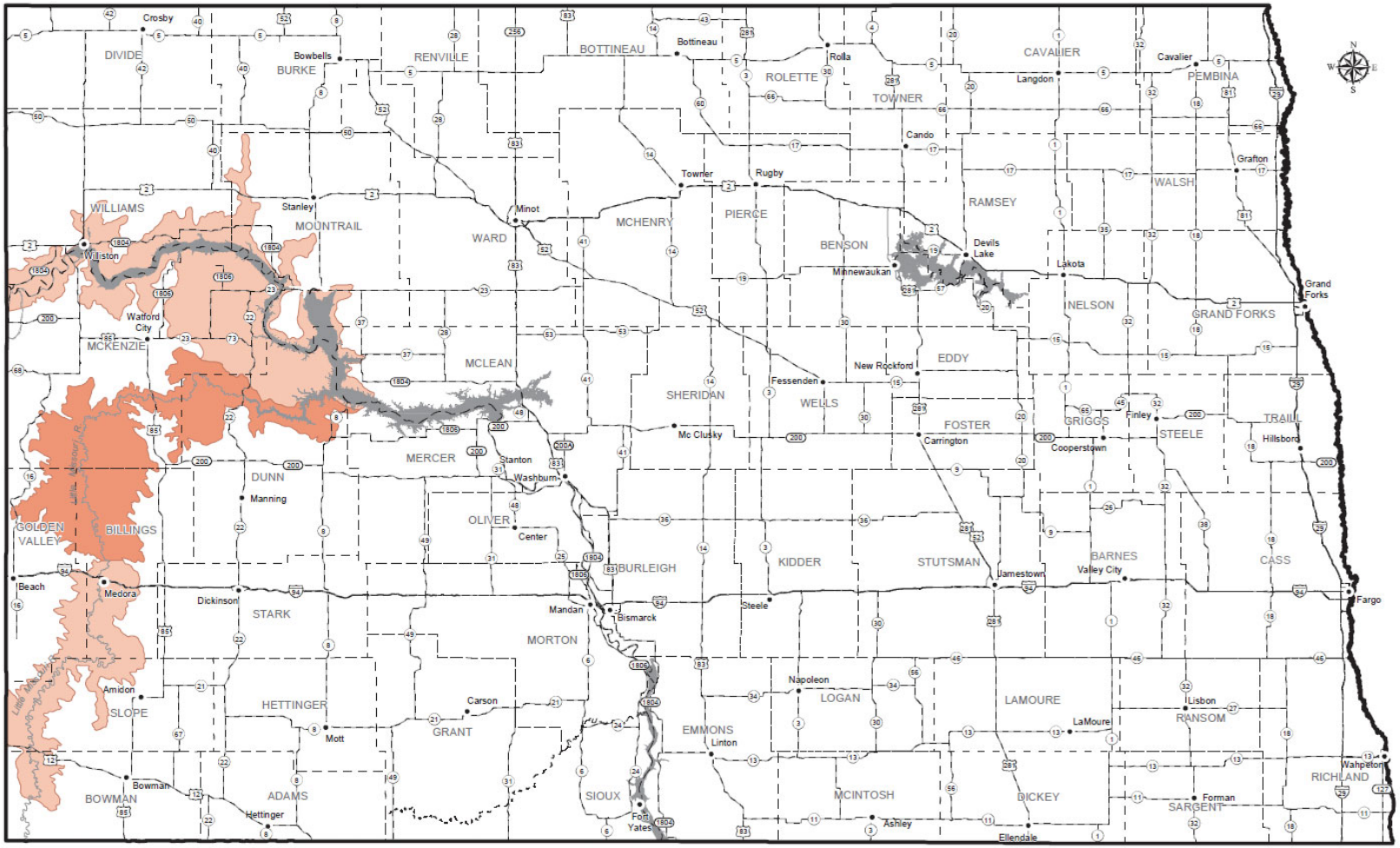
Mountain Lion Track Identification

North Dakota Game and Fish Department

North Dakota Game & Fish Department
Mountain Lion Range

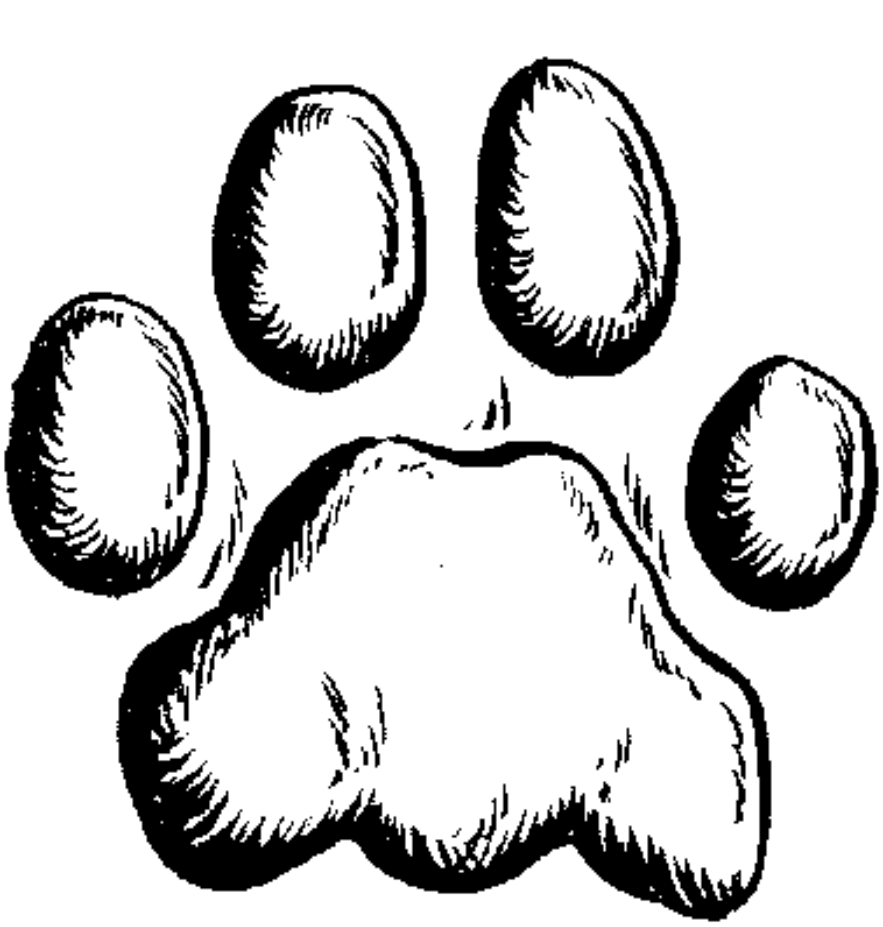


Mountain lions inhabit the badlands and Missouri River breaks regions of North Dakota. However, because