COMMON HABITAT

Rotting logs, stones, boards or any other materials lying on the ground provide good nesting sites and are excellent places to find a variety of insects including ants, termites, beetles and grubs. Grassy areas are good areas to search because insects are easily seen. The following insects can commonly be found in most locations.

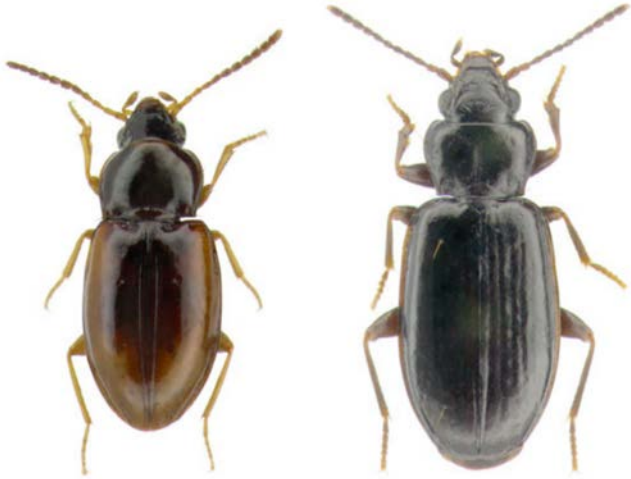
Grasshoppers. Most commonly found in open fields. Watch for them jumping out of the way when walking. Eaten raw or cooked, remove the legs.



Discover Entomology, by Carl D. Patrick, Grasshoppers and Their Control, Copyright 2008 by Texas A&M University Department of Entomology. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from http://insects.tamu.edu/extension/bulletins/l-5201.html

Figure F-1 Grasshopper

Beetles. Often found under rotting logs, stones, boards or any other material lying on the ground. Insects with hard outer shells will have parasites so cook them before eating.



Canadian Biodiversity Information Facility, Ground Beetles of Canada. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from http://www.cbif.gc.ca/spp_pages/carabids/phps/image1_e.php#Bembidiini

Figure F-2 Beetles

Unofficial convenience copy of A-CR-CCP-703/PF-001, cached 2026-11-08 from https://app.cadets.gc.ca/cadet-publications/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001.pdf.
Verify against the official publication.

Worms. Worms are an excellent source of protein. Dig for them in damp soil or watch for them on the ground after rain. After collecting them, drop them into clean, potable water for a few minutes. The worms will naturally purge or wash themselves out, after which they can be eaten raw.



Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Find Out About Earth Worms, Copyright 2004 by Cheshire Wildlife Trust. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/cheshire/watch_earthworms.htm

Figure F-3 Earth Worm

Grubs. Known as insect larva, grubs are often found under rotting logs, stones, boards or any other materials lying on the ground.



Green Smiths, Grub Worms. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from http://www.greensmiths.com/grubs.htm

Figure F-4 Grubs

Aquatic Insects. Many species of edible insects exist around the edges of lakes, or ponds, or the ocean. Cook any hard shell insects.

Unofficial convenience copy of A-CR-CCP-703/PF-001, cached 2026-11-08 from https://app.cadets.gc.ca/cadet-publications/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001.pdf.
Verify against the official publication.



P. Tawrell, Camping and Wilderness Survival: The Ultimate Outdoors Book (2nd ed.), Paul Tawrell (p. 912)

Figure F-5 Water Insects

IDENTIFYING TRACKS AND HABITAT

All animals can be a source of nourishment. The more one knows about animals, the better the chances of locating an animal. To find an animal in the wild, one must be observant for signs. If a person can recognize the signs an animal leaves, and identify the animal, one can devise a method to hunt and trap it.

Most mammals are on the move at dawn and dusk (first light, last light), using regular routes between their watering spots, feeding places and homes. Animal tracks and trails can be identified by looking for specific signs.

The following are tips to locate and identify animals:

- Tracks are more obvious on wet ground snow and damp sand.
- The size of the impression is left from their tracks.
- The age of the track can be identified by its sharpness and moisture content.
- The clearer the track the more recent it is. If water or rain has seeped into it, it may be older.
- Heavy vegetation reveals regularly used routes or paths.
- Some animals never travel very far; any tracks likely mean they are in the area.
- Smaller animals make tunnels through dense underbrush.
- Broken twigs along a route, will identify direction of travel and the height of the animal.

Rabbits and Hares

Rabbits and hares are easy to catch. They live either in burrows or above ground and most often use a specific run that they routinely retrace. Rabbits and hares have long hind legs with small front paws. When looking for rabbits or hares keep the following in mind:

- They leave little detail on soft ground.
- They have a narrow hind foot with four toes.
- They leave tracks with their hind feet in front of the forefoot instead of side by side.
- They eat tree bark and may nibble the base of a tree.

Unofficial convenience copy of A-CR-CCP-703/PF-001, cached 2026-11-08 from https://app.cadets.gc.ca/cadet-publications/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001.pdf.
Verify against the official publication.

- They warn other rabbits and hares by using their paws to create sounds. The sound emitted sounds like a thump or someone hitting a cushion.



N. Bowers, R. Bowers, and K. Kaufman, Kaufman Focus Guides: Mammals of North America, Houghton Mifflin Company (p. 35)

Figure F-6 Rabbit and Tracks

Squirrels

Squirrels are alert and very nimble. Most are active day and night – feeding on nuts, fruits, shoots and for some bird's eggs. Their nests are usually the size of a small day pack, made of sticks and leaves, high in trees. However, squirrels seek out tree hollows for winter dens. Squirrels are small and their tracks are barely noticeable. Signs of squirrel presence include:

- chewed cones,
- cone scales piled about, and
- loud and almost continuous high-pitched squeals and chirps.



