

Animal Tracks of the Waterberg

This guide will help you identify the main tracks you will find in the Waterberg area.



Name: _____

The four basic principles of tracking

1. Identify the track and establish a definite starting point and direction of travel
2. Anticipate the animal's movement and be flexible
3. Interpret the tracks and signs well before attempting to gain speed
4. Preserve the tracks so that if the direction is lost, your last known track location is not destroyed, and you can try again

The different sorts of tracks

- Ground spoor – tracks left on the ground, such as footprints and droppings
- Aerial spoor – indications that an animal has moved through the area such as dust or dew knocked off grass stems, blood or saliva on leaves and branches

Important tracking skills and techniques

1. Use of the sun's position

Always try and keep the tracks you are following between you and the sun. This allows the spoor to cast a shadow that makes it a lot easier to follow. Test this practically in the field

2. Look ahead

Looking down will make your tracking slower and will make you less aware of your surroundings. Look ahead and try and establish the direction and movement of the animal without having to locate each track individually

3. Direction of track

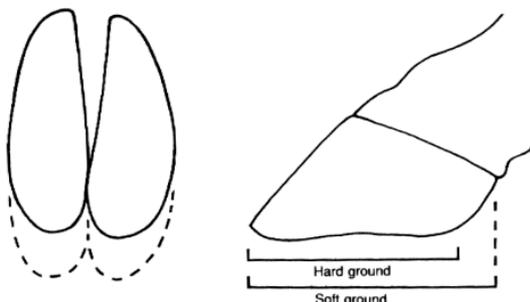
Use more than just one track to try and ascertain the direction that an animal is moving

4. Think ahead

Where would the animal most likely be moving. Look at the direction of movement and try to predict where the animal is most likely to go. Could it be heading towards water or to some shade or an area of good grazing?

5. Substrate

The sort of soil the animal is walking on will make a big difference to the appearance of the tracks. The softer the ground the deeper and longer lasting the track will be. Take this into consideration when following a set of tracks. When last did it rain? (This can be used to establish the age of the track). Has the wind been blowing? (This will make the track look old quite quickly)

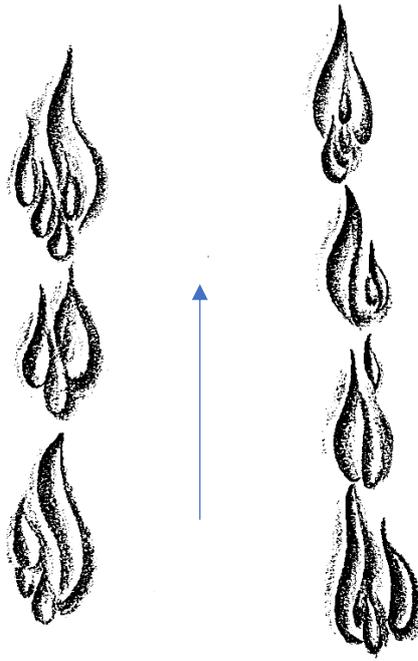


(Left) showing how an animal's tracks (a kudu in this example) may appear larger or smaller depending on how hard the ground is. (Right) showing the structure of a kudu hoof

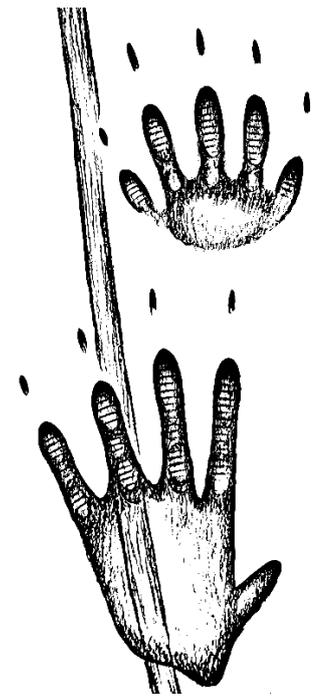
Reptiles



Snake track (size depends on length of snake)



