



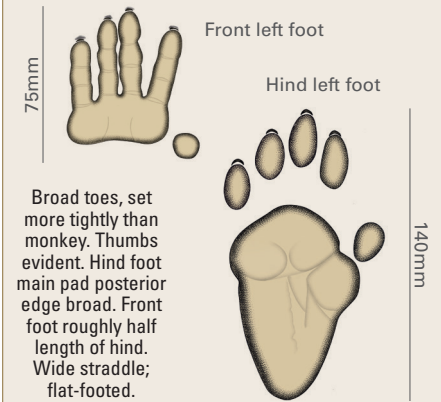
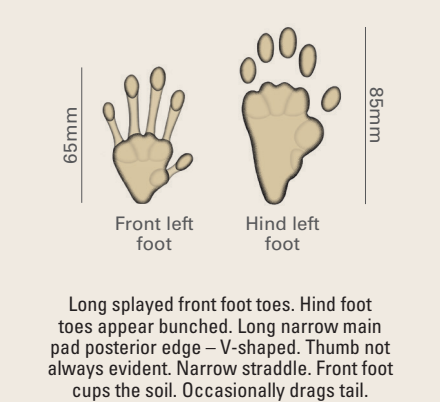
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# Animal track comparisons

These animal tracks have been grouped in tables because they are the ones most often confused in the field, based on the similarity of their track morphology and the animals' shared habitat.

The terms below are used frequently in the descriptions given:

- **straddle** – distance between left and right feet, measured from outside edges
- **register** – when the hind foot lands partially or directly on top of the front foot track
- **variable gait** – refers to when an animal uses a variety of gaits, including understep, register or overstep
- **symmetrical** – refers to when left and right features of the track are equal
- **asymmetrical** – refers to when left and right features of the track are unequal
- **negative space** – the space between toes, and/or main pad and toes
- **central ridge** – the space between the cloven hooves that leaves a prominent ridge of soil

BABOON	VERVET MONKEY
 <p>75mm</p> <p>Front left foot</p> <p>Hind left foot</p> <p>140mm</p> <p>Broad toes, set more tightly than monkey. Thumbs evident. Hind foot main pad posterior edge broad. Front foot roughly half length of hind. Wide straddle; flat-footed.</p>	 <p>65mm</p> <p>85mm</p> <p>Front left foot</p> <p>Hind left foot</p> <p>Long splayed front foot toes. Hind foot toes appear bunched. Long narrow main pad posterior edge – V-shaped. Thumb not always evident. Narrow straddle. Front foot cups the soil. Occasionally drags tail.</p>



Alta Oosthuizen – Adobe Stock

*A chacma baboon shows its underfoot.*



Bernard DUPONT / iCC BY-SA 2.0

*Vervet monkeys often leave obscure tracks.*

**SMALL GREY MONGOOSE**



Front left foot      Hind left foot

Longish thin claws and small oval toes.  
Very small, close to 3cm without proximal pad showing. Main pad asymmetrical. Variable gait.

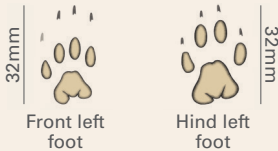
**YELLOW MONGOOSE**



Front left foot      Hind left foot

Surprisingly large toes. Toe 1 seldom shows.  
Negative space between toes and main pad.  
Variable gait. Track more symmetrical than suricate.

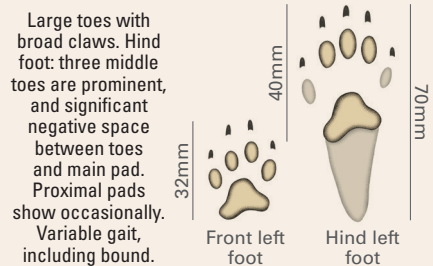
**SURICATE**



Front left foot      Hind left foot

Very long claws. Hind foot main pad is large. Hind foot markedly larger than front.  
Main pad asymmetrical. No register.