they are capable of traveling great distances, they have turned up in all parts of North Dakota.

Canine tracks are commonly mistaken for mountain lion tracks.

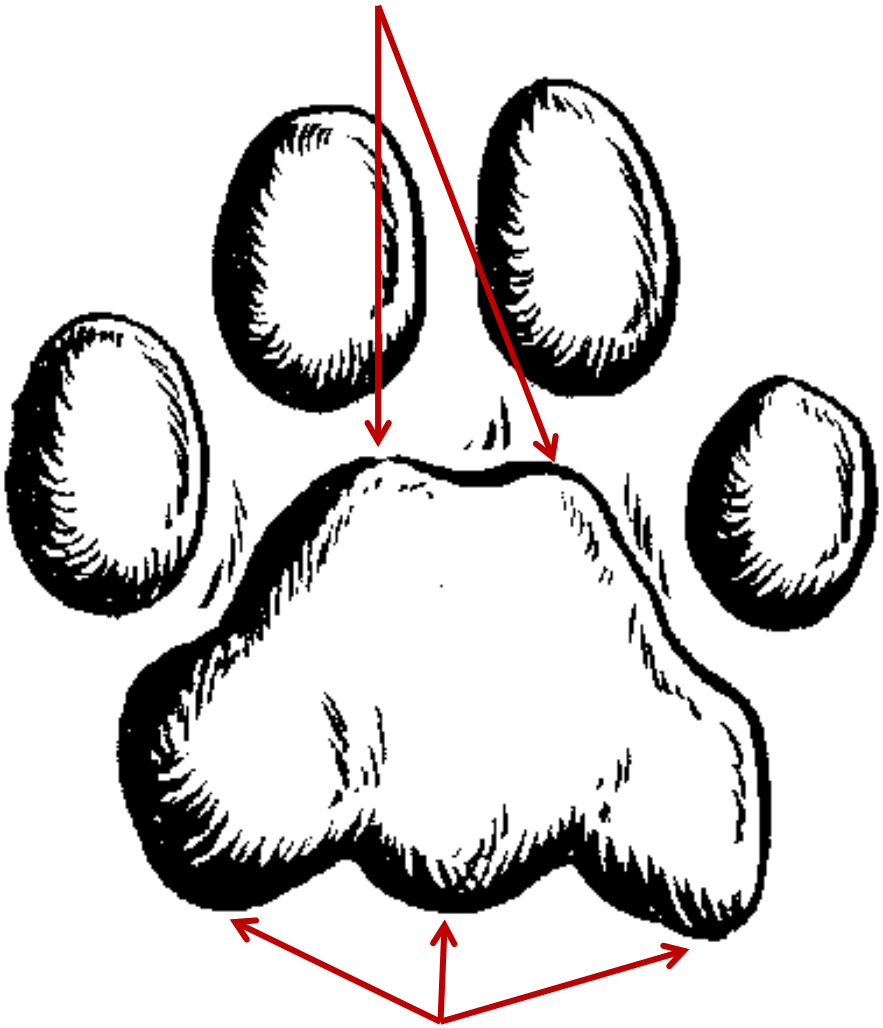
This video will show you how to tell the difference and will also look at other similar tracks.

