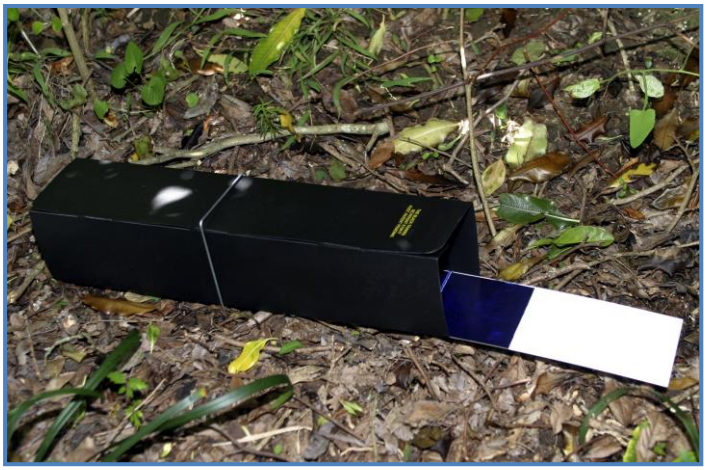
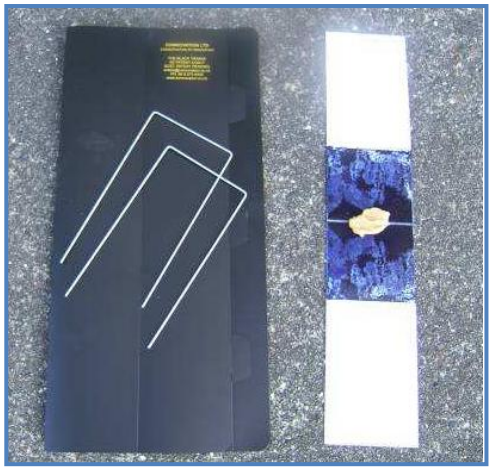
ROTOKARE
SCENIC RESERVE TRUST

What made these tracks?





There are hundreds of these black tracking tunnels in the bush at Rotokare Scenic Reserve. They are used to see if there are any pest animals hiding out at Rotokare. Most pest animals love tunnels, they are curious and like to explore. When they enter these tunnels they get a tasty treat (usually peanut butter) and unknowingly get ink on their feet. When they leave the tunnel they leave their footprints behind. Scientists have discovered how to identify lots of different animals by their footprints. This includes some good (native) animals, including lizards and insects.

Use this guide to help you identify some animal tracks!

Thanks to Warren Agnew for the photographs, animal tracks and information used

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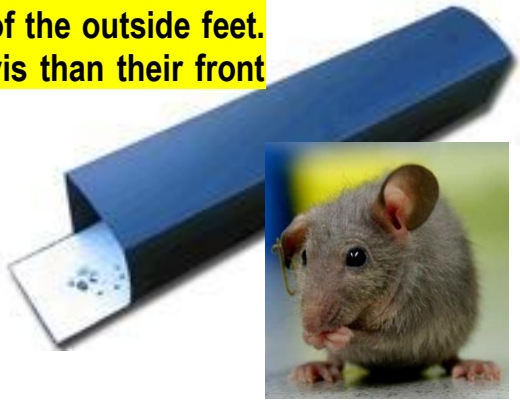
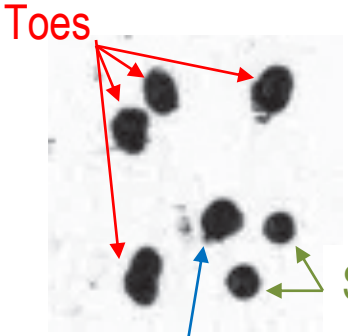
Mice

NB# We can tell whether the mouse is male or female by the position of the outside feet. Females have a wider pelvis than their front shoulders!

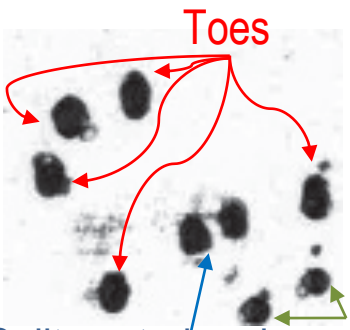


- **Mice tracks have the same pattern as rat tracks but are smaller.**
- **They have 4 toes on the front feet and a central pad.**
- **The back feet have 5 toes and the central pad is split.**

Front foot (R)



Back foot (R)



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Possums

- The front feet are smaller than the back.
- The claws are 1-1.5cm out in front of the central pads which comprise 4 main sections.

- The feet are circular in shape.
- Often possums reach into tunnels with their paws and pull the bait out, leaving a long smear mark in ink.