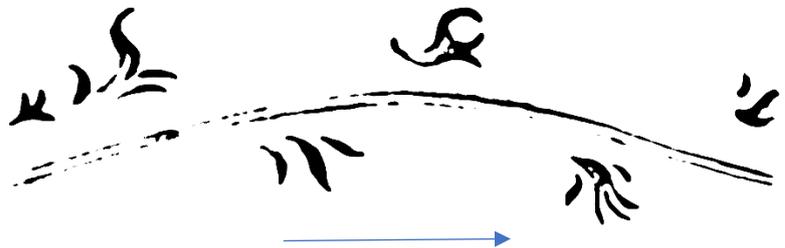
Tortoise in loose sand



Monitor lizard (12 cm)

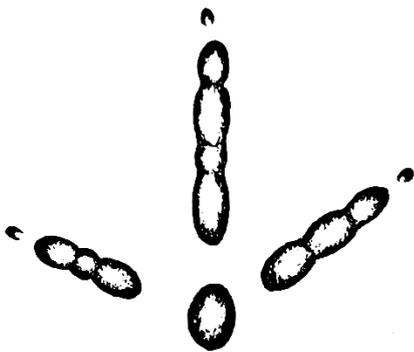


Tortoise (up to 5cm)



Typical lizard or skink (about 5 cm wide)

Birds



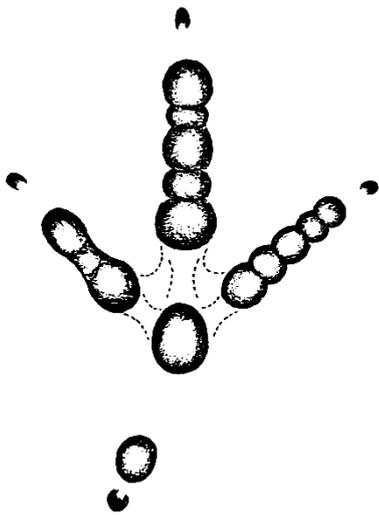
Crowned Lapwing (3.5 cm)



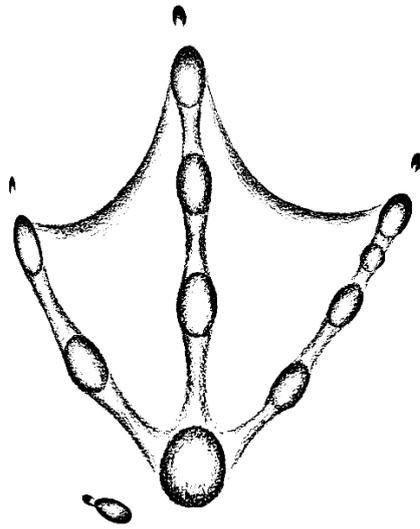
Cape Turtle Dove (4.5 cm)



Spotted Thicknee (4 cm)



Helmeted Guineafowl (10cm)

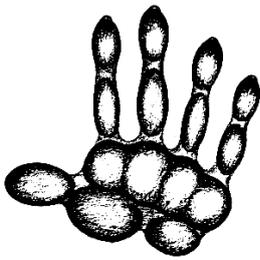


Egyptian Goose (8 cm)

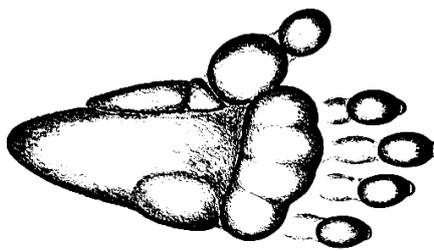


Laughing dove trail

Primates

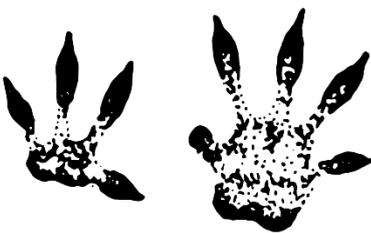


Chacma Baboon (F = 8 cm, R = 14 cm)

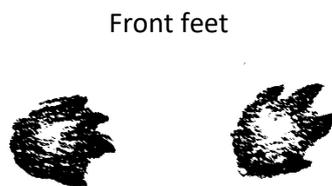


Vervet Monkey (8 - 9.5 cm)

Rodents and Hares



Rats and mice (± 1 cm)