Mountain Lion vs. Canine



Mountain Lion

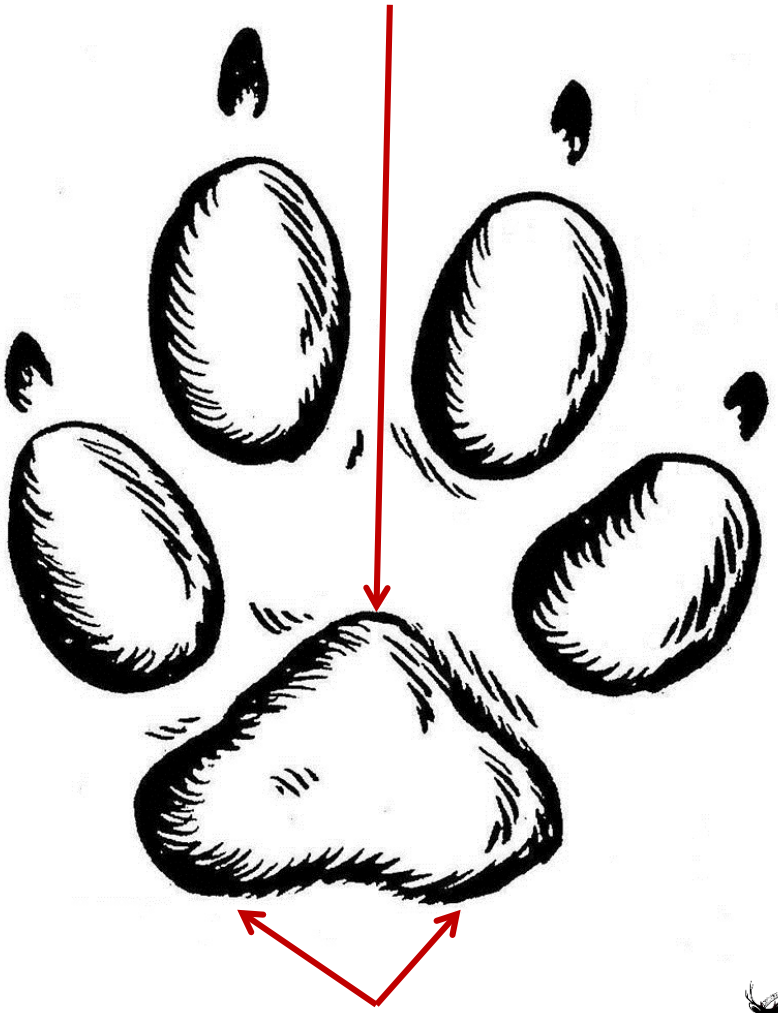
Heel pad: 2 lobes on front



Heel pad: 3 lobes on back

Canine

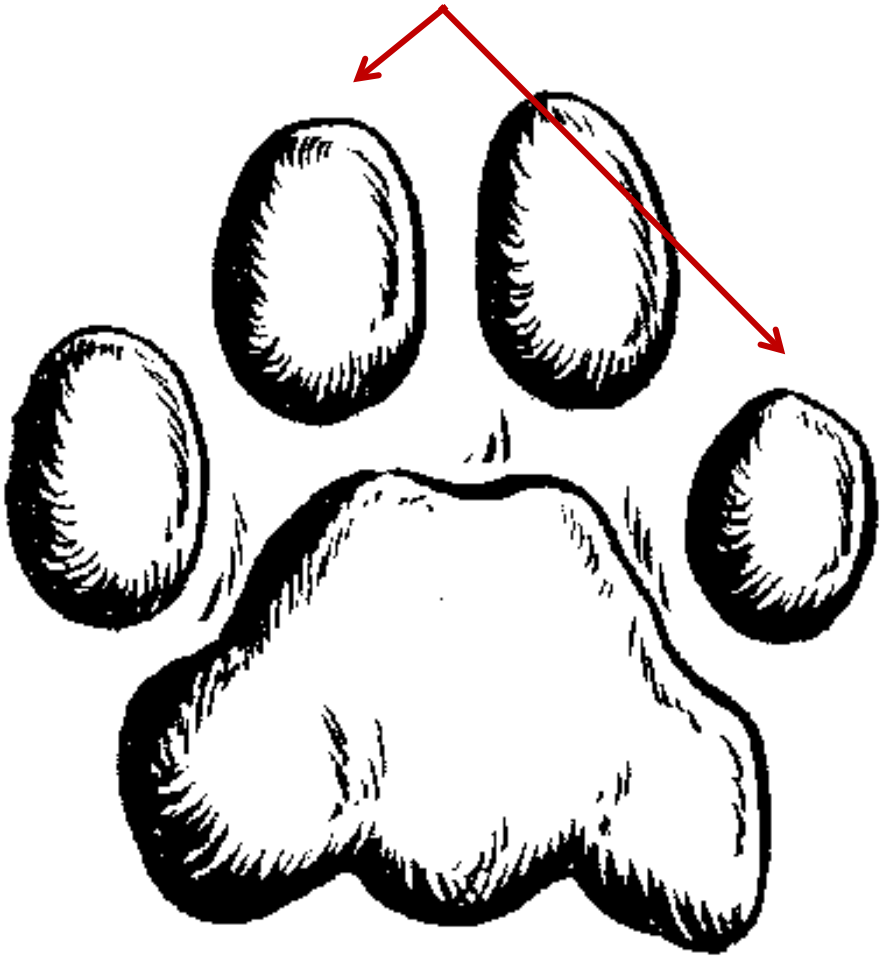
