Order: Didelphimorphia

Family: Didelphidae

*Didelphis virginiana*- Virginia opossum

**Range**: Statewide

**Habitat**: Generalist, especially wooded areas along or near streams and lakeshores. Seeks shelter in old, uninhabited dens of other species

**Track**: On their front and back feet there are five elongated toes. In some cases, their tracks look star shaped, due to a splayed foot posture. The back foot has an opposable thumb which lacks a nail.

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[Opossum Track Illustration]

Stride: 6 to 10 inches
Front: 1 1/2" L X 2" W
Hind: 2 1/2" L X 2 1/2" W

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[Link to Virginia Opossum on Wikipedia]

(http://www.bear-tracker.com/opossum.html)
Order: Cingulata

Family: Dasypodidae

*Dasypus novemcinctus* - nine-banded armadillo

**Range:** Scattered records, mostly in the southern part of Illinois

**Habitat:** woodland, scrub, brushy areas, fields,

**Track:** Track is often referred to as “hoof-like,” it digs for insects so disrupted mounds may be a sign of a nine-banded armadillo

![Image of armadillo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Nine-banded_Armadillo.jpg)

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**Figure 7: Armadillo sign**

a. Tracks in detail, somewhat unusual in that all the toes are showing (Florida).
b. Droppings, about ¾ natural size.
c. Typical leaping gait of a traveling armadillo (Florida).
Order: Lagomorpha

Family: Leporidae

*Sylvilagus floridanus* - eastern cottontail

**Range:** statewide

**Habitat:** mixed cover, forest edges, grassy areas, farmland, pastures, hedgerows - avoid areas without nearby cover

**Track:** In snow, there are rarely toe or pad marks due to the cottontail not having large toe pads and their foot being entirely covered by hair. The track is recognizable by showing the two hind feet next to each other in front of the two front feet which are one after the other.

Front tracks: 1-1 7/8” long by ¾-1 3/8” wide

Hind tracks: 1 1/4- 3 1/4” long by 7/8- 1 13/17” wide

http://www.nhptv.org/natureworks/easterncottontail.htm

http://www.biokids.umich.edu/critters/Sylvilagus_floridanus/pictures/tracks/

http://wildwoodtracking.com/mammals/easterncottontailrabbit/index.html
Order: Lagomorpha

Family: Leporidae

*Sylvilagus aquaticus*- swamp rabbit

**Range:** southern third of the state

**Habitat:** cane thickets, brush and wooded areas around marshes and swamps, typically found close to water

**Track:** Similar to the cottontail with the track showing the two hind feet next to each other in front of the two front feet which are one after the other. Swamp rabbits also often leave scat piles on the tops of logs or other debris.

  Front tracks: smaller than 4-4 ½” long, rounded

  Hind tracks: 4-4 1/2 " long

http://www.hunter-ed.com/wildlife/small_mammals.htm
Order: Rodentia

Family: Geomyidae

*Geomys bursarius*- plains pocket gopher

**Range:** band across central Illinois, south and east of the Illinois and Kankakee rivers

**Habitat:** well-drained soil where burrowing is possible, mostly in open habitats

**Track:** 5 toes on front and back feet, claw marks common, burrows distinguishable by the earth cap they create to plug the entrance of their burrows

Front: 1 ½- 1 5/8” long and 7/8- 1” wide

Hind: 1 1/8- 1 ¼” long and 1 1/8- 1 ¼” wide

Although none of the tracks to the left are from *Geomys bursarius*, they are from closely related species and their tracks should be similar.

http://www.ksr.ku.edu/libres/mammals_of_kansas/geomys-burs.html

Murie O. J. and M. Elbroch
Order: Rodentia

Family: Castoridae

*Castor canadensis*- American beaver

**Range:** statewide

**Habitat:** aquatic habitat

**Track:** Beavers build easily identifiable dams and lodges. High quality beaver tracks are difficult to find since the tail often obscures them; regardless, the large, webbed hind feet are very distinctive.