Actual Size

PEST

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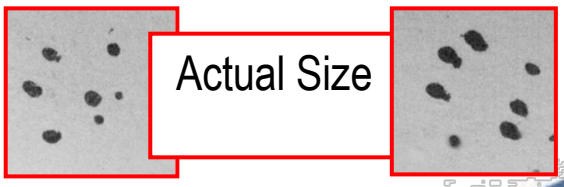
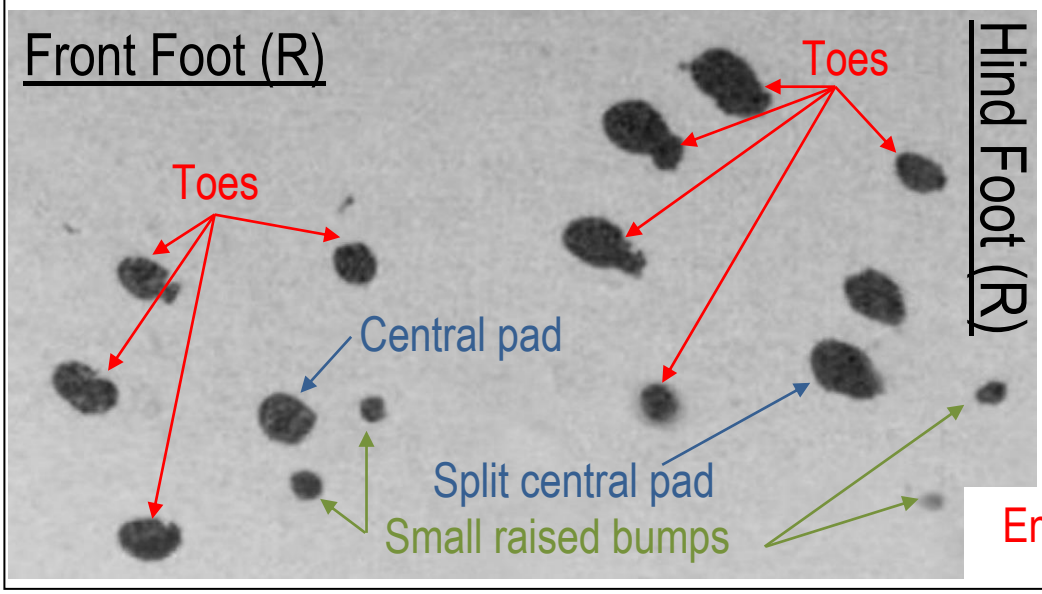
Rats



- 4 toes on the front feet and a central pad, with 5 toes and a split central pad on the hind feed, and 2 raised bumps behind the central pads.



Enlarged

PEST

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Hedgehogs

- Hedgehog prints look like little hands.
- Like other mammals, we can determine whether the animal is a female or male based on the placement of their feet.

These tracks are from a male hedgehog; see how the hind feet are placed in line with the front feet. If it was a female the hind feet would place outside of the front.

PEST

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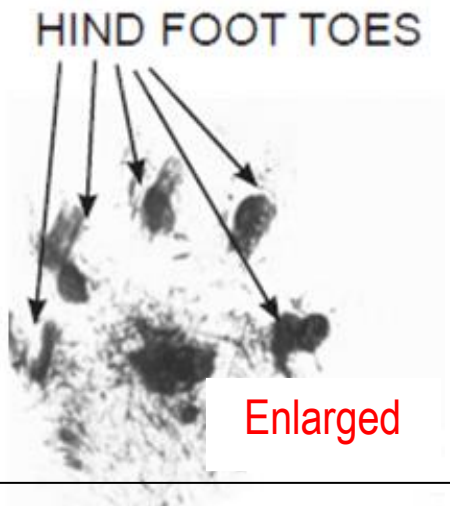
Stoats

- The front feet are 10mm in width, the back feet are 15mm in width.
- Stoat footprints have characteristic hair marks between the toes. These stoat prints belong to a female, note the hind feet are placed outside the front feet.



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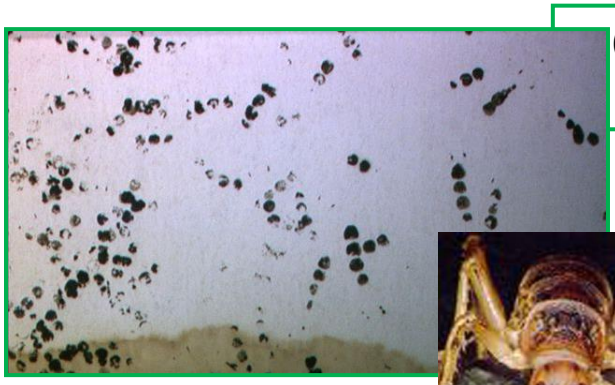
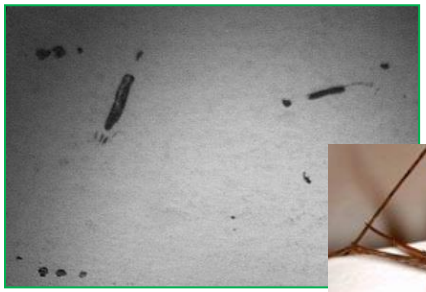
Insects

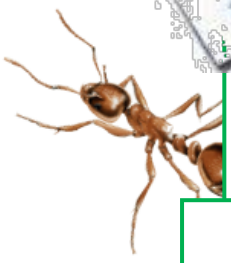
Knowing how many and what kinds of insects are around tells us a lot about forest health

Ground Weta

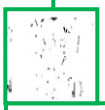




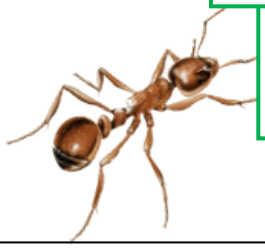
Cave Weta



Ants



Actual Size



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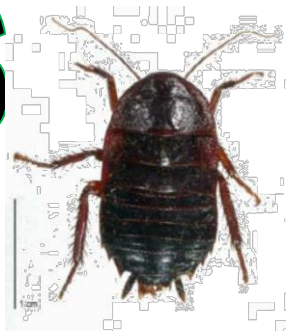
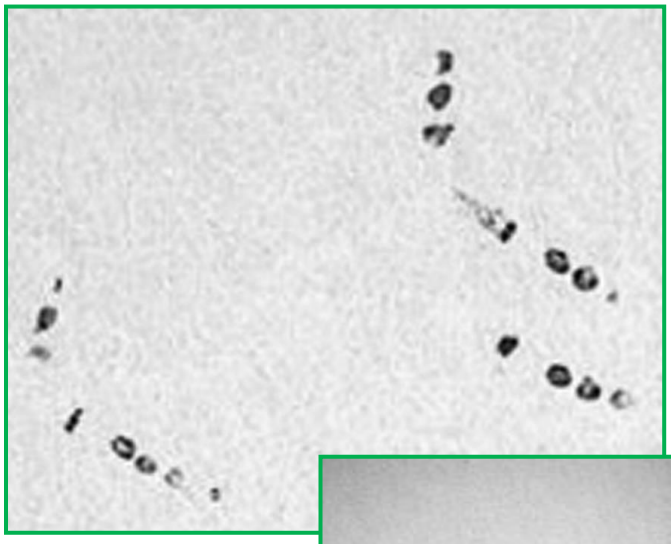
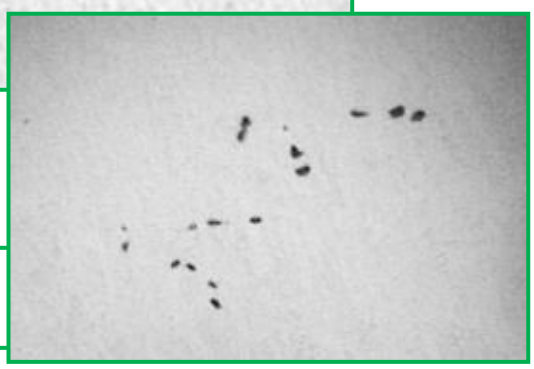
Insects





