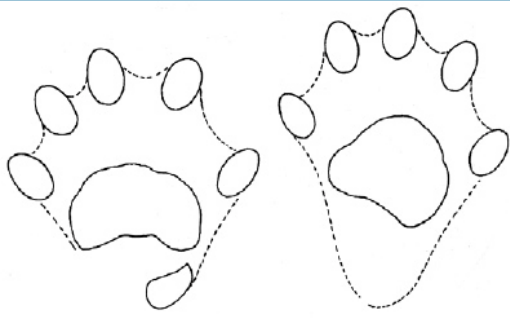


Field Guide to Riverside Animal Tracks and Signs



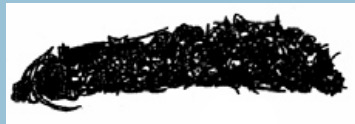
Identifying animals from their tracks isn't as difficult as you may think. Here are some tips to help you out. Animal tracks are best observed when the ground is covered in snow, or soft mud alongside a river bank.

Otter



Right fore print

Right hind print



Otter spraint

Look closely at the ground around rivers for a print with 5 digits and an almost round pad.

If the ground is very soft you may see evidence of webbing between the digits.

Spraints smell sweet, like jasmine tea. They are distinctive greenish black/grey

Mink



Right fore print
hard ground

Right hind print
soft ground



Mink scat

Tracks can be found along riverbanks, streams and lakes.

Their tracks show toes on both front and hind feet along with pad markings. The stride length of their tracks is 12-26 inches apart and both hind and forefeet prints almost touch.

Mink scats smell like burnt rubber and look greenish black/brown

Badger



Right hind print



Badger tracks are quite easy to identify. Look for five digits and a large kidney-shaped pad.

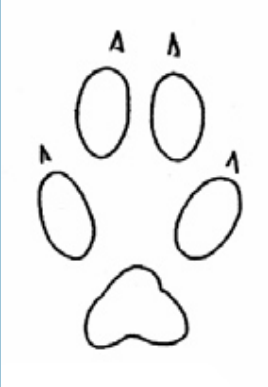
Badgers have powerful front feet and large claws for digging which are easy to see in their footprints.

Badgers usually stick to the same trails, so it should be easy to make regular tracking sessions

Field Guide to Riverside Animal Tracks and Signs



Fox



Right fore print



Fox tracks are similar to dog tracks, but far more compact. The print has four digits with the outer two curved towards the inner ones.

The tracks show the claws and the pads clearly and is symmetrical making it impossible to tell between a left and right foot.

Water Vole



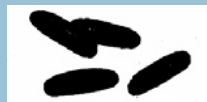
Right hind print Left fore print



The difference in size between the tracks of the fore-foot and hind-foot (between 20-25mm long) is quite distinctive.

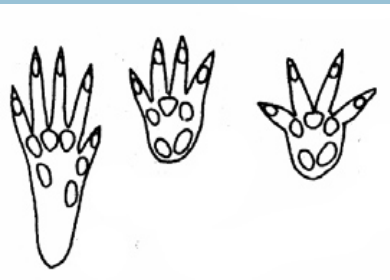
Tracks are very similar to those of the Brown Rat so it helps to be familiar with those to tell the two apart.

Water Vole droppings are cylindrical shaped and odourless.



Water Vole droppings

Brown Rat



Left hind and fore
On hard ground

Left fore
on soft ground



There are a number of pads that are visible in the tracks. The claw marks usually show.

The hind footprint has a long heel, between 30-45mm, which is often visible.

Droppings have a strong foul smell of rancid food. They are blackish in colour