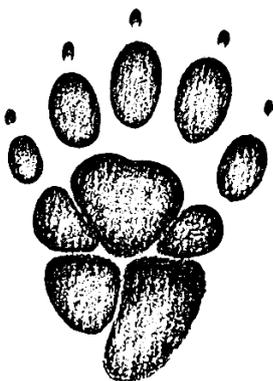
Front feet



Back feet



Scrub hare



Porcupine (R = 8cm)



Springhare (F and R = 5 cm)



Tree Squirrel (R = 4.5 cm)

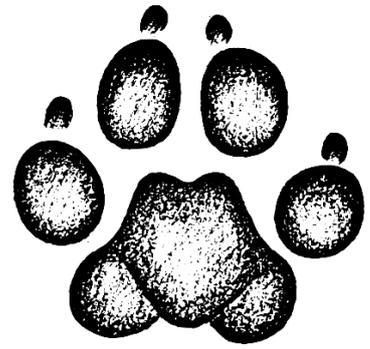
Carnivores



Slender Mongoose (3 cm)



Water Mongoose (6 cm)



Civet (6 cm)



Honey Badger (11cm)



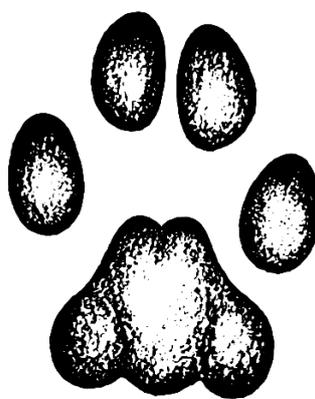
Cape Clawless Otter (11.5 cm)



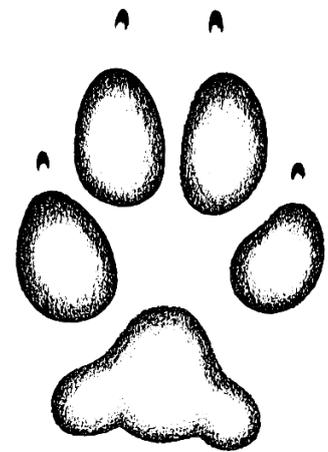
Black Backed Jackal (F = 6.5 cm)



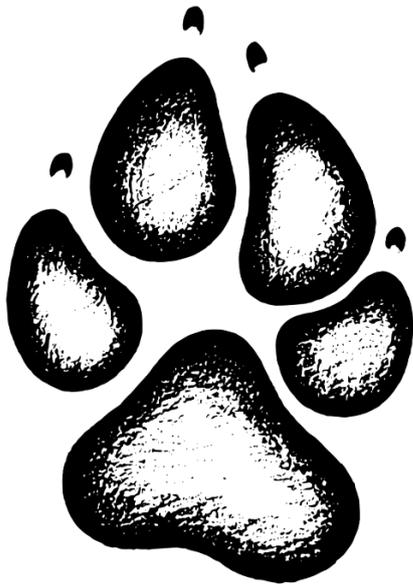
Caracal (F = 5.5 cm)



Serval (F = 5 cm)



Domestic Dog (Up to 12 cm)

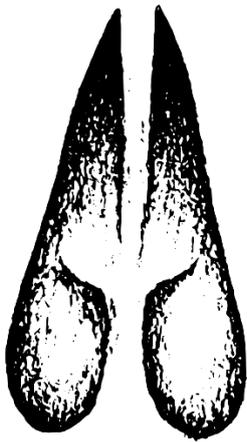


Brown Hyaena (F = 9 cm)



Leopard (F = 7.5 cm)

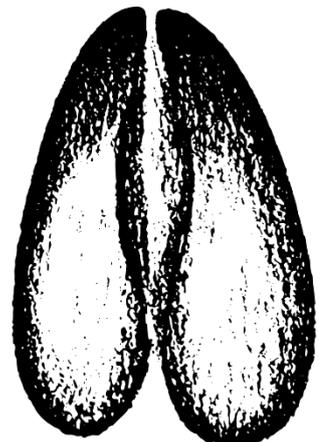
Hoofed Animals



Steenbok (4 cm)



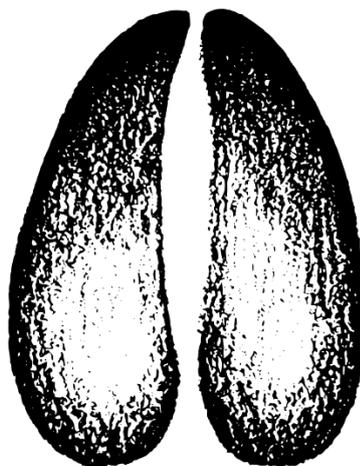
Klipspringer (2 cm)