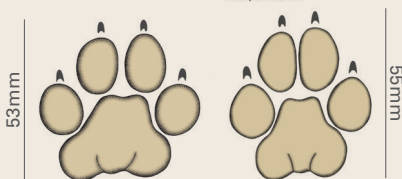
**GROUND SQUIRREL**



Front left foot      Hind left foot

Large toes with broad claws. Hind foot: three middle toes are prominent, and significant negative space between toes and main pad. Proximal pads show occasionally.  
Variable gait, including bound.

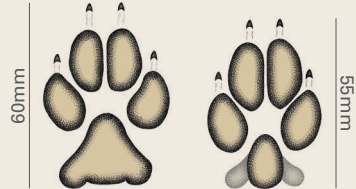
**CIVET**



Front left foot      Hind left foot

Round track. Claws not always evident.  
Very little negative space. Often register.  
Hind track similar to jackal's.

**BLACK-BACKED JACKAL**



Front left foot      Hind left foot

Symmetrical track. Large toes with claws.  
Middle and outer toes sit in parallel.  
Triangular-shaped main pad. Variable gait.

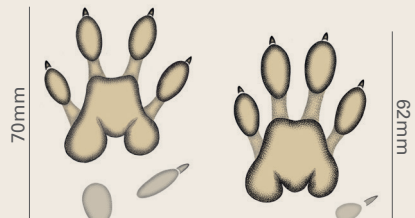
**WHITE-TAILED MONGOOSE**



Front left foot      Hind left foot

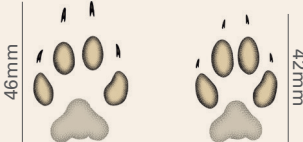

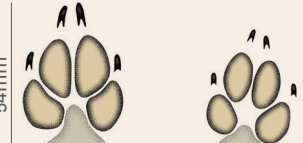







Oval toes arranged in arc. Box-shaped hind main pad. Asymmetrical front main pad.  
Toe 1's claw shows occasionally.  
Tracks don't register. Toes smaller than jackal.



**WATER MONGOOSE**



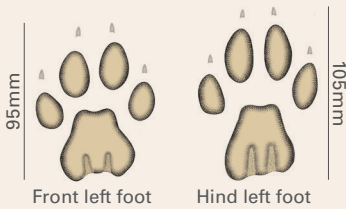
Front left foot      Hind left foot

Long splayed toes with short claws. Asymmetrical front main pad. Large front proximal pad and toe 1 show occasionally. Variable gait, seldom register.

<p><b>BAT-EARED FOX</b></p>  <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Front foot oval toes quite splayed. Very long front foot claws. Underfoot hair often obscures track. Main pad not always visible. Variable gait. Don't usually register.</p>	<p><b>CAPE FOX</b></p>  <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Symmetrical track. Oval toes. Long claws. Main pad often unclear due to hair under foot. Variable gait. Often oversteps.</p>	
<p><b>AARDWOLF</b></p>  <p>Front left foot      Hind right foot</p> <p>Asymmetrical track. Kidney-shaped outer toes set tightly together. Substantial claws. Main pad often appears small or unclear. Typical hyaena gait: smaller hind feet register close to opposite side's front foot.</p>	<p><b>SCRUB HARE</b></p>  <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Underfoot hair obscures detail – resembling smudges on the ground. Toes reveal in mud. Main pad not visible. Typical hare gait.</p>	
<p><b>BANDED MONGOOSE</b></p>  <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Very long claws resembling elongated toes. Main pad asymmetrical. Toe 1 shows when moving slowly. Highly gregarious – they move in groups.</p>	<p><b>SLENDER MONGOOSE</b></p>  <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Slightly splayed oval toes with sharp claws. Outer toes widely set. Proximal pad and toe 1 show when moving slowly. Moves along edges of roads, singly. Often bounds.</p>	<p><b>DWARF MONGOOSE</b></p>  <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Looks like miniature banded mongoose. Very small. Long claws. Highly gregarious. Often bounds. Don't usually register.</p>
<p><b>GENET</b></p>  <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Round toes. No claws. Large, substantial main pad with two large outer lobes. Proximal pad shows occasionally. Variable gait.</p>	<p><b>TREE SQUIRREL</b></p>  <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Hind foot five toes with three middle toes closely set. Main pad shows tread-like features. Variable gait, including bound. Often confused with slender mongoose.</p>	<p><b>MELLER'S MONGOOSE</b></p>  <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Large main pad. Claws evident. Front foot middle toes separated. Significant negative space. Similar to genet or small white-tailed mongoose.</p>

