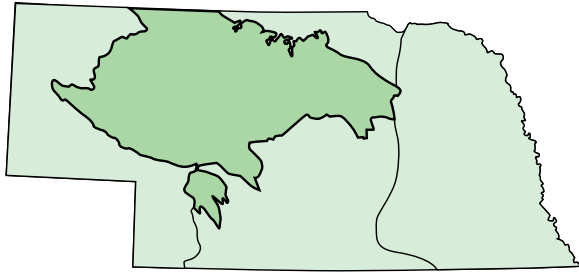


## Sandhills Region



The Sandhills region in Nebraska contains the largest area of stabilized grass covered dunes in the western hemisphere. Of the 13 million acres, over a million of these are wetlands. There are 1,600 Sandhill lakes, comprising around 80,000 surface acres of water. These wetland areas are important for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl, providing much-needed habitat. This area also sits directly atop the Ogallala aquifer, for which the wetlands play an important role in retaining and filtering the water.

This area receives 17 - 23 inches of water annually. The sandy soil of the area makes farming difficult, so this area contains one of the largest tracts of unplowed prairie in North America. People primarily use the Sandhills region for cattle grazing. With few lights from buildings and infrastructure across the Sandhills, there is low light pollution, making the area ideal for stargazing.



## Mammal Viewing Tips

**Mammals can be difficult to see due to their secretive nature.**

1. **Stay quiet and calm.**
2. **Be discreet** — wear muted clothing and limit fragrances.
3. **Look for signs** — tracks and scat can tell you if a mammal is in the area, even when you don't see them.
4. **Use binoculars** to get a closer look. Always keep a respectful distance from wildlife.
5. **Be patient.**
6. **Go to where the habitat is** — visit state parks and other public lands.
7. **Do your homework** — learn what species of mammals live in the area.



# Mammals of the Nebraska Sandhills

### Tracks

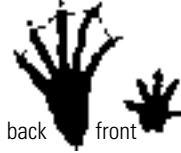


#### American Badger

Length: 2.5 - 3 in.

Width: 2.3 - 2.8 in.

Stride: 6 - 12 in. (walking)



#### Beaver

Length: f 2 - 3.2 in., h 5 - 7 in.

Width: f 2 - 3.5 in., h 3.3 - 5 in.

Stride: 3 - 6.5 in. (walking)



#### Coyote

Length: 2 - 3.2 in.

Width: 1.4 - 2.4 in.

Stride: 8 - 16 in. (walking)



#### Bobcat

Length: 1.8 - 2.5 in.

Width: 1.8 - 2.5 in.

Stride: 8 - 16 in. (walking)



#### Mule Deer

Length: 3.13 - 3.25 in.

Width: 2.5 - 2.62 in.

Stride: 21 - 24 in. (walking)

PRINTS NOT TO SCALE



## Identification Guide

**NEBRASKA**  
- GAME PARKS -

[OutdoorNebraska.org](http://OutdoorNebraska.org)



### Ord's Kangaroo Rat

*Dipodomys ordii*

**Size:** L: 8 - 14 in., W: 55 - 96 g.

**Description:** Tan back with white below. Long tail, hairy on the end and large flat hind feet.

**Diet:** Grain and occasional insects

**Habitat:** Prairie and open fields

**Viewing:** Year-round, west



### American Beaver

*Castor canadensis*

**Size:** L: 36 - 52 in., W: 34 - 64 lbs.

**Description:** Large, semi-aquatic rodent, dark brown fur, short front legs with large claws, webbed hind feet, orange teeth and long, flat scaly tail.

**Diet:** Bark, leaves, aquatic vegetation  
**Habitat:** Areas with slow-moving fresh water

**Viewing:** Year-round, statewide



### Striped Skunk

*Mephitis mephitis*

**Size:** L: 18 - 32 in., W: 2 - 13 lbs.

**Description:** Triangular head, bushy tail, black fur with thin white stripe down center of face, and white V starting at the base of the neck.

**Diet:** Insects, small mammals, seeds and fruit

**Habitat:** Rural to urban

**Viewing:** Year-round, statewide



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### Northern Grasshopper Mouse

*Onychomys leucogaster*

**Size:** L: 6.5 in., W: 25 - 40 g.

**Description:** Carnivorous mouse with brown fur above and white below, and short tail.

**Diet:** Insects and small animals

**Habitat:** Open prairie to shrubland

**Viewing:** Year-round, statewide



### Muskrat

*Ondatra zibethicus*

**Size:** L: 16.0 - 25.5 in., W: 2.5 - 3.5 lbs.

**Description:** Semi-aquatic rodent with dark brown head, coloring gets lighter moving down sides and back. Partly webbed hind toes and long, nearly hairless tail.

**Diet:** Cattails, aquatic vegetation

**Habitat:** Shallow water, wetlands

**Viewing:** Year-round, statewide



### Bobcat

*Lynx rufus*

**Size:** L: 30 - 48 in., W: 11 - 30 lbs.

**Description:** Varied brown fur with darker speckle/spotting, tufted ears, large paws, and short, bobbed tail.

**Diet:** Animals, mainly small prey

**Habitat:** Various, forest to fields

**Viewing:** Year-round, statewide



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### Plains Pocket Gopher

*Geomys bursarius*

**Size:** L: 7.8 in., W: 128 - 380 g.

**Description:** Varied brown with light belly. 3.5-inch, almost naked tail. Small eyes and ears. Large front claws.

**Diet:** Roots and tubers

**Habitat:** Under sandy grassland soils

**Viewing:** Year-round, statewide



### River Otter

*Lontra canadensis*

**Size:** L: 35 - 52 in., W: 11 - 30 lbs.

**Description:** Semi-aquatic, brown fur, flat head, long body and tail, short legs.

**Diet:** Fish, eggs, crayfish, reptiles and small mammals

**Habitat:** Rivers, ponds, lakes and marshes

**Viewing:** Year-round, statewide



### Coyote

*Canis latrans*

**Size:** L: 48 - 53 in., W: 15 - 46 lbs.

**Description:** Gray-brown fur above, whiter below. Triangular ears, black nose and bushy tail.

**Diet:** Various animals and some plants

**Habitat:** Various, rural to urban

**Viewing:** Year-round, statewide



### Black-tailed Jackrabbit

*Lepus californicus*

**Size:** L: 18 - 24 in., W: 4 - 8 lbs.

**Description:** Peppered brown fur with black stripe down back, long legs and black-tipped ears.

**Diet:** Plants

**Habitat:** Open prairie and shrubland

**Viewing:** Year-round, statewide



### American Badger

*Taxidea taxus*

**Size:** L: 20 - 35 in., W: 9 - 27 lbs.

**Description:** Long brown-black fur with white cheeks and white stripe from nose to back of neck.

**Diet:** Animals, mainly small prey

**Habitat:** Open areas, prairies

**Viewing:** Year-round, statewide



### Mule Deer

*Odocoileus hemionus*

**Size:** L: 54 - 84 in., W: 130 - 280 lbs.

**Description:** Dark to light brown-gray, white tail with black tip and oversized ears. Males have antlers.

**Diet:** Grass and forbes

**Habitat:** Various, rural to urban

**Viewing:** Year-round, west