Heel pad: 1 lobe on front



Heel pad: 2 lobes on back

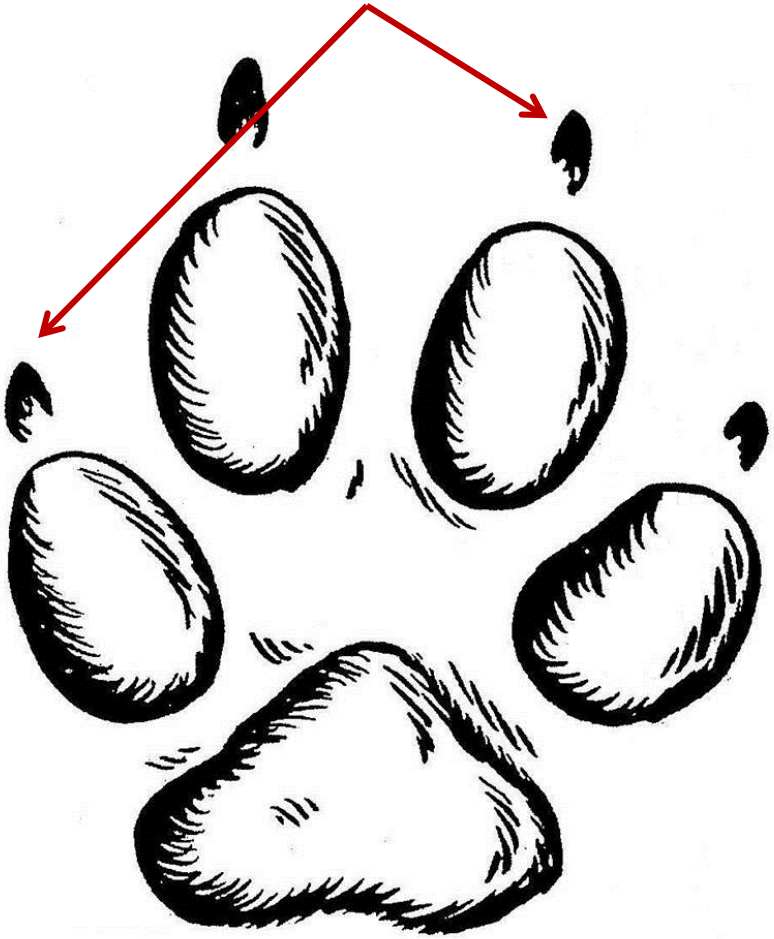
Mountain Lion

Retractable claws



Canine

