

# TRACKS & SIGNS

## MOUSE

### PRINT DESCRIPTION

**Size: Front Tracks 1/4" / Hind Tracks 1/2"**

When you encounter a small mammal's footprints in the snow, it is not so easy to know exactly which species left the tracks. They are most likely left by mice, voles, or shrews because they all live above and below the snow during winter. The front tracks of mice and voles have four toes, while their hind tracks have five toes. Shrews are different with five toes on all feet. All of them can leave tail marks but shrews and voles have shorter tails than mice leaving less obvious or no markings. Mice can also hold their tails up, disrupting the tail mark.



### PATTERN OF TRACKS

**Gallopers:** Mice move by hopping, their smaller front feet are placed first, followed by the larger hind feet, which land ahead of the front feet. Other animals that move using this pattern include rabbits, voles, shrews, chipmunks, squirrels, and hares. Voles and shrews leave a variety of track patterns depending on their speed and the depth of the snow. They sometimes hop like mice but other times they might just trot and leave an alternate-track trail.

### OTHER SIGNS

**Other signs can help to confirm the presence of mice.** The tracks might lead to areas where mice are more active such as snow tunnels, holes, or bushes where there may be mouse droppings. Mouse scat is typically small and cylindrical, resembling dark grains of rice with pointed ends. Fresh droppings are black and turn gray-brown when old.

**ALDO LEOPOLD**  
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