

TRACKS & SIGNS

MUSKRAT

PRINT DESCRIPTION

Size: Front Tracks 1 ½" long / Hind Tracks 2-3" long

Muskrat's front tracks show four slender, widespread toes with long claws. The front feet actually have a fifth rudimentary toe that is too small to show on the tracks, but may leave a claw mark. Hind tracks are bigger than front tracks and clearly show five toes. Sometimes, muskrats leave tail drag marks in an "s"-like pattern when they move at a walking pace and in a straight line when they are bounding.



PATTERN OF TRACKS

Waddlers: Animals with this pattern tend to walk by moving one side of the body then the other. Other animals that move using this pattern include raccoons, porcupines, beavers, black bears, opossums, woodchucks, and skunks. Muskrat track patterns can vary greatly if they switch from walking to bounding. Most of the time, muskrats choose to move at a fast walking pace. In this case, the tracks left by the front and hind feet of the same side land close to each other with a stride of approximately 8". The stride is the distance between tracks left by the same foot.

OTHER SIGNS

Other signs can help you to confirm the presence of muskrats. They may build dome-shaped lodges made from vegetation and mud. They also have burrows along pond banks, lake shores, and ditches. Their feces are green to gray (or even black) oval pellets and are usually found on grooming locations such as partially-submerged logs or exposed rocks. The consistency of the scat is semi-liquid and mostly contains plant matter. Partially-eaten vegetation or piles of opened and discarded freshwater mussel shells, can also indicate the presence of muskrats.