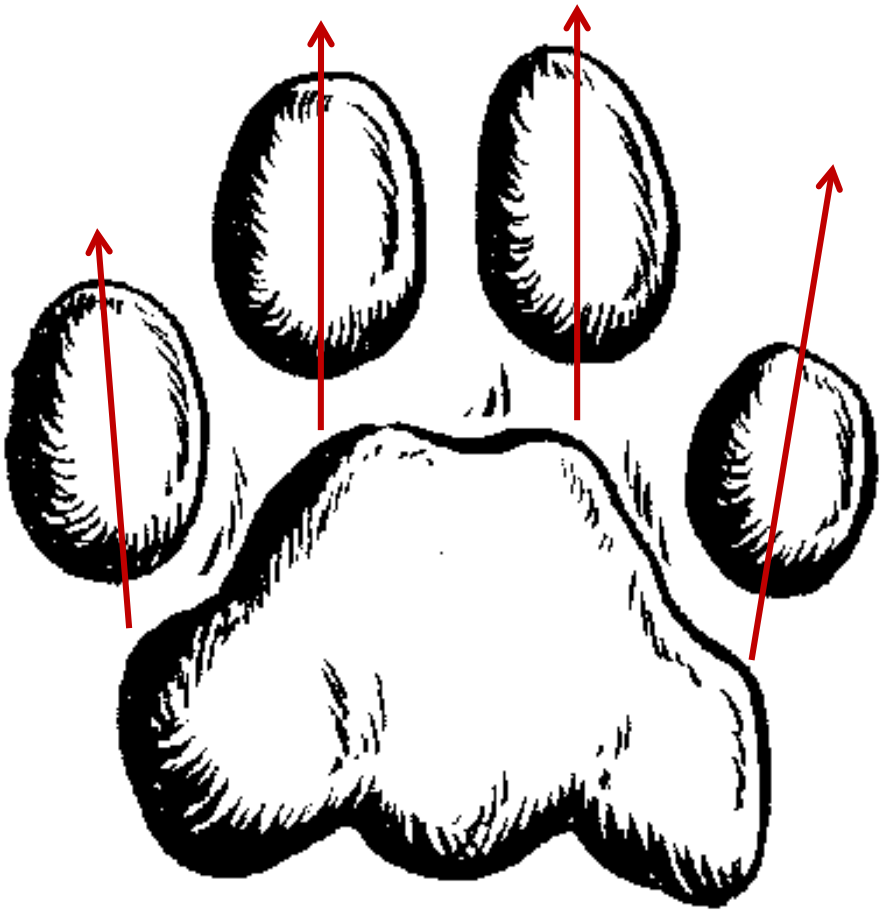
Claw marks



Occasionally claw marks may be seen in mountain lion tracks

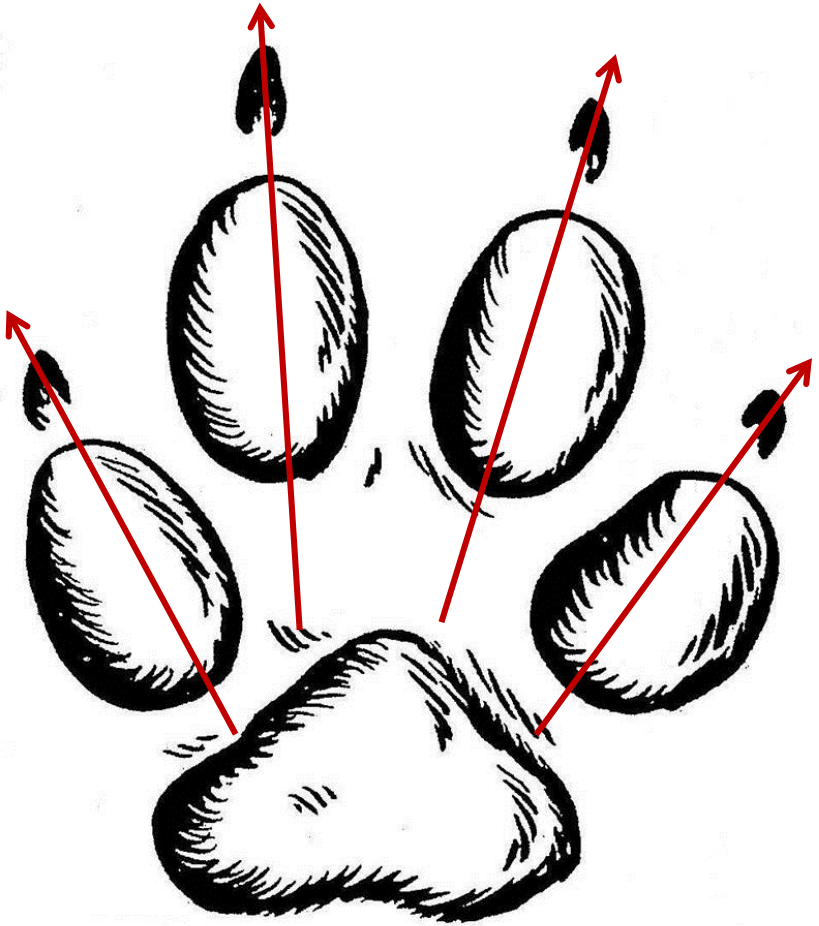
Mountain Lion

Toes point forward