http://www.bear-tracker.com/beaver.html
Order: Rodentia

Family: Sciuridae

*Tamias striatus*- eastern chipmunk

**Range:** statewide

**Habitat:** wooded habitat

**Track:** Four front and five back toes, claws not always seen, generally run on their toes so foot pads not always seen, hind feet show in front of front feet.

http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/pictures/Tamias_striatus.html

Order: Rodentia

Family: Sciuridae

*Marmota monax* - woodchuck (ground hog)

**Range:** statewide

**Habitat:** variety of habitats, especially forest edge

**Track:** Four-toed front foot, five hind toes, full hind foot doesn’t always leave a print. Since they hibernate tracks are not expected during the winter

http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/freepubs/pdfs/uh092.pdf

http://m.extension.illinois.edu/wildlife/directory_show.cfm?species=woodchuck
Order: Rodentia

Family: Sciuridae

(Ground Squirrels)

*Spermophilus tridecemlineatus* - thirteen-lined ground squirrel

*Poliocitellus franklinii* – Franklin’s ground squirrel

**Range:** both found in the northern 2/3 of the state

**Habitat:** short grasslands, including mowed lawns, roadsides, etc. (Thirteen-lined ground squirrel) or grassy habitats of intermediate height, avoid short, mowed areas (Franklin’s ground squirrel)

**Track:** ground squirrels hibernate so tracks will not be seen in snow; general habitat different than that of tree squirrels (ground squirrels less likely to be found in forests); ground squirrel claws are longer and straighter than those of tree squirrels,
Order: Rodentia

Family: Sciuridae

(Tree squirrels)

Sciurus niger- fox squirrel

Sciurus carolinensis- eastern gray squirrel

Range: statewide (fox squirrel), or formerly widespread in Illinois but now mostly where extensive forest or riparian forests remain, plus often in cities and towns (eastern gray squirrel)

Habitat: forest edges, woodlands, open forests, better than gray squirrels at living in regions with lot of open habitat (fox squirrel); or woodlands, esp. riparian forests with dense understory, urban/suburban areas (eastern gray squirrel)

Track: The two are similar enough to be discussed as a group, very similar to the red squirrel but larger, none of the tree squirrels have a prescribed track pattern, as their gait varies immensely depending on occasion

Hind feet

Front feet
Order: Rodentia

Family: Sciuridae

*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus* - red squirrel

**Range:** small area near Kankakee River in northeastern Illinois

**Habitat:** mostly coniferous forest, but also live in hardwood forests in other states

**Track:** Four toes on front feet, five on hind, tends to keeps the forefeet parallel when running (not always true), heel pad of hind feet doesn’t always show
Order: Rodentia

Family: Cricetidae

_Ondatra zibethicus_- muskrat

**Range:** statewide

**Habitat:** wetlands, including marshes, ponds, drainage ditches, creeks, streams, etc. Build houses in marshes, but live in burrows in banks in many habitats and also live in beaver dams during winter

**Track:** found mostly near water, both feet have five toes although one toe on the front is small and rarely shows

http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/muskrats.html

http://icwdm.org/inspection/tracks.asp

www.dnr.state.oh.us/

http://www.nature-watch.com/muskrat-track-p-76.html
Order: Carnivora

Family: Canidae

*Canis latrans* - coyote

**Range:** statewide

**Habitat:** generalist

**Track:** The front foot is larger than the hind foot and the track pattern is extremely variable depending on the gait of the animal (walk, trot, lope, etc.), nail marks usually seen.

- Front: 2 ¼ - 2 ¾” long and 1 ¾ - 2 3/8” wide
- Hind: 2 - 2 3/8” long and 1 ½ - 1 7/8” wide

[Image of coyote tracks]
Order: Carnivora

Family: Canidae

*Vulpes vulpes* - red fox

**Range:** statewide

**Habitat:** prefer open country, grasslands, brush-land near wooded areas, forest edges; usually not in dense woods or forest