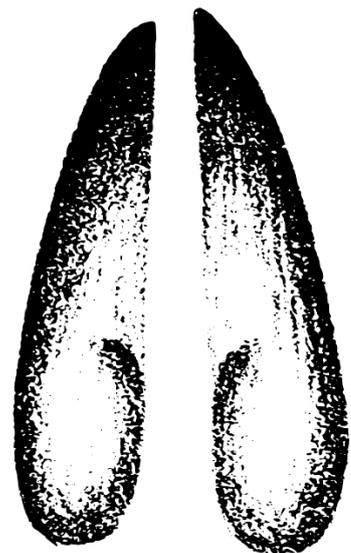
Common Duiker (3.7 cm)



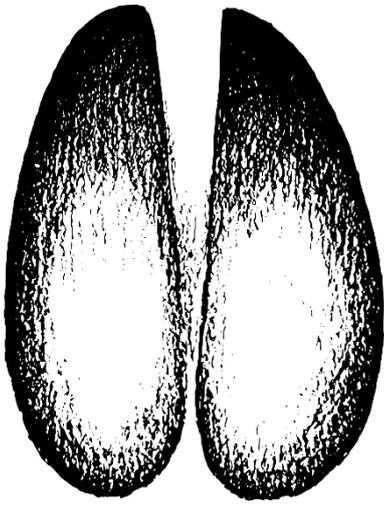
Impala (4.5 cm)



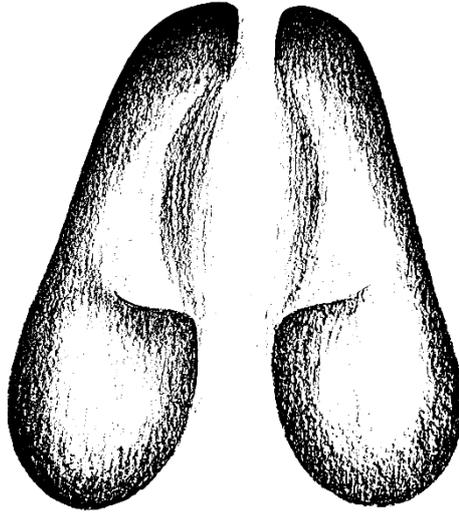
Bushbuck (4 cm)



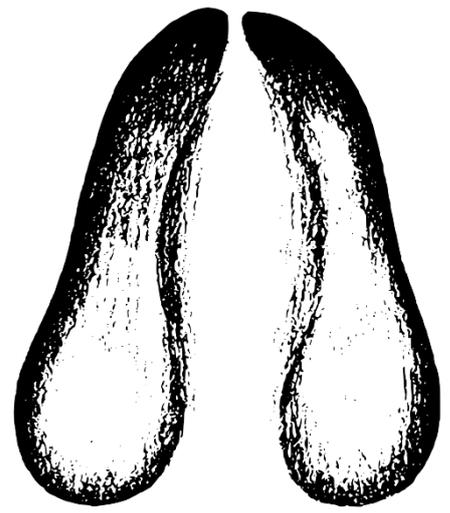
Reedbuck (6.5 cm)



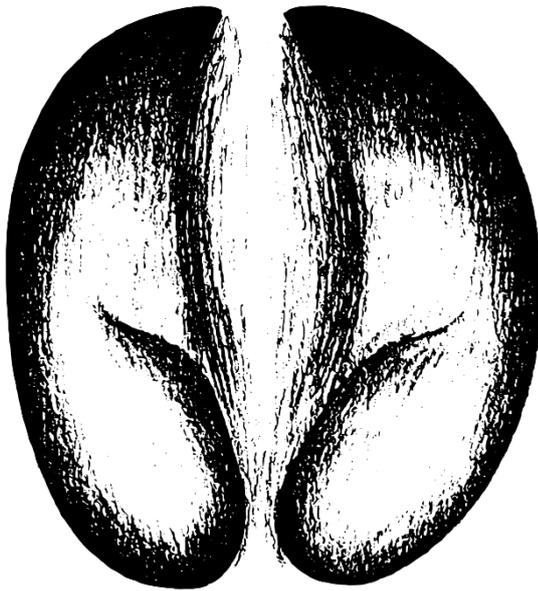
Kudu (F = 7 – 8 cm)