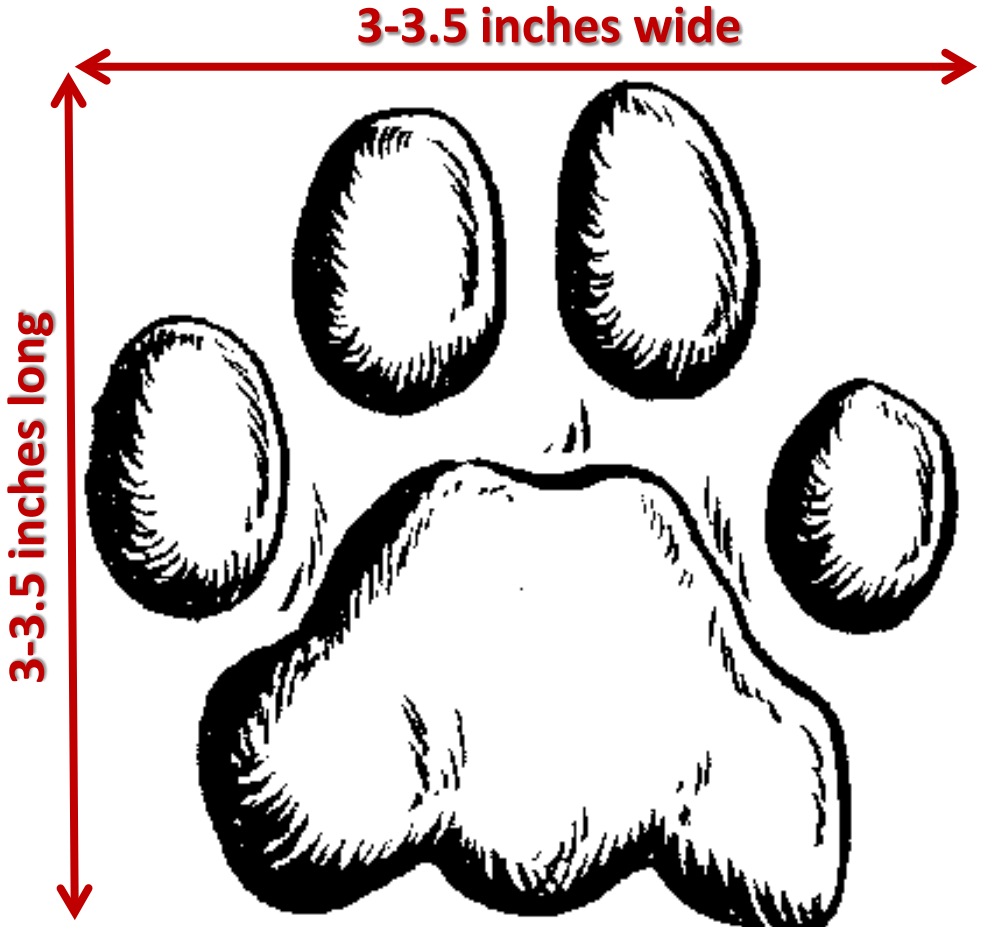


Canine

Toes point outward

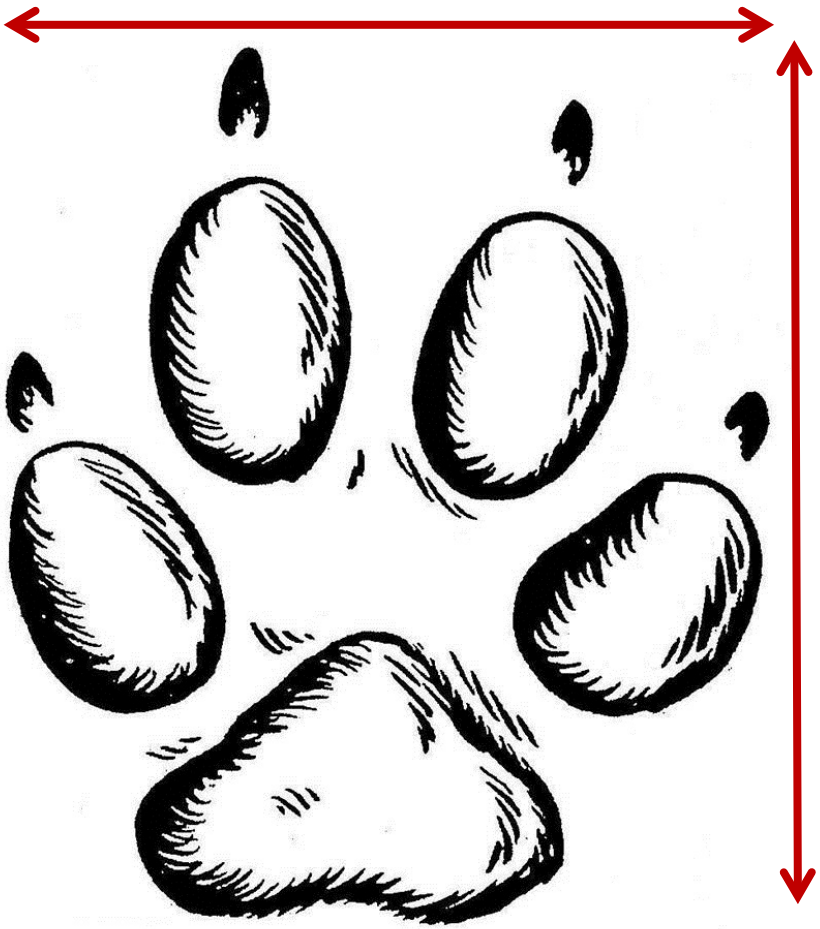


Mountain Lion



Round or wider than long

Canine

