



Whitetail Deer. These tracks are fairly recognizable. Not many animals have tracks that look like these. Especially in Wheeler Nature park. They are generally prominent due to the hard nature of their hoofs. Their tracks are two ovals in a crescent moon shape next to each other that taper to a point at the front of the hoof. Occasionally two small circles behind the wide part of the track are visible. These are dew claws. Some people think that dew claws means that the track was made by a buck. This is false both doe and buck have dew claws. However dew claws show up more often in buck tracks. While you may see deer tracks you may not see the deer. They are afraid of people, and they have an extremely good sense of smell and hearing. They are also able to walk extremely quietly and blend in with the woods. If you see one consider yourself fortunate as you will be one of the few.



Dead hollow logs can be home to many different types of animals. Along with burrows and dens, foxes may take refuge in a hollow, fallen down log. A hollow log is also favorable for chipmunks. Many animals that have burrows also like to live in logs. Skunks really like to live in hollow logs, because they not only provide shelter for the animal, but they provide a great food source. Decaying logs are home to a host of different insects such as grubs, which is the main part of a skunks diet.



It is possible that you may find an animal burrow. Many animals build their homes underground. One of the most common that will be seen is the chipmunk. Their holes tend to be about the size of a silver dollar, and have a clear area around them. They need the hole to be just big enough for them to fit in that way predators can not get them. Chipmunks are common and easy to spot. Voles also dig holes. Their holes are about the size of a dime. Some larger holes you may find are fox holes. They are approximately four inches in diameter, and usually dug in the grass. They may also take over other animals burrows and build dens in piles of brush or under structures.



Dead standing trees or “snags” also make very good habitat for animals. Old snags almost always have a least one squirrel living in them. Snags are also a favorite home of raccoons. Along with fallen logs snags are home to hundreds of bugs making them an ideal site for woodpeckers. Once woodpeckers have made a hole big enough they can also live in it. But not

just woodpeckers live in these holes, just about any bird can move in to one of these holes and call it their own.



WHEELER NATURE PARK



South Burlington

WHEELER NATURE PARK COMMON ANIMAL TRACKS



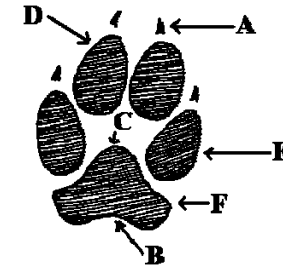
Gray Squirrel. The most likely to be seen at Wheeler Nature park. They are short with

bushy tails, they are extremely good climbers. If you enter their territory they will scold you by making a chattering sound at you. When they make tracks their hind feet are actually land in the front. They are most likely to be seen in the fall when they are scavenging for nuts. Wheeler park is also home to red squirrels which are smaller than gray squirrels and orange in color.



Red Fox. Sighting a red fox is fairly rare, as they are

most active during the night. They will eat most anything they can get their hands on. Fox tracks are characterized by these signatures; they will usually have visible claw marks, their toes will a good distance away from their main pad. These do however look similar to dog prints, but they are generally smaller, and have callous spots on their toes that make a deeper impression. Further evidence of foxes, are holes approximately 3 to five inches in diameter.



Domestic Dog. Extremely common in the park. Dog tracks can be identified by these characteristics; a main pad that is triangular in shape, with toes that are

relatively close together and close to the pad. There also may be claw marks visible. One would most likely find these directly on the trail, due to dog walkers.



Skunk. These can be identified by their five toes on the hind and front foot. Their main pads are oval in shape. With the hind foot having a larger impression that is not as prominent as the

main pad. The claw marks are visible almost all of the time. The claws are primarily for digging, so if there are tracks leading to torn up earth the skunk was looking for food.



Cottontail Rabbit. Seeing a rabbit in the wheeler nature might prove difficult. As these animals are very skittish. When they see a predator they dive into the brush. Their tracks are fairly recognizable. Their hind feet are much larger than their

front feet, and as with squirrels the hind feet fall in front of their front feet.