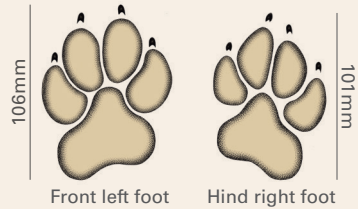
BADGER	PORCUPINE
 <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Very long front foot claws. Large sausage-shaped toes. Three middle toes sit tightly. Large, unsegmented main pad. Five toes on both feet. One proximal pad. Slight overstep common. Front foot faced inwards.</p>	 <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Round, slightly splayed toes. Short blunt claws, although front foot can show long claws. Segmented main pad. Two proximal pads. Variable gait.</p>
CARACAL	SERVAL
 <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Broad main pad. Outer toes sit low, flanking main pad. Variable gait.</p>	 <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Main pad narrow on leading edge – triangular-shaped. Hind foot toes set well forward and narrow. Long stride – oversteps.</p>
WILD CAT	BLACK-FOOTED CAT
 <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Broad main pad. Main pad leading edge concave (indented). Hind toes set forward of main pad. Variable gait. Significantly smaller than caracal.</p>	 <p>Front left foot      Hind left foot</p> <p>Main pad more triangular-shaped with leading edge particularly narrow. Toes oval in shape. Track length almost 1cm less than wild cat.</p>

**CHEETAH**



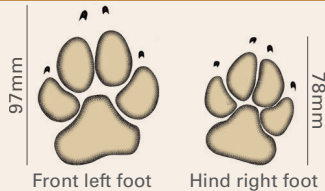
Oval toes. Claws usually evident. Angular main pad shows clear ridges on posterior edge – leading edge is square. Three posterior lobes of main pad distinctive. Significant negative space in hind foot. Hind foot longer and appears slender. Typically oversteps.

**SPOTTED HYAENA**



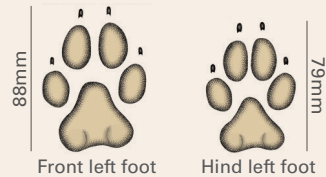
Kidney-shaped outer toes arranged tightly. Main pad distinctly asymmetrical. Little negative space. Typical hyaena gait: hind feet register close to opposite side's front foot. Hind foot lands at a slight angle, facing outwards.

**BROWN HYAENA**



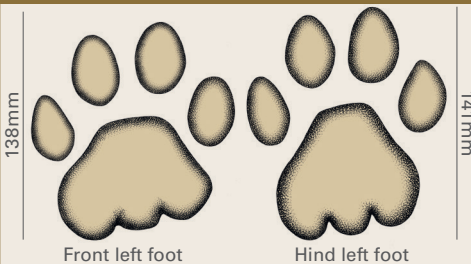
Kidney-shaped outer toes arranged tightly. Main pad distinctly asymmetrical. Longer claws. Hair around track. Very little negative space. Hind much smaller than front. Typical hyaena gait: hind feet register close to opposite side's front foot.

**WILD DOG**



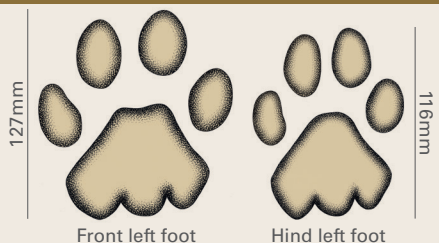
Track symmetrical. Large middle toes sit in parallel. Triangular-shaped main pad. Substantial claws. Variable gait. Often trots.

