

Know the Difference ... Kaye Traynor and Bill McKellar

As we are now approaching the next Hooded Plover nesting season, we thought some information about the tracks of some of our carnivores could help. The sand is a good place to get readable imprints.

Dog v Fox



Walking Pattern



Front Foot

Dogs come in different sizes but if we take a dog the size of a fox, we find that the dog (see right) while walking, has a wide straddle whereas the fox (see left) walks in a straight line. The dog's foot has smaller gaps between the central pad and toe pads than the fox. The dog's toes leave clear, well-separated claw marks whereas the fox's front claws are close, less distinct or even absent.



Walking Pattern

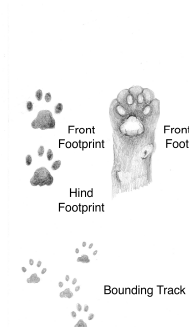


Front Foot

Cat v Quoll

Both the quoll and cat have two gaits, either walking or bounding.

The quoll footprints (see right) are broad showing space between the toes with the small fifth toe often seen. No claws are seen. There are three central and two posterior pads. When bounding these pads join up into two groups and the claws become obvious.



Bounding Track

The cat footprints (see left) are smaller, with a central pad and a semicircular ring of only four toes and no claws. When bounding they take off with all their feet close together, like a jump. No claws are displayed.

We hope you don't see cats or foxes around the Hooded Plovers. Please report it to GORCC and or Birds Australia if you do.



Bounding Track

Walking Track



Front Foot

Hind Foot

Deer v Goat

Deer are now commonly seen and are nearly always Fallow Deer (see left). The males have a shoulder height of about 1m and females of around 80cm. Fallow deer are usually white, with or without brown markings. They have cloven hooves and will often walk on paths in line. The imprint is only 60mm long.



Footprint



Front Foot

Goats are not common. Their cloven hoof is the same size as the deer but incurved at the front (see right). Their tracks are not in line.



Footprint



Front Foot

Ref: Triggs, Barbara, *Tracks, Scats and Other Traces: A Field Guide to Australian Mammals*

Copyright

Any article or information appearing in this newsletter may be copied to further interest in the conservation of native flora and fauna or in environmental care, provided that the source and contributor(s) are acknowledged.