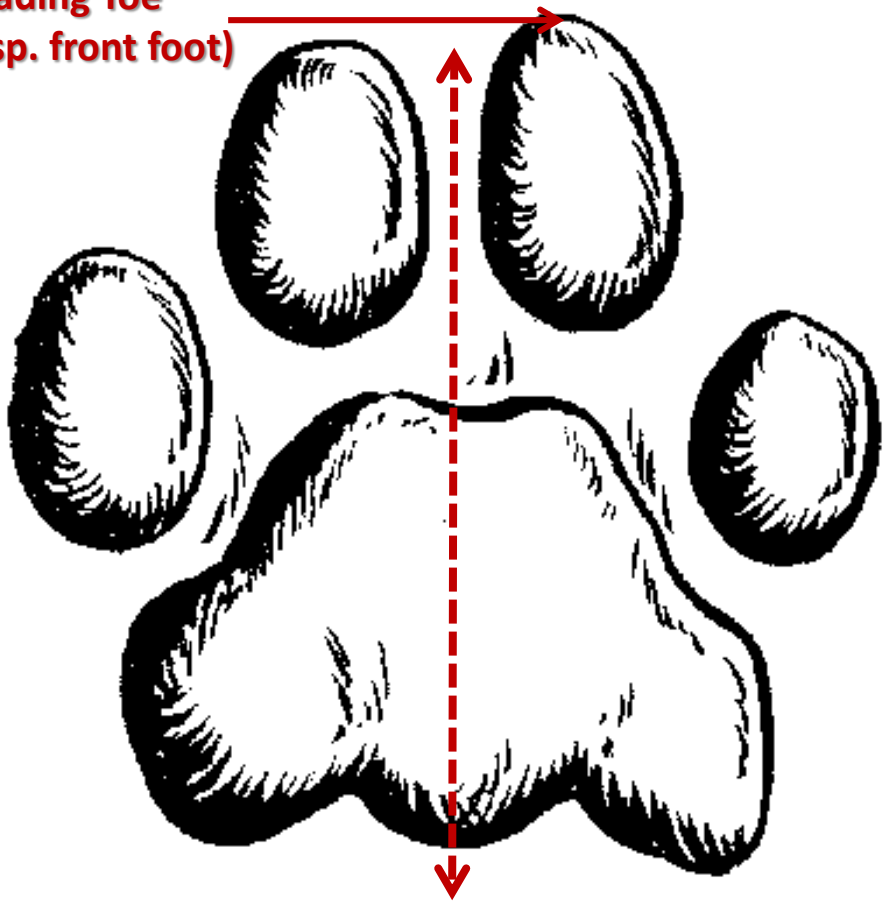


Longer than wide

Mountain Lion

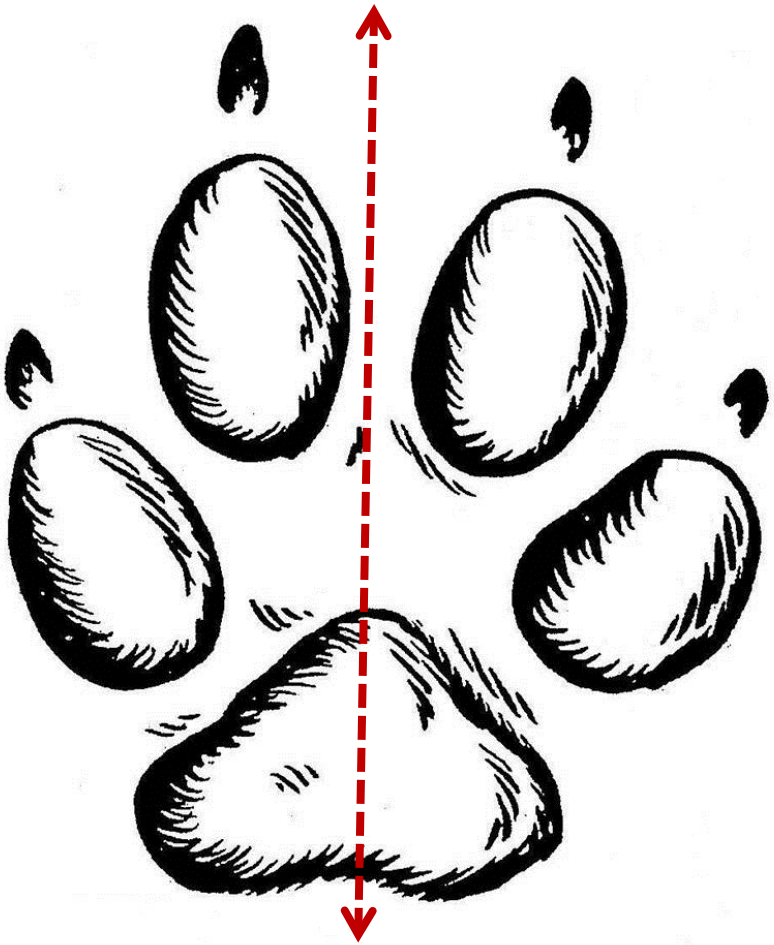
2 halves of foot not identical

Leading Toe
(esp. front foot)



