

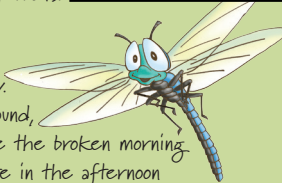
Tips for Finding Tracks

Finding tracks is easier if you know when, where and how to look.

Where to Look: Since all animals need to visit water sources, look for their tracks along streams, creeks, ponds, lakes or even puddles. The soft sand and wet mud makes it easier for animals to leave good tracks. Look at how well my track shows up in that moist sand. Another place to look for tracks is in the loose, dry soils along the edges of trails.



When to Look: The absolute best time to look for tracks is after a light snow. However, since it doesn't snow year round, look for tracks early in the day where the broken morning dew gives away the animals path or late in the afternoon when the angle of the sun casts shadows in the tracks.



Use a Tracking Stick: Tracking sticks are helpful tools that you can use to track animals. To make a tracking stick, find a branch and place the end of it at the heel of a track and measure the distance to the next track. Make a mark on the stick of that distance. When the trail becomes hard to follow, use the mark on the stick to determine where the next track should be located.

I have my tracking stick, and I'm ready to get tracking. Grab a stick... let's go!

People and Their Tracks

When people travel through the Park, they leave tracks and traces too. Look behind you... do you see any traces of your presence here? Our role in a healthy ecosystem is to minimize the impact of our traces. When visiting our parks and forests, remember to take only pictures and leave only tracks.



TRACK and **KIP**
want You to become a
Trail **TRACKer**



Thank you for joining us on the trail today.

We want you to join the Trail **TRACKer** Team. It's fun, healthy and free.

Best of all, by keeping TRACK of your trails on our website, you can earn prizes. For more information about the Trail TRACKer Team, other TRACK Trail adventures near you, or for general information about the

Kids in Parks program, please visit our website at:

www.kidsinparks.com

The TRACK Trail program is part of the larger **Kids in Parks** initiative sponsored by the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation. Working together with Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park, the National Park Foundation and other partners throughout the community, our mission is to increase physical activity of children and their families, improve nutritional choices, and get kids outdoors.

Kids in Parks...

for the Health of our Kids, our Communities and our Parks.



Chimney Rock's TRACK Trail Partners

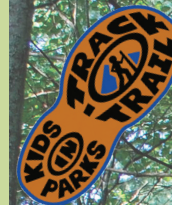


Founding Kids in Parks Partners



BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina Foundation

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association



CHIMNEY ROCK'S Tracks & Traces

Tracking things in nature sure is fun. TRACK and Grady are the experts... let's go with them and see what we can find.

Hey Grady, judging by the size and smell of this track, I think we have found a fox.

After taking a closer look, I'd say you're right TRACK.



WARNING:

Raccoon scat may contain the eggs of raccoon roundworm which can be fatal to humans.

If you find scat, DO NOT handle it.

Tracks

Coming across animal tracks on a hike is exciting. However, it's more exciting when you know what animal's tracks you've found. Use the pictures below to help identify a few of the more common tracks that can be found here at Chimney Rock.



Raccoons have five toes on their front and rear paws, and their tracks look like mini baby hand and foot prints. Raccoon tracks can often be found near water.

Deer tracks are usually the easiest to find because their hard hooves leave better impressions than the soft paws of other animals. Deer like the meadow outside Grady's Discovery Den, and their tracks are often found there.



Bears leave large palm prints with five toes. Their tracks are sometimes capped with claw marks and, like our feet, their hind tracks leave a heel impression.

Can you count to Three? Wild turkey and other birds can. As male turkeys strut around, they often puff themselves up to look bigger and more attractive to the female turkeys. When doing the display, they often drag their wing tips on the ground leaving additional tracks for you to find.



As you walk down the trail, imagine what wild animals may have traveled the path. Look for their tracks in soft sand and muddy areas. When you find a track, what kind of animal do you think might have left it? What direction was it traveling? See how far you can track it without leaving the trail.

Scat

Scat, the scientific name for animal poop, can help us identify what types of animals are living in the forest. The scat's size, shape and contents can provide clues as to which type of animal went "number two" on the trail.



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

With their clustered pellets typically containing a dimple on one end and a point on the opposite end, deer scat is easily identifiable. Depending on what they've eaten, their scat pellets will either be in loose piles or clumped together in bigger blobs.



Like raccoons, bears are omnivores, and their scats will vary in appearance depending on the time of year and what they have eaten. In spring, bear scat is filled with grasses, and in summer their scat is filled with berry seeds.

Wild turkey scats are usually large and tubular with a slight curve on one end. Because their diets vary throughout the year depending on what foods are available, their scats also vary in appearance and sometimes look like formless blobs.



When you find a pile of scat, try to guess what type of animal may have left it. But remember, don't touch or disturb it. Is the scat from an herbivore (scat will be made up of plant material), carnivore (scat will contain animal bones and fur), or an omnivore (scat will have both plant and animal parts)?

Traces

Besides their scat and tracks, animals leave other signs of their presence in the forest. From the trails they make, to the food scraps they leave... you can find signs of animals everywhere. How many "other" traces of animals can you find along the trail today?



Different bird species build unique nests. Some roost in the cavities of trees, some live in bushes and others build intricate nests. If you were a bird, where would you build your nest? On the edge of a cliff like the peregrine falcon, or in the canopy of a tall tree like the red-tailed hawk.

The large oblong holes in this tree were created by pileated woodpeckers in search of carpenter ants and bark beetles. Other types of woodpeckers make different sized and shaped holes. Can you find any trees with traces that woodpeckers left on them?



The contents of scat piles are not the only clues we have of what animals eat. Many animals leave traces of their food choices. Squirrels and chipmunks leave fragmented nuts and pine cones, while bears flatten thickets of berry bushes in search of the best berries.

Finding a snake track is difficult, but occasionally we find other traces of their presence. A snake's shed is a great find. Snakes shed their old skin as they grow larger. As a snake grows, it forms a new skin under the old one and then slithers out of its old skin, leaving the shed behind.



No animal can pass through an area without leaving traces. The more time you spend in nature, the more aware you will become of that evidence. As you walk down the trail, slow down and look for woodpecker holes in trees or for animal trails, two of the easiest traces to find.