

## Tracks

Animals tracks in the snow are very fun to find and learn about. The track trail can tell much about the animal's habits, from finding feeding areas to bedding sites. A great book to check out is [Mammal Tracks and Scat](#) by Lynn Levine.



Fox



Mouse



Raccoon



Bear



Rabbit

## Hoar Frost on the Ground

Crystal formations around small holes are signs of warm blooded animals breathing underground in their burrow.



## Browse Line

A browse line is the area where deer can reach and have eaten all the leaves, branches and new growth off of the trees and shrubs. Usually there is a clear line between where deer have eaten and where they have not. Also, look for freshly nipped buds and branches for deer activity.



There are many more animal signs to see if you pay attention to the details. Hike on various trails in various habitats and look for other signs. Take pictures and share them with us at [Tanya.hall@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:Tanya.hall@dcr.virginia.gov).



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**Hungry Mother State Park**

# Winter Animal Signs Self-Guided Hike



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## Stripped Bark and Rub Marks

Look at the base of trees for shredded bark, then look at the entire tree. Deep oval holes in the bark are signs of Pileated Woodpecker activity. Other woodpeckers make smaller rounder holes or even small holes in circular rings around the trunk, which is a sign of a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Bark that is stripped in wide patches along the trunks are made by buck deer rubbing the velvet off their antlers. Look up for scratches made by bear sharpening their claws.



## Middens



Look at base of tree stumps or trees. A pile of shredded pinecones at the base or nut shells broken up is a midden mound or feeding area for squirrels.

## Pellets



Owl



Crow

Look near the base of trees to find bird pellets. Pellets are the indigestible parts of a meal that are regurgitated by owls and other birds that contain the fur, feathers, bones and casings of animals that birds have eaten.

## Scat

All animals leave behind scat. Different shapes and textures of scat tell a lot about the animal that left it. Rabbit scat is small, hard yellowish-brown balls. Fox scat is pointed at one end and full of fur, feathers, and bones. A very large pile of scat with berries is usually bear, and coyote scat can turn white over time due to the bones eaten.



## Bedding Areas

Compacted grasses in a circle are usually a place where deer, coyote or foxes rested for the night or took cover during a storm. Other spots that look like bedding areas are plunge spots where birds of prey dropped to catch prey and “angel prints” where birds took off from the ground.



## Disturbed Snow or Leaves



This is a sign of an animal looking for nuts and other food items along the ground's surface. Turkey, deer, squirrels, foxes and coyote are known to perform this behavior.