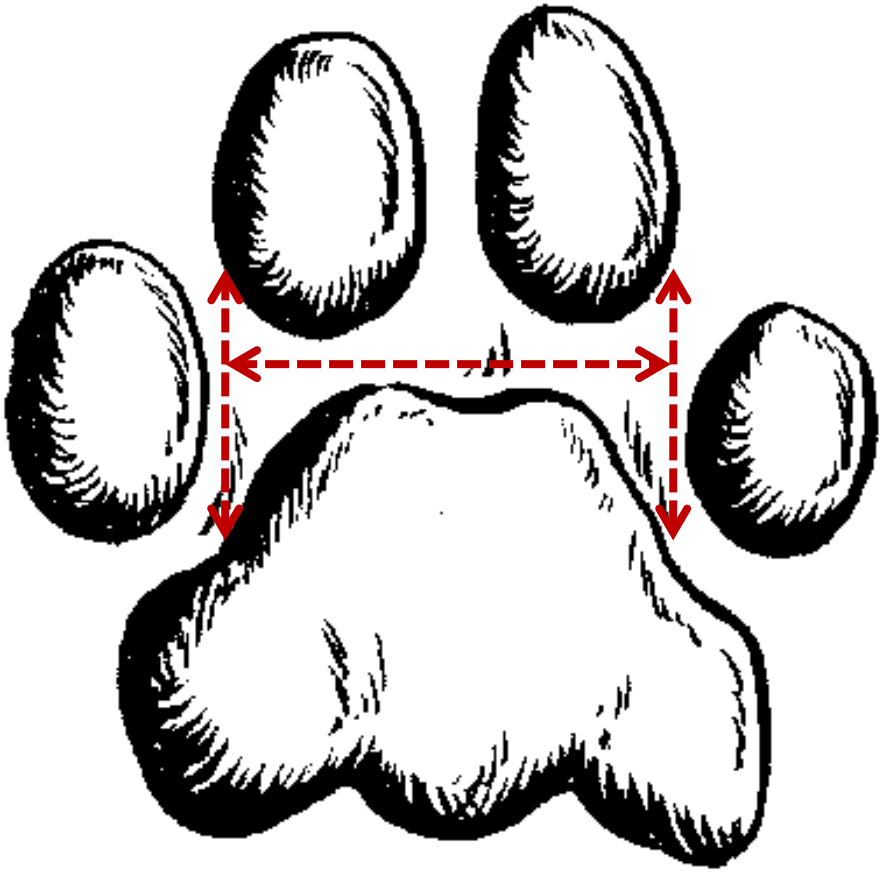
Canine

2 halves of foot generally identical



Mountain Lion

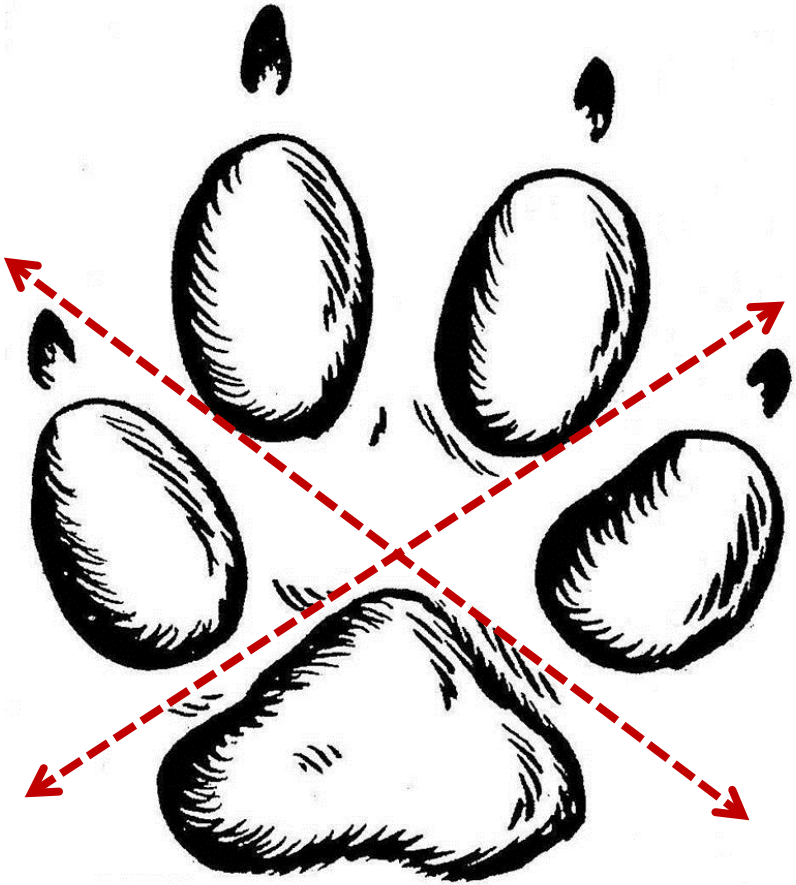
Space between toes forms an "H" pattern



Substrate does not squish up between toes and heel

Canine

Space between toes forms an "X" pattern



Substrate squishes up between toes and heel

Adult Mountain Lion

Front Foot

Rear Foot

Mountain Lion Tracks

Track Comparison Chart

Is this a mountain lion track?

No, this is a dog track.

Is this a mountain lion track?

No, this is a coyote track.

Is this a mountain lion track?

Yes, this a mountain lion track.

Is this a mountain lion track?

No, this is a house cat track.

Hint: same as mountain lion, only much smaller

Is this a mountain lion track?

No, this is a beaver track (hind foot).

Beaver tracks:
Front– 2″ L, 2″ W
Rear– 6″ L, 4″ W

Is this a mountain lion track?

Yes, this is a mountain lion track (next to a deer track).

Is this a mountain lion track?

No, this is a dog track.

The following photos are all examples of mountain lion tracks.

Mountain Lion Tracks

Mountain Lion Tracks

Mountain Lion Tracks

Mountain Lion Tracks

Mountain Lion Tracks

Mountain Lion Tracks

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