**MALE LION**



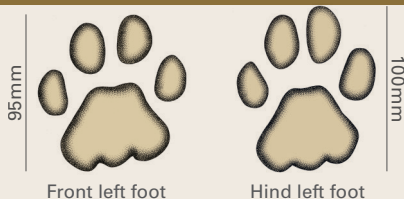
Large rounded oval toes and substantial, broad main pad. Posterior edge of main pad rounded.

**FEMALE LION**



Large oval toes and main pad. Main pad leading edge narrower. More negative space than male lion. Main pad posterior edge more angular.

**MALE LEOPARD**



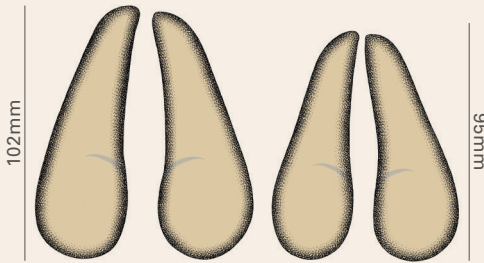
Rounded, oval toes and large main pad. Main pad leading edge is broad, and posterior edge rounded.

**FEMALE LEOPARD**



Oval toes. Main pad leading edge narrower than male leopard (and indented). Main pad more angular.

**BLUE WILDEBEEST**

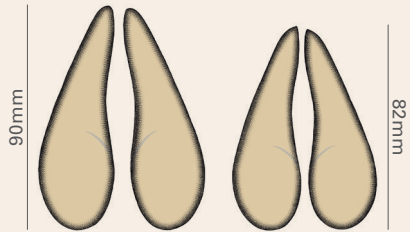


Front left foot

Hind left foot

Broad track. Square and blunt on leading edge. Straight hoof edges. Wide central ridge. Front track typically rectangular, hind is pointed. Hooves often splay. False hooves show occasionally. Overstep is typical.

**TSESSEBE**



Front left foot

Hind left foot

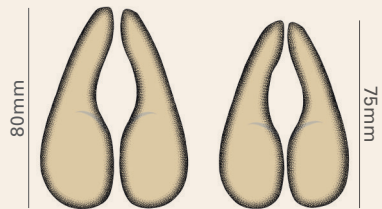
Variable shape: pointed and blunt versions possible. Hoof edges usually straight. Rim-walking – hoof edges are prominent. Hind track narrow. Overstep is typical.



*Blue wildebeest galloping*

JeremyRichards – Adobe Stock

**WATERBUCK**

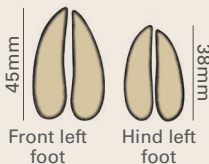


Front left foot

Hind left foot

Pointed, narrow and occasionally heart-shaped track. Cloven hooves close but do splay when slippery. Hind more pointed. A step is possible. Gap between hooves causes a small mound of soil. Variable gait, but a small overstep is common.

**BUSHBUCK**

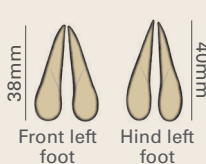


Front left foot

Hind left foot

Rounded hoof edges. Hooves usually tight. Hoof tips often mismatched. Walk on tiptoes – hence scuffing of hoof tip common. Widest near middle. Hooves face outwards, slightly. Tracks typically register.

**STEENBOK**

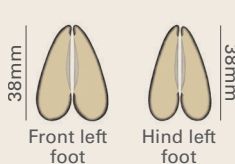


Front left foot

Hind left foot

Narrow and pointed track with straight hoof edges. Prominent and proportionately wide central ridge. Step is possible. Hind track hoof edge is concave. Tracks typically register.

**COMMON DUIKER**

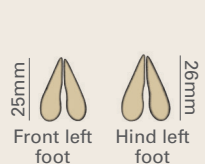


Front left foot

Hind left foot

Highly variable in shape. Usually symmetrical. Narrow central ridge. Hooves tight. Hoof edges curved but a straighter version is also possible. Widest near posterior edge – creates a V-shape. Tracks typically register.

