



ANIMAL TRACKS CHECKLIST

On May 8, 1846, soldiers marched onto the field of battle to track down the enemy. Long before the Battle of Palo Alto, animals engaged in the fight of predator vs. prey on this very field. Today as you walk the park trails, you may discover tracks of animals that still engage in combat to survive on this battlefield.

HOW TO READ TRACKS

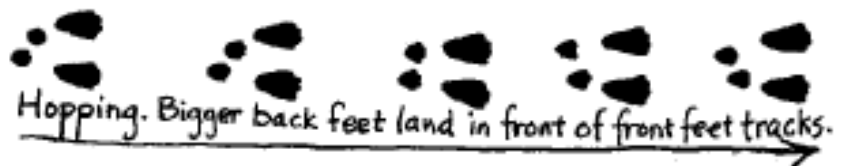
Finding tracks is exciting and tells you what was there before you. Your challenge? Figure out what animal left the tracks. Look for clearly defined tracks, preferably in fresh mud. As mud dries, tracks shrink and lose their details.

Look at the track pattern.
Some animals, such as rabbits,
hop while others walk.

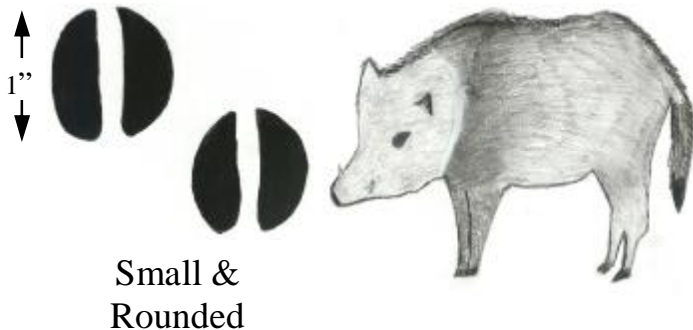
How many toes are there?

*Two-toes are javelina, nilgai,
and pigs

*Four-toes are coyotes, bobcat,
and rabbits



HOOFED MAMMALS



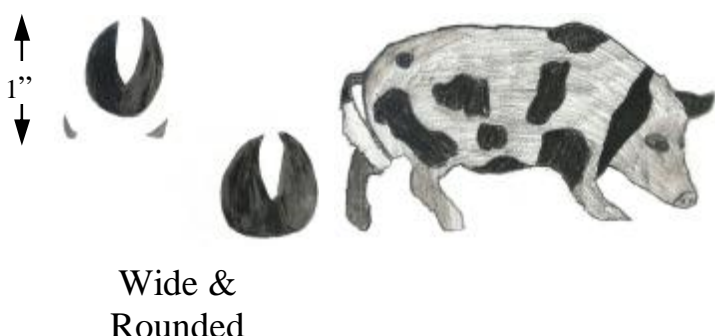
Small &
Rounded

COLLARED PECCARY (JAVELINA)
Named for their razor-sharp, javelin-like tusks, javelina rely on the succulent prickly pear cactus for over half their diet and almost all their water. In summer, they escape the sweltering heat and sleep in the protection of the thorny chaparral, emerging only to forage under the cool dark of night. In winter, javelina are active at dusk and dawn.



Often mistaken
for deer tracks

NILGAI
In the 1930s, these Indian antelope were imported onto Texas ranches as game animals. Today, nilgai are found throughout south Texas. In the cool early morning and early evening, nilgai graze on prairie grasses and mesquite. In Texas, coyotes prey on young and weak nilgai but are not large enough to take adults.



Wide &
Rounded

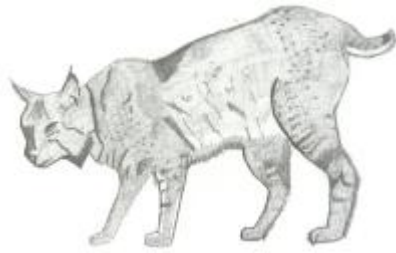
FERAL HOG
Over 300 years ago, Spanish explorers brought hogs to Texas. In the 1930s, European hogs were imported onto Texas ranches as game animals. Cross-breeding of the two species created the modern-day feral hog. These non-natives make their home in the thickets of thorny chaparral. Feral hogs eat everything from grasses and roots to reptiles, amphibians and small mammals.

PAWED MAMMALS



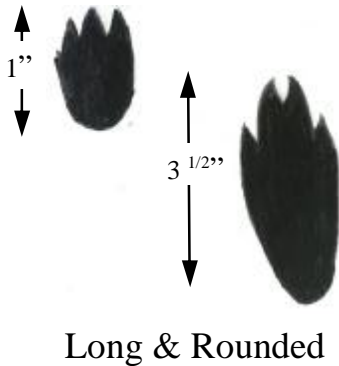
COYOTE

Nicknamed “prairie wolves,” coyotes require very little shelter and can survive in the open prairie. These primarily nocturnal animals have long, thin legs that help them run swiftly through the tall prairie grasses. Coyotes eat almost anything, including birds, small mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and even prickly pear cactus.



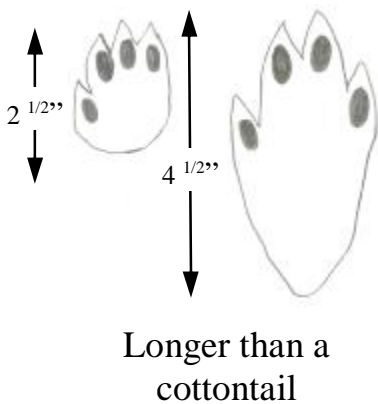
BOBCAT

Named for their short bobbed tail, bobcats make their home in the protection of the park’s brushy thickets. Their dark spots blend with the chaparral, allowing these cats to sneak up on prey such as rabbits and rats. During the cool evening hours, these solitary cats hunt the open prairie for small mammals and birds.



EASTERN COTTONTAIL

Eastern cottontails forage at dusk, feeding on grasses and tender shoots of the prairie plants. During the hot daylight hours, these rabbits seek shelter in the safety of the thorny areas of the park. This brush, or chaparral, hides Eastern cottontails from predators like bobcat, coyotes, and snakes.



BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT

During the day, black-tailed jackrabbits take refuge from the hot summer sun or chilly winter winds in scratched-out hollows in the tall grass. These hollows also hide them from predators, such as coyote and bobcat. At twilight and throughout the evening, black-tailed jackrabbits leave their safe havens to forage for mesquite, cactus, and grasses.

WHOSE TRACKS DID YOU SEE?

TOTAL # SPECIES SEEN: _____ DATE: _____ TIME: _____

OBSERVER(s): _____

