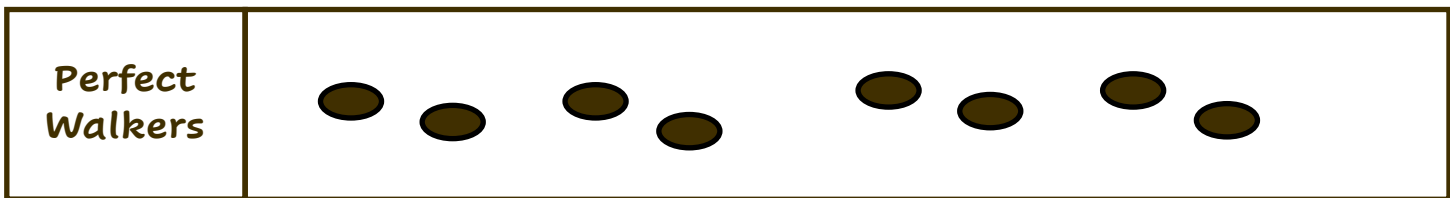
Did you know that there are patterns to tracks? You can use the patterns to help identify an animal track. Below are four common types of animal track patterns. This will help you explore tracks.



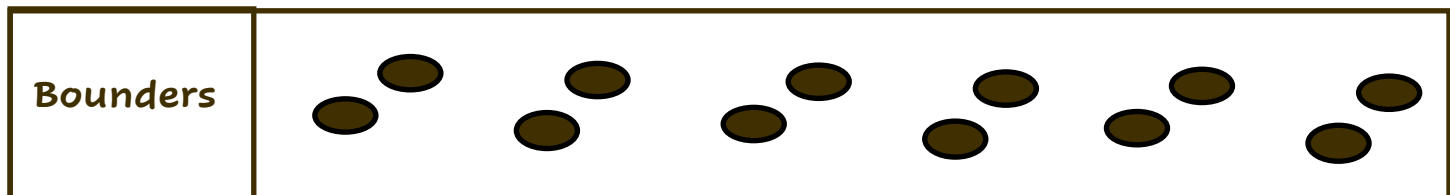
Squirrels, rabbits, and mice are all hoppers. Hoppers move two feet at a time. The hind feet land ahead of the front feet.



Porcupines, beavers, skunks, and bears are examples of imperfect walkers. These animals are husky and heavy. They normally have a waddle to their walk. Some animals will even make trenches in the snow.



Deer, moose, foxes, and coyotes are examples of perfect walkers. Perfect walkers create tracks in two straight lines. The right paws make one line, and the left paws make a second line. Both lines are close to one another. When a perfect walker is moving, they will often step on a previous track print made from the front paw.



Fishers, otters, mink, and weasels are examples of bounders. They move with leaping strides, moving both hind feet and front feet together at the same time creating a bounding movement.