

## Deer and Turkey Animal Habitats and Clues

This guide will help you identify where to look for certain animal tracks. Also, it will list other signs to look for in order to determine if an animal has been in the area.

### White-tailed Deer

**Spring** – Does (females) seek seclusion for fawning (having babies) in brushy fields, heavily vegetated stream bottoms, forest edges, pastures and hayfields.

**Summer** – Deer can be found wherever food, water and seclusion exists.

**Fall** – Standing corn is often used for travel, food and shelter.

**Winter** – Heavy timber, cattails, tall weeds and heavy brush provide adequate cover for the harsh Iowa winter.



**A pair of Does (females)**



**Mature Buck (male)**

### **Deer Scat**



### **Deer Bed**



Look for areas where deer have laid down. In heavily vegetated areas you can see them by looking for oval-shaped areas of grass that have been pushed flat. You can also look for depressions or cleared areas in the snow in the winter. Deer like to bed on south-facing slopes in the winter to stay warm in the sun and out of the cold north wind.

## Deer Rub



In the late summer or early fall many bucks (males) rub trees in order to shed the velvet from their newly-acquired antlers. Bucks make rubs on trees each fall to alert the does and other bucks in the area that they are present and ready to breed. They also do this in order to strengthen their neck muscles for fighting. Large bucks like to use more mature trees for rubbing (4" – 8" in diameter) and younger ones prefer to use saplings.

## Examples of rubs



## Deer Scrape



These are marks made by bucks in the area by scraping their antlers and hooves on the ground. These are commonly found before the breeding season in the fall. Look for areas where fallen leaves have been cleared and marks have been made. Deer also urinate in these areas.

## Deer Trail



Deer trails are easy to identify in the winter because of snow cover. In the other times of the year look for long narrow strips of barren land going through a wooded area or just along the edge of a forest. Trails can also be found through grassy areas.



## **Wild Turkey**

**Spring, Summer and Fall** – Turkeys can be found in mature oak-hickory forests feeding on a variety of nuts, seeds and berries. In the Spring turkeys breed and large groups of them can be spotted in open fields where the Toms (males) strut for the hens (females) in order to attract them for mating purposes.

**Winter** – Turkeys rely on what is left of acorns and other nuts in the early winter. They also can be found in open fields where they commonly feed on harvested corn and soybeans that were left behind. When snow gets deep, turkeys switch to mainly corn.



**A pair of mature Toms (males)**



**A Hen turkey (female)**



**A Jake (immature male)**

## **Turkey Scratching**



Look for bare plots of dirt with a pile of leaves next to them. Wild turkeys often scratch the ground in order to clear it looking for nuts and bugs to eat.

## **Turkey Dusting Spot**



Turkeys like to dust themselves in areas cleared of vegetation. Look for their tracks in the dirt and also prints from their wings (above).

### **Turkey Droppings**



### **Turkey roosted in a tree**



Turkeys roost at night in large-mature trees. If you listen closely, you can here the male turkeys gobble when they get to their spot in the tree at dusk. They also call in the morning before they leave the roost to feed.