**Track:** Heel pad appears to lie far behind the toes, if high quality track- heel pad has a transverse, arched, raised bar protruding from the hair if the foot

http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/red-fox/

http://www.bear-tracker.com/redfox.html
Order: Carnivora

Family: Canidae

_Urocyon cinereoargenteus_- gray fox

**Range:** statewide

**Habitat:** mostly forests, sometimes found in brushy habitats and pastures near woods; good tree climbers

**Track:** similar in appearance to coyote tracks but much smaller, tracks make a relatively straight line which distinguishes them from domestic dog tracks

- Front tracks: 1 ¼ - 1 7/8” long, 1 3/8 – 1 ½” wide
- Hind tracks: 1 1/8 – 1 3/4” long, 1 1/8 – 1 ½” wide

![Gray Fox track](http://www.bear-tracker.com/grayfox.html)
Order: Carnivora

Family: Procyonidae

*Procyon lotor*- raccoon

**Range:** statewide

**Habitat:** Varieties of habitats as long as water and a good den site are nearby (don’t dig their own dens, use hollow trees etc.)

**Track:** Five toes on front and hind feet, plantigrade animal leaving a miniature bear-like print, similar walking pattern to opossum making identification difficult on bad prints

Trail Pattern
Order: Carnivora

Family: Mustelidae

(Weasels)

*Mustela nivalis*- least weasel

*Mustela frenata*- long-tailed weasel

**Range:** northern ½ of Illinois (Least weasel) or statewide (long-tailed weasel)

**Habitat:** mostly in grassy habitats, can be found in a variety of habitat types but generally avoids woodlands (least weasel); or variety of habitats, both grassy and forested (long-tailed weasel)

**Track:** Five toes on both front and hind feet, although both don’t always show, tracks usually appear as a line of twin prints, the least and long-tailed weasels have similar prints with size and range being the determining factor between the two (least weasels are considerably smaller than long-tailed)
Order: Carnivora

Family: Mustelidae

*Neovison vison* – American mink

**Range:** statewide

**Habitat:** mostly associated with water, including streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, drainage ditches, etc.

**Track:** characteristic “double print” pattern, makes air holes in ice to forage under water during the winter, tracks of males are larger than those of females and may be discernible with skill

http://www.bear-tracker.com/mink.html
Order: Carnivora

Family: Mustelidae

*Taxidea taxis*- American badger

**Range:** Statewide except for a few southern counties

**Habitat:** open country

**Track:** Powerful front claws used for digging apparent in good prints, their burrows are elliptical shaped and often have claw marks on the walls, “pigeon toed” prints

http://ontariobadgers.com/aboutbadgers.html

http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/Home/species_a_to_z/SpeciesGuideIndex/badger/tabid/6807/Default.aspx
Order: Carnivora

Family: Mustelidae

*Lontra canadensis* - North American river otter

**Range:** approximately statewide

**Habitat:** rivers, streams, lakes or other aquatic habitats

**Track:** similar to mink but larger, webbing on back feet doesn’t always show

  Signs: slides during the winter on ice and snow and latrine sites common

http://www.bear-tracker.com/otter.html
Order: Carnivora

Family: Mephitidae

*Mephitis mephitis*- striped skunk

**Range:** statewide

**Habitat:** variety of habitats, more abundant in open country but also in wooded habitats

**Track:** Five toes and pad present on front and hind feet, large claw marks easily identifiable on most prints

http://www.bear-tracker.com/stskunk.html
Order: Carnivora
Family: Felidae

*Lynx rufus* - bobcat

**Range:** most common in southern Illinois, but probably statewide distribution

**Habitat:** wooded habitats, especially with bluffs

**Track:** more rounded than coyote or dog, no claw marks seen (retractable claws), pad shape distinct with two lobes nearest to toe pads and three lobes on the side furthest from the toes
Order: Artiodactyla

Family: Cervidae

*Odocoileus virginianus* - white-tailed deer

**Range:** statewide

**Habitat:** variety of habitats, but mostly wooded areas

**Track:** “Heart shaped” hoof print, only wild ungulate in the state

http://www.aboutwhitetaileddeer.com/

http://hunting.about.com/library/weekly/bldeertrack.htm
Non-wildlife Prints

Domestic dog:

Domestic cat: