



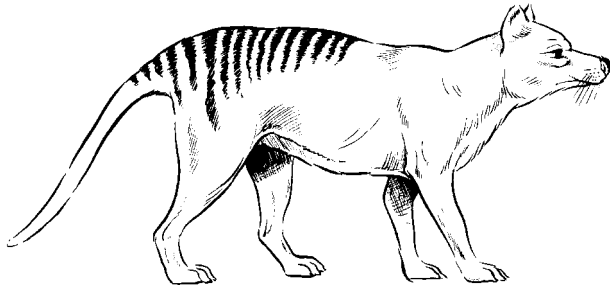
Tracks Through Time – Animal Footprints

The footprint drawn in the journal for *Tracks Through Time* is from a Tasmanian Tiger or Thylacine.

Animals leave traces wherever they go, such as scats (faeces or poo), hair, scratch marks and footprints. Footprints are easiest to see in the morning or late afternoon when the shadows are long (to highlight the print). The best areas to look for footprints are in creek and dam banks, roadside, dried out puddles, claypans and beaches. People such as scientists and trackers look for footprints to find certain animals. By studying footprints, trackers can determine how the animal walks (its gait) and whether it was walking, running, dragging its tail, etc. Four legged animals usually leave four footprints - two back (or hind) feet and two front feet.

The *Tracks Through Time* exhibit has footprints for the following animals, all of which are found in mainland Australia and/or Tasmania (which is an island below mainland Australia).

Tasmanian Tiger (*Thylacine cynocephalus*)



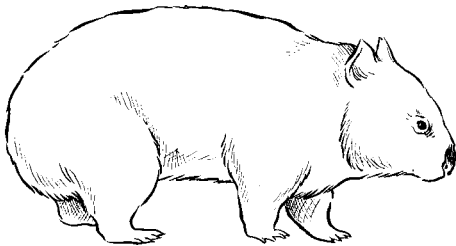
The Tasmanian Tiger or thylacine had tracks about the same size as a red fox. Photographs showed that when standing, it sometimes stood on the whole of the hind foot, so the heel pad would leave an impression. It trotted stiffly and ran awkwardly and only the front part of the foot seemed to touch the ground. Although it was called a tiger, the thylacine had a quiet, nervous temperament and only resembled normal tigers in its striped coat. During the 1700s, thylacines were only found in Tasmania, Australia. They are marsupial carnivores, generally thought to be extinct, although unofficial sightings are occasionally reported in Tasmania and Victoria. Fossils of thylacines can be found throughout Australia. It used to be widespread on mainland Australia about 7 000 years ago and has probably been extinct there for 2 000 years, due to competition with dingoes, which were introduced at least 8 000 years ago to the mainland. When Europeans arrived in Tasmania about 200 years ago, thylacines were seen as a threat to stock (sheep and cattle) and were shot on sight. A bounty was placed on their pelts and many were trapped for zoos. The last known living thylacine died in a Tasmanian zoo in 1936. While thylacines were found in Tasmania, they were not distributed around Adventure Bay where the explorers landed (on Bruny Island off south east coast of Tasmania). They have been included for the purposes of this exhibition.

Tasmanian Devil (*Sarcophilus harrisi*)



Found only in Tasmania, the Tasmanian Devil has squarish shaped footprints. While Tasmanian Devils were found in Tasmania, they were not distributed around Adventure Bay where the explorers landed (on Bruny Island off south east coast of Tasmania). They have been included for the purposes of this exhibition.

Common wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*)



Found in wet and dry open forest with dense undergrowth and grassy areas, alpine woodland and sandy heathland on the south east coast of Australia and Tasmania. Their tracks are easy to identify, because wombats walk with a slow, heavy gait.

Spot tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*)



These quolls are found in open forest, rainforest and dense coastal heathland along the east coast of Australia and Tasmania. They have a small, clawless toe and they tend to walk or bound along.