

More Traces for You to Find

Doodlebugs

'Doodlebug' is the nickname for the larva antlion. It digs funnel-shaped pits in the sand and grabs ants and other insects that fall in. Once it is finished eating, it tosses out the rest of the insect carcass.



Antlion Pit



Antlion Larva



Antlion Adult

Antlion larva eventually go through the process of metamorphosis. Like caterpillars becoming moths, the antlion cocoons itself and transforms into its adult form, resembling a dragonfly.

Leave No Trace

Some of the traces you find might not be from natural sources. It's important for people to leave as little trace as possible.

Use this checklist to make sure you leave no trace.

☐ Dog Poop

Dog poop is no fun to step on and can spread illness or parasites. Always pick up after your dog.



☐ Stay on the Trail

Walking off trail can damage sensitive ecosystems. Be sure to stay on designated trails.



☐ Litter

Litter is trash that is discarded anywhere other than designated garbage bins. Trash takes a long time to decompose and can injure wildlife. If you pack it in, pack it out.



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Tracks & Traces

Tracking things in nature is fun! Hey TRACK, what kind of footprint is that?

Well KIP, judging by the size and shape of these tracks and scat, I think a raccoon was here last night.



No animal can pass through an area without leaving traces. As you walk down the trail, use this brochure to discover the tracks and traces you can find around Gainesville.



WARNING:

Animal scat can contain parasites that are dangerous to humans. If you find scat, DO NOT handle it.

Raccoon

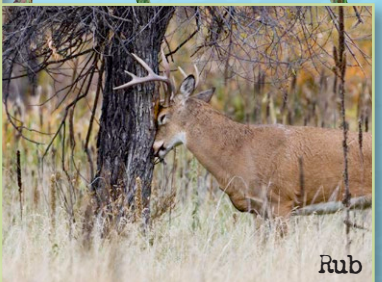
Raccoon tracks have five toes on their front and rear paws and resemble miniature human-baby hand prints.



Because raccoons are **omnivores** (they eat both plants and animals), their scat can vary in size, shape, and color. As a rule of thumb, if you can't identify the scat, treat it as raccoon scat and **DO NOT** disturb it.

White-Tailed Deer

Deer tracks are usually the easiest to find because their hard hooves leave better impressions than the soft paws of other animals. Look for heart shaped prints. The point of the heart points in the direction of travel.



Found in clusters, a deer scat pellet has a dimple on one end and a point on the opposite end. A **deer rub** is a place where male deer scrape their antlers on the bark of a tree. Look for trees with a smooth barkless patch somewhere between the base and about four feet up the trunk.

Red-Shouldered Hawk

Red-shouldered hawks don't spend much time on the ground so looking for signs can be challenging. Look on the ground for black and white banded flight feathers that they occasionally drop.



Their nests can be found high up, resembling a tangle of twigs in the crotch of trees. One of the best ways to detect a red-shouldered hawk is to listen for its distinctive 'kee-yah' call.

Armadillo

Armadillos leave distinctive long-toed prints. Though they have four toes on their front paws, only the middle two usually leave a print. Likewise, only the middle three of their five hind-paw toes tend to leave a print.



Other ways to spot signs of armadillo activity are to look for fresh dig marks where they forage for insects. Because of all the soil they eat while foraging, their small, rounded scat can contain a lot of soil as well as bits of insects. You might mistake the scat for balls of dirt.

Grey Squirrel

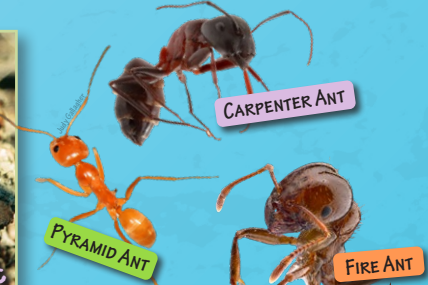
Grey squirrel's smaller front paws have four toes while the larger back paws have five toes. Their tracks clearly show claws on the front of the toes.



Squirrels eat the seeds from pine cones, hickory nuts, maple samaras, and acorns, leaving leftovers on the ground. Squirrel scat is shaped like small, dark, oval pellets.

Ants

Carpenter ants build their nests in old wood. Rotting logs are a favorite and the soft wood is easy to tunnel through. Look for piles of wood dust beside logs or holes in the logs themselves.



Pyramid ants build tunnels and chambers underground. They bring the soil to the surface and deposit it in entrance mounds shaped like volcanoes that are 2-4 inches across. **Fire ants** are aggressive and invasive, building large formless mounds. Watch out, their bites are painful!