**SHARPE'S GRYSBOK**



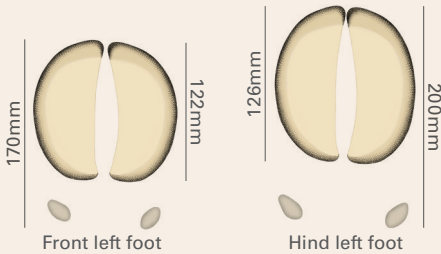
Front left foot

Hind left foot

Neat triangular-shaped track. Very pointed on leading edge. Hooves may be narrow. Wide on posterior edge. Tracks typically register.

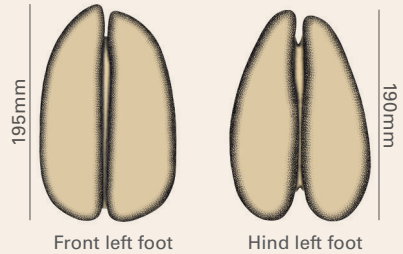


**BUFFALO**



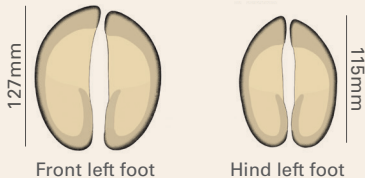
Broad, curved symmetrical track, almost circular in shape. Gap between hooves varies but usually appears small – creating a narrow central ridge. Hind slightly narrower. False hooves occasionally make an appearance. Gait varies. Register is common.

**GIRAFFE**



Long, broad cloven hoof track. Front rectangular. Hooves tight. A central mound of soil or narrow central ridge is common. A significant overstep is typical.

**ELAND**



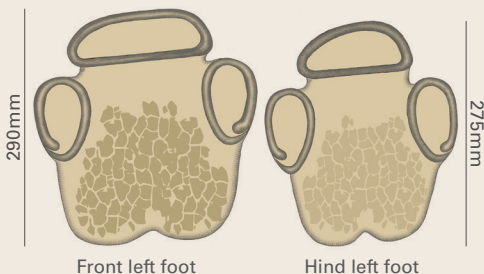
Curved with noticeable gap between hooves. Hoof tips often mismatched (asymmetrical). Oval-shaped hind markedly narrower than front. A very broad version of the front is common. False hooves don't show. Typically register. Longer stride than buffalo.



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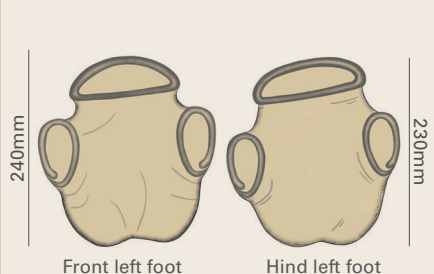
*Giraffe hooves*

**WHITE RHINO**



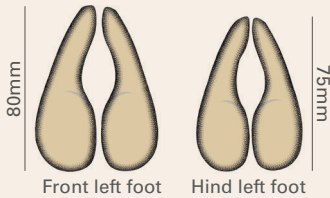
Overall box-shaped track with three prominent toes. Outside toes close to middle toe. Sole creases in little block shapes are common. W-shaped indentation on posterior edge. Variable gait. Understep is common.

**BLACK RHINO**



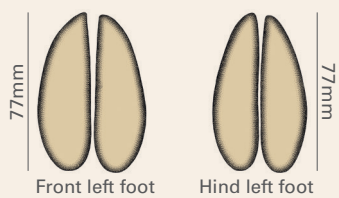
Overall circular-shaped with three toes. Outer toes located further away from middle than white rhino. Shallow indentation on posterior edge. Less sole creases and smaller toes than white rhino. Direct register is typical.

**WATERBUCK**



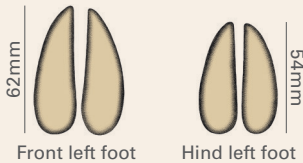
Pointed, narrow and occasionally heart-shaped track. Cloven hooves close but do splay when slippery. Hind more pointed. A step is possible. Gap between hooves causes a small mound of soil. Variable gait, but a small overstep is common.

