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**Tracker Academy 1775847748**

# Tracker Manual: A Practical Guide to Animal Tracking in Southern Africa

Official Instruction Manual

## ABOUT THIS MANUAL

This manual, "Tracker Manual: A Practical Guide to Animal Tracking in Southern Africa," is a revised and expanded second edition. It serves as a comprehensive guide to animal tracking, developed by experienced Southern African traditional trackers. The content draws upon centuries of accumulated wisdom regarding wildlife observation in natural environments.

The second edition incorporates an additional 26 species, approximately 200 new photographs, and updated track drawings. It provides clear, bulleted text to highlight key features of tracks for around 200 animals, including predators, large mammals, birds, and insects. Where applicable, it also details their habits, diet, droppings, and territorial behaviors.

Multiple annotated photographs illustrate animals, their tracks, dung, middens, and scrapes, guiding users on what signs to identify. Supplementary features include a table for bird track sizes and a comparative table for easily confused animal footprints. The introduction covers track morphology, animal gaits, track age recognition, and the necessary skills and mindset for accurate identification.

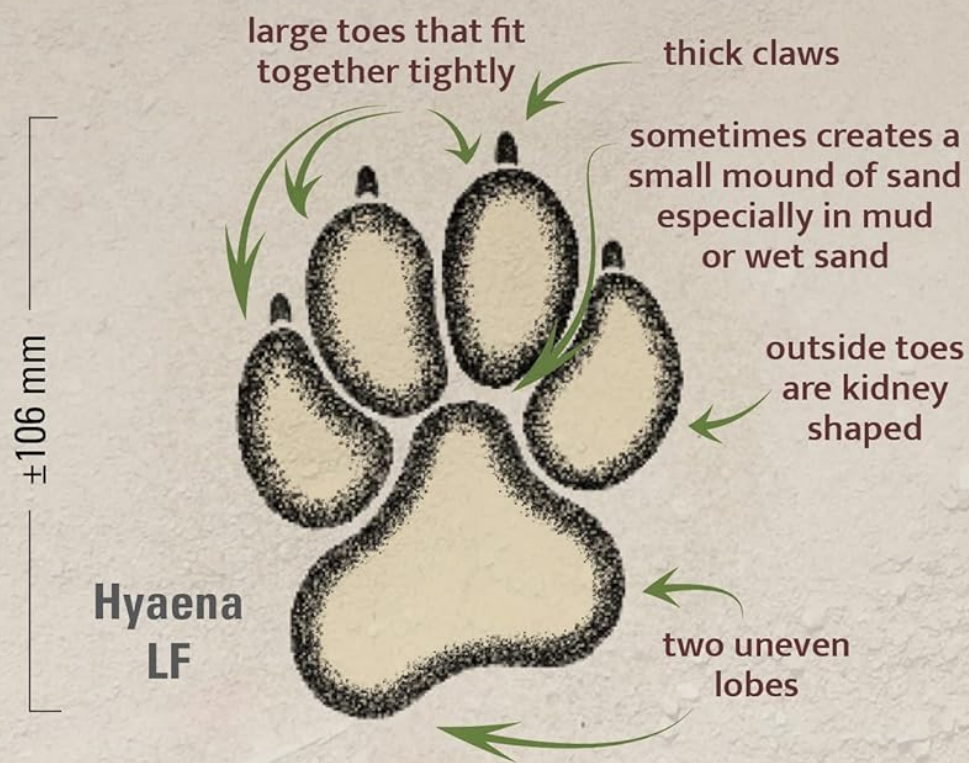
This richly illustrated manual is an invaluable resource for field use and for individuals seeking to interpret animal tracks and signs in the Southern African region.

## KEY TRACKING CONCEPTS

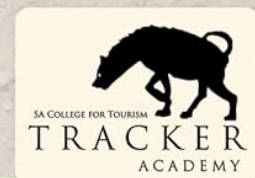
Understanding animal tracks involves observing specific characteristics. This section provides an example of a hyena track and its distinguishing features.

# TRACKER MANUAL

A practical guide to animal tracking in southern Africa



**Alex van den Heever**  
**Renias Mhlongo**  
**Karel Benadie**



All royalties go to Tracker Academy, an NGO that teaches wildlife tracking in South Africa

**Image Description:** An illustration of a Hyena's left front (LF) paw print. The track measures approximately 106 mm in length. Annotations point to key features: "large toes that fit together tightly," "thick claws," "sometimes creates a small mound of sand especially in mud or wet sand," "outside toes are kidney shaped," and "two uneven lobes." This image is from the cover of the "Tracker Manual."

## Hyena Track Characteristics (Left Front Paw)

- **Overall Size:** Approximately 106 mm in length.
- **Toes:** Large toes that fit together tightly.
- **Claws:** Thick claws are typically visible.
- **Sand Displacement:** May create a small mound of sand, particularly in mud or wet sand.
- **Outside Toes:** Often kidney-shaped.
- **Heel Pad:** Features two uneven lobes.

## HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This manual is designed for practical application in the field and for study. To maximize its utility:

1. **Familiarize Yourself with the Introduction:** The introductory sections provide foundational knowledge on track morphology, animal gaits, and track age recognition.
2. **Study Species Profiles:** Each species entry includes bulleted text highlighting key track features, habits, diet, droppings, and territorial behavior.
3. **Utilize Visual Aids:** Refer to the numerous annotated photographs and track drawings to compare with observations in the field.
4. **Consult Comparative Tables:** Use the bird track size table and the comparative footprint table for species that are easily confused to aid in identification.
5. **Practice Observation:** The manual serves as a guide; consistent field practice is essential for developing tracking skills.

## SPECIFICATIONS

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Authors	Alex van den Heever, Karel 'Pokkie' Benadie, Renias Mhlongo

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND TRACKER ACADEMY

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The "Tracker Manual" is a collaborative effort by renowned trackers:

- **Alex van den Heever:** A founder member and general manager of the Tracker Academy. He has extensive experience as an environmental manager, guide, and trainer of trackers in South Africa, having also studied traditional tracking skills globally.
- **Karel 'Pokkie' Benadie:** With 33 years as a tracker and field ranger in the Karoo National Park, he contributed significantly to scientific research on black rhino habits. He is a founder member and the principal trainer at the Tracker Academy, based at Samara Game Reserve.
- **Renias Mhlongo:** Born in the greater Kruger National Park, he was instrumental in habituating the leopards of Londolozi in the 1980s. He has lived for 32 years at Londolozi. He is a founder member and head Academy trainer at Londolozi Game Reserve.

The [Tracker Academy](#) is an NGO dedicated to teaching wildlife tracking in South Africa. All royalties from this manual support the Academy's mission.

