

Observing Animals' Feet

There are different types of animals' feet.



FLAT-FOOTED

Flat-footed animals walk on palms and all bones of the feet below the ankle. This group includes climbers, runners, and burrowers. They are slow in speed compared to other running animals.



TOE-RUNNERS

Toe-runners run on the bones of their toes. The wrists and ankles do not touch the ground as they run. Some of these animals can also climb or burrow. All birds are toe-runners.



NAIL-RUNNERS

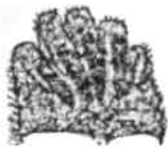
Nail-runners run on the tips of their toes on hooves (thickened nails). No burrowers or climbers are in this group.

Some animals have adaptations that help them climb.



OPPOSABLE DIGITS

Grasping digits are fingers or toes that can wrap around a branch for a sure grip.



CLIMBING CLAWS

Climbing claws are curved and sharply pointed to dig into tree bark.



PREHENSILE TAIL

Prehensile tail can be wrapped around a branch for support. It must be able to hold all or part of an animal's weight.

Balancing tail is long and helps the animal maintain balance, but cannot grasp tree branches.

Some animals have adaptations that help them burrow.



DIGGING CLAWS

Digging claws are broad and blunt and are used together to dig.

Broadened feet are wide and flat paws that act like scoops or shovels. Sometimes fur or bristles help make the paws wider.

Some animals have adaptations that help them hop.



Hind legs are longer and more muscular than front legs and move together. Such legs have long toes to help absorb the impact of hitting the ground during fast hopping.

Balancing tails are long and help the animal turn when running and balance when standing.