**KUDU**



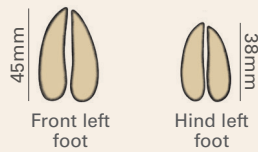
Neat rugby-ball-shaped track with rounded hoof edges. Blunt on leading edge. Cloven hooves tight, creating a narrow central ridge. Widest near the middle. 'Irons the ground' – walks flat-footed. Typically register.

**NYALA**



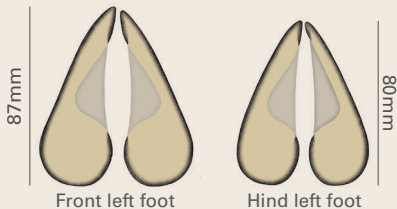
Rounded edges with characteristic gap between hooves, prone to splaying. Hoof tips blunt. Widest near the middle. 'Irons the ground' – walks flat-footed. Typically register. Shorter stride than kudu.

**BUSHBUCK**



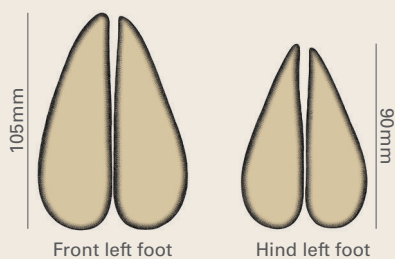
Rounded hoof edges. Hooves usually tight. Hoof tips often mismatched. Walks on tiptoes – hence scuffing of hoof tip common. Widest near middle. Tracks typically register. Hooves face outwards slightly.

**RED HARTEBEEST**



Triangular-shaped. Front foot broad on posterior edge. Often leaves oval-shaped mound of soil, or prominent central ridge. Straight hoof edges. Occasionally shows a step. Overstep is typical.

**GEMSBOK**



Large, flat-footed, symmetrical track. Roughly triangular. Broad front foot is curved, and pointed hind is straighter. Cloven hooves tight – narrow central ridge is distinctive. No step. Digging may change shape of front foot. Overstep is typical.

**SPRINGBOK**



Sharp on leading edge and broad on posterior edge. Prominent central ridge. Hoof edges usually straight rather than curved. Front foot often broad. Hind foot hoof edges can be concave. Step is possible. Overstep is typical.

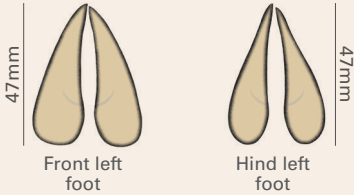


*Springbok pronging*

Alta Oosthuizen  
– Adobe Stock

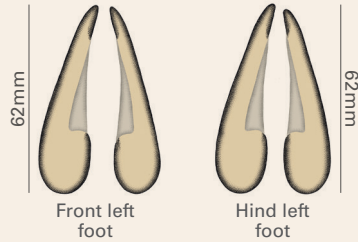


**IMPALA**



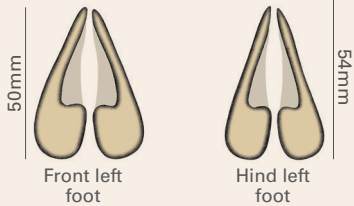
Pointed and triangular shaped with convex, straight, or concave hoof edges. Front foot is broad. Prominent central ridge. Rim-walker: hoof edges often distinctive. Often creates a step. Overstep is typical.

**SOUTHERN REEDBUCK**



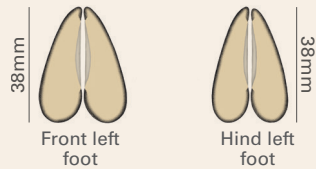
Proportionately long, narrow, sharp, and pointed. Distinctively straight hoof edges. Gap between hoof tips and clear central ridge. Occasionally shows a step. Hooves prone to splaying. Overstep is typical.

**SPRINGBOK**



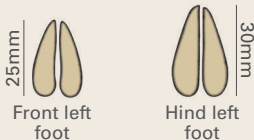
Sharp on leading edge and broad on posterior edge. Central ridge varies. Distinct hoof edges usually straight rather than curved. Front foot often broad. Hind foot hoof edges can be concave. Often flat-footed. Overstep is typical.