B



Earwig

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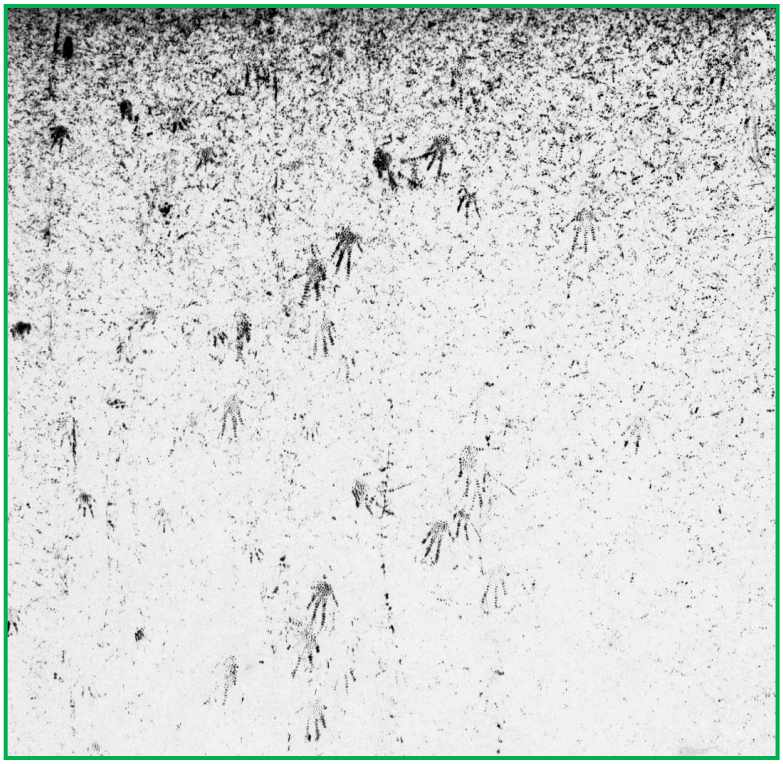
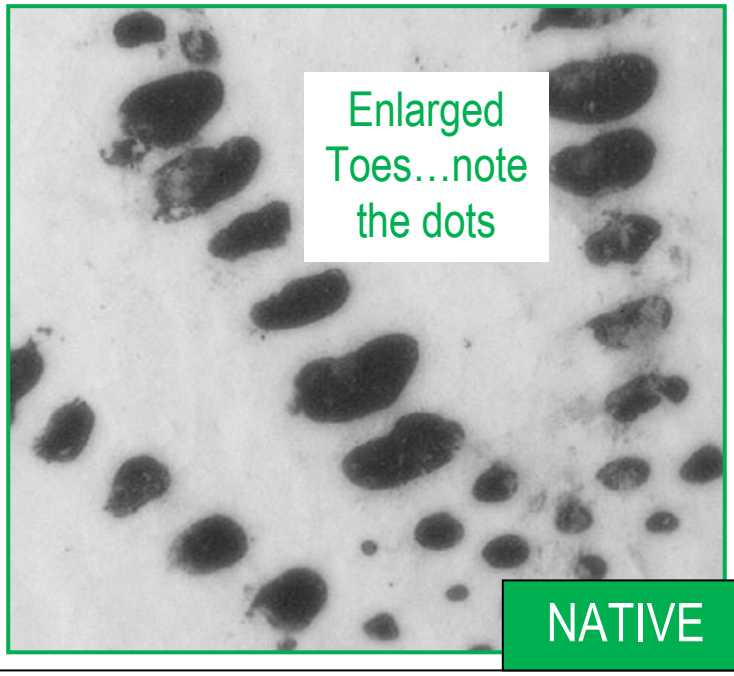
Skinks





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Geckos

Different types or species of lizards (geckos and skinks) have different foot prints; much like each person has different finger prints from anyone else. So from these footprints we can discover what types of geckos live at Rotokare!

- **Often with lizard prints the tail is visible – this is known as the tail drag.**

Gecko Foot

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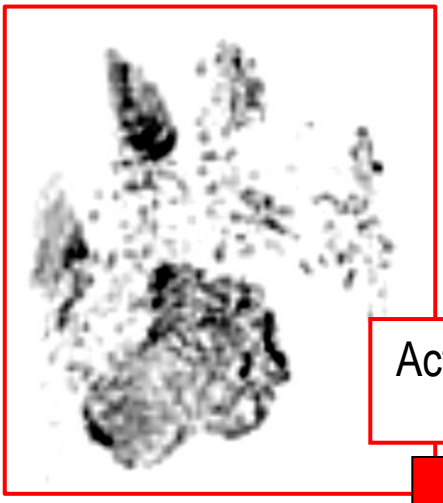
Cats

- Cat prints look like pug marks: each foot has four large, padded toes and a cushiony central “heart-shaped” pad with three bumps
- The two middle toes are not aligned with each other
- Prints are usually wider than they are long

Cat prints can be smudged or dragged as many cats don’t enter tracking tunnels fully, but drag the card out of the tunnels. Sometimes they leave fine hair and scratches on the cards!



Actual Size

PEST

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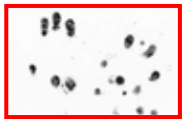
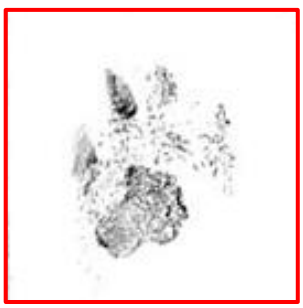
Confused?



Actual Size

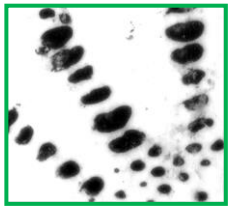
Mice vs Rats: match the sizes

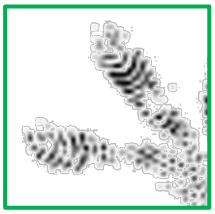
- Mice prints are much smaller than rat prints



Cats vs Possums: count the toes

- Possums have five toes; cats only have four
- Pro tip: check to see if the inkpad has any cat hair





Skinks vs Geckos: spots vs stripes

- Skinks run on the ground, so they have elevated spots for grip
- Geckos are climbing lizards, so need lines/stripes (like our fingerprints) for extra grip

MIXED