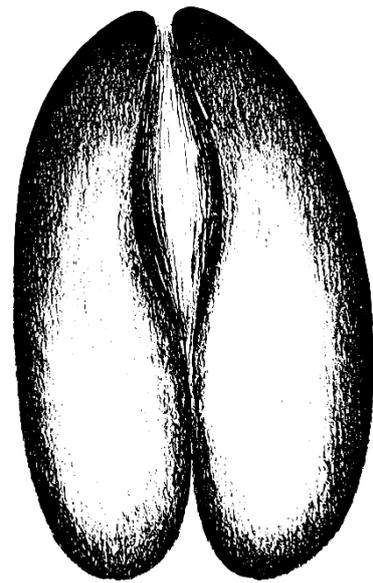
Blue Wildebeest (F = 11 cm)



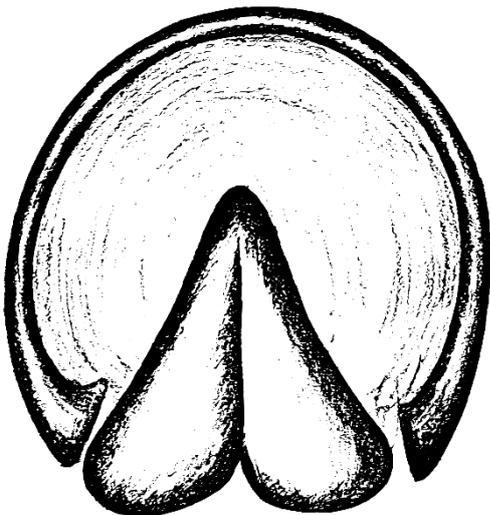
Sable (up to 11 cm)



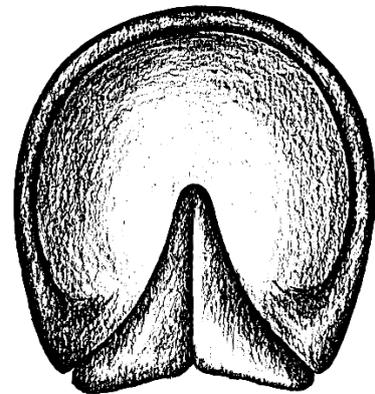
Eland (F = 10 – 12 cm)



Giraffe (F = 20 – 25 cm)

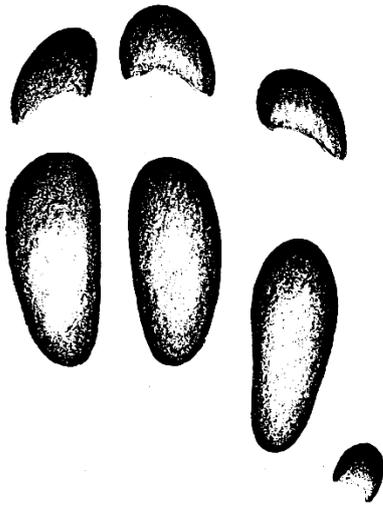


Domestic Horse (F = 11 – 14 cm)

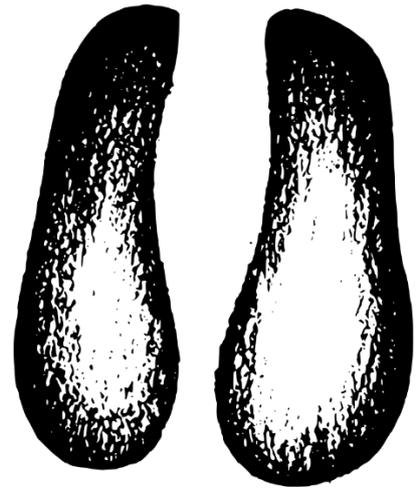


Plains Zebra (F = 9 – 11 cm)

Other Animals



Aardvark (7 – 8.5 cm)



Warthog (4 cm)

Use this space to draw any interesting tracks which you cannot identify