

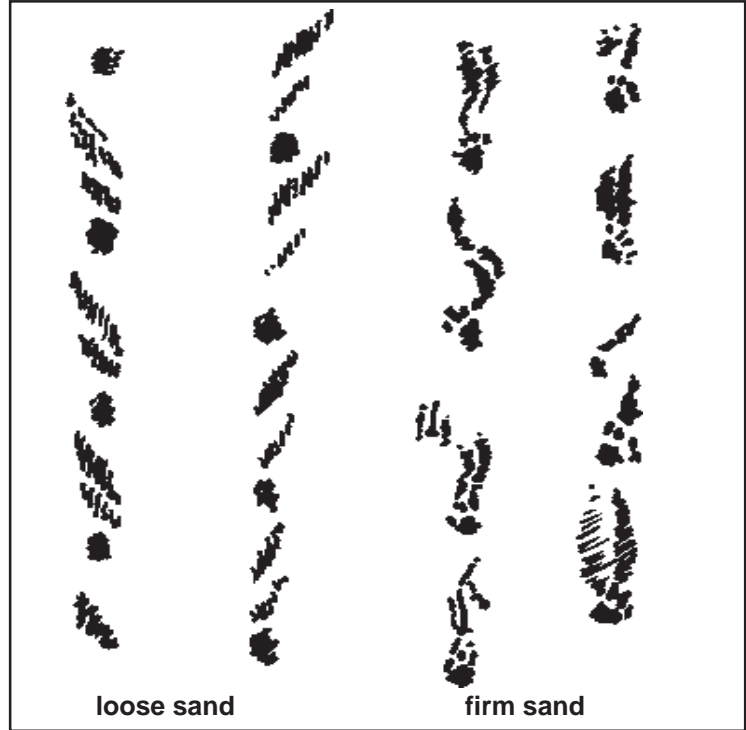
Desert Tortoise - Tracks -



Photo: U.S. Army, Fort. Irwin, CA

The desert tortoise has very distinctive tracks, as a result of its body structure and its relatively slow walk. Tracks of all four feet have similar size (approx. 1 inch) and stumpy shape, with no webbing between the toes, resembling those of elephants but with long nails, which they use for digging. Track length (gait) is not much greater than their width. The tracks appear to be almost parallel on both sides.

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Depending on the hardness of the substrate where they are imprinted, some tracks can be more defined than others (see drawing). In soft substrates such as loose sand, tortoise tracks appear as mere depressions; on firmer sand the feet and nails are better defined.



California Department of Pesticide Regulation
Endangered Species Project
www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/endspec/index.htm