N. Bowers, R. Bowers, and K. Kaufman, Kaufman Focus Guides: Mammals of North America, Houghton Mifflin Company (p. 49)

Figure F-7 Squirrel and Tracks

Marmots (Groundhog)

The groundhog is most commonly found on pastures, roadsides, and overgrown fields. Groundhogs live alone in burrows up to 9 m long (30 feet), excavated under stumps, rocks or edges of buildings. Normally there are three entrances to the burrows. They are visible, measuring 20–30 cm (8–12 inches) across, with big mounds of dirt nearby.

Unofficial convenience copy of A-CR-CCP-703/PF-001, cached 2026-11-08 from https://app.cadets.gc.ca/cadet-publications/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001.pdf.
Verify against the official publication.



N. Bowers, R. Bowers, and K. Kaufman, Kaufman Focus Guides: Mammals of North America, Houghton Mifflin Company (p. 91)

Figure F-8 Marmot (Groundhog) and Tracks

Porcupines

The porcupine is the second largest rodent. It has sharp quills that are solid at the base and barbed at the tip. This animal feeds mainly on grasses, acorns and twigs and is fond of salt. Their tracks and signs include:

- footprints, where the front paws have four toes and hind paws have five toes,
- trees with bark stripped in irregular patches, and
- nipped twigs littering the ground.



N. Bowers, R. Bowers, and K. Kaufman, Kaufman Focus Guides: Mammals of North America, Houghton Mifflin Company (p. 109)

Figure F-9 Porcupine and Tracks

Beavers

Beavers are known as dam builders. They are aquatic animals with scaly, padded-like tails. They can be found using regular runs along streams, lakes, or bogs/marshes and reside in a den known as a beaver house, where they can be trapped. Their tracks and signs include:

- fore footprints that have five toes with claw marks but, often only four show,
- rear footprints that are webbed, roundish and larger,
- water levels that are higher than normal lakes, bogs or marshes,
- the presence of a beaver dam, lodges, fallen and chewed saplings, and

Unofficial convenience copy of A-CR-CCP-703/PF-001, cached 2026-11-08 from https://app.cadets.gc.ca/cadet-publications/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001.pdf.
Verify against the official publication.

- the presence of bark shavings near water.



N. Bowers, R. Bowers, and K. Kaufman, Kaufman Focus Guides: Mammals of North America, Houghton Mifflin Company (p. 110)

Figure F-10 Beaver and Tracks

Raccoons

The “masked bandit” lives in a variety of habitats, from forests to prairies to city parks. They prefer to be in the vicinity of water and trees and are most abundant in wooded swamps. They reside in dens often in a hollow tree or log, rock crevice, cave or abandoned building. A raccoon’s diet from land sources includes nuts, fruit, insects, small rodents, and birds. Near water they will eat frogs, fish, molluscs and insects. Their tracks and signs include:

- a hind track that is about 7.62 cm (3 inches) long with 5 toes, and
- a front paw that is like a small hand with five fingers.



N. Bowers, R. Bowers, and K. Kaufman, Kaufman Focus Guides: Mammals of North America, Houghton Mifflin Company (p. 99)

Figure F-11 Raccoon and Tracks

Unofficial convenience copy of A-CR-CCP-703/PF-001, cached 2026-11-08 from https://app.cadets.gc.ca/cadet-publications/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001.pdf.
Verify against the official publication.

DETECTING SIGNS OF FEEDING

A skilled eye can often identify the species of animal by the pattern left by teeth or beak marks on a nut, or the way in which a pine cone has been stripped to get at its seeds. Some signs of feeding that my be found in the wilderness include:

- bark stripped from trees,
- the gnawed shells of nuts,
- partially eaten fruits,
- bitten off shoots,
- the remains of prey, and
- remains of carnivores or the destruction of nests.

Discarded fruits or nuts are often found when food is plentiful – an animal finds one piece not to its liking and drops it to try another. They not only disclose an animal's presence but suggest bait for traps.

FINDING DROPPINGS

Droppings (sometimes called scat) are one of the best indications of whether an animal is a herbivore or a carnivore. The size of the animal can be judged from the mass and quantity of droppings. The dropping's dryness is an indication of how long it has been since they were passed. Old droppings will be hard and odourless. Fresh droppings will be wet, still smell and may be covered by flies.

The composition of droppings can be used to figure out what kind of animal deposited it. Bits of plant material (stems, seeds, husks, and stalks) indicate an herbivore (plant eater). There is almost no scent to the droppings of a plant eater, although those that have gorged on berries leave sweet smelling scat.

Droppings filled with animal material (scales, bones, and fur) left by a carnivore, usually has a rank smell. A mass of flies indicate a pile of fresh droppings.

IDENTIFYING ROOTINGS

Some animals root up the ground in search of insects and tubers. If the earth is still crumbly and fresh an animal is likely to have been active on the spot. Small scratches may be where a squirrel or other rodents have been digging for shoots.

DETECTING SCENTS AND SMELLS

Be alert and if you smell anything out of the ordinary. Try and register the smells. They may be indications of wildlife present. Where one kind of animal exists, there will also be others.

Unofficial convenience copy of A-CR-CCP-703/PF-001, cached 2026-11-08 from https://app.cadets.gc.ca/cadet-publications/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001.pdf.
Verify against the official publication.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Unofficial convenience copy of A-CR-CCP-703/PF-001, cached 2026-11-08 from https://app.cadets.gc.ca/cadet-publications/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001/A-CR-CCP-703-PF-001.pdf.
Verify against the official publication.