**COMMON DUIKER**



Highly variable in shape. Usually, symmetrical. Hooves tight. Hoof edges curved but a straighter version is also possible. Widest near posterior edge – creates a V-shape. Tracks typically register.

**RED DUIKER**



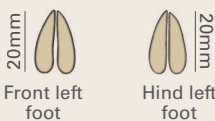
Straighter hoof edges are common. Narrow central ridge. Tracks typically register.

**BLUE DUIKER**



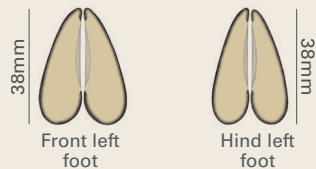
Typically rounded. Front foot may splay. Hind foot straighter and more pointed. Central ridge is prominent. Tracks typically register.

**SUNI**



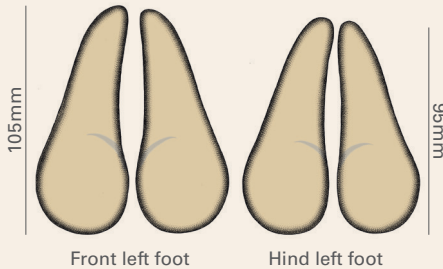
Very small and round. A straighter, more pointed version is common. Central ridge narrow. Can easily be overlooked. Tracks typically register.

**COMMON DUIKER**



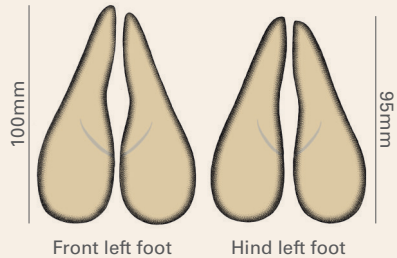
Highly variable in shape. Usually symmetrical. Hooves tight. Hoof edges curved but a straighter version is also possible. Widest near posterior edge – creates a V-shape. Tracks typically register.

### ROAN ANTELOPE



Large, robust track that is broad on the posterior edge. Hind foot can be very sharp. Narrow central ridge. A significant gap between front hoof tips is common. Overstep is typical.

### SABLE ANTELOPE



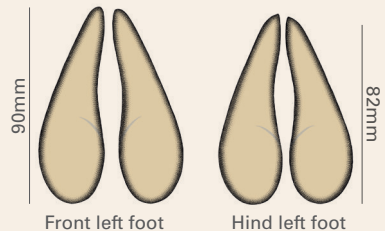
Sharp leading edge and broad and rounded on posterior edge. Narrow version common. Hoof edges straight or concave. Cloven hooves tight, although front may splay. Often shows a step. Rim-walker: hoof edges often distinctive. Overstep is typical.



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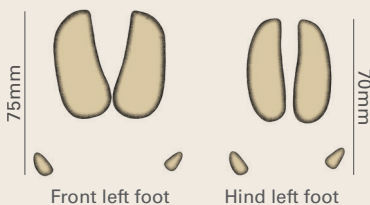
*Roan antelope fighting on their 'knees'*

### TSESSEBE



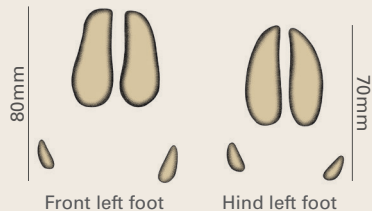
Variable shape: pointed and blunt versions possible. Hoof edges usually straight. Rim-walker: hoof edges are prominent. Hind track narrow. Overstep is typical.

### BUSHPIG



Front foot rounded and very splayed on leading edge, resembling the shape of mopane leaf. A less splayed version is also common. Hind foot hooves tighter, and rectangular in shape. False hooves may show. Variable gait, with a register being common. Tracks more rounded than warthog.

### WARTHOG



Box-shaped and blunt on leading edge, particularly front foot. Hind foot is more curved and pointed. Prominent central ridge. Widely set false hooves show in deep substrate or when moving quickly. Often drags feet. Variable gait. Tracks smaller than bushpig.