

Guide for the footprint detective

Visitors can spot the muddy beds where the footprints appear from the top of the dunes and the highest band is located about 50 metres out. This band is divided into separate beds, many of which are only occasionally visible, and stretches along the whole of Formby point.

The different types of footprints that are most commonly found are as follows:

Humans



Print Size

Adult Males: 22-31cm, UK shoe size 4-13, Estimated Height 5'6"-6'-2"

Adult Female and adolescent: 18-25cm, UK shoe size 1-7, Estimated Height 4'8"-5'9"

Toddlers and children: 5-16cm, Estimated Height 1'2"-3'8"

Aurochs



Print Size

Prehistoric range 22-28cm

A very large type of wild ox, now extinct, the aurochs was approximately 6 feet high and 11 feet long with large horns. A fearsome sight for our hunter ancestors but a huge result if brought down successfully in terms of meat, bone and hide.

Red Deer



Print Size

Prehistoric Range: 10-15cm

Modern Average: 9cm

There are more red deer prints on the beach than of any other animal and they are much larger than the breed living today.

Roe Deer



Print Size

Prehistoric Range: 4-5cm

Modern Average: 4-5cm

Roe deer grazed in the marshes probably with the red deer at dawn and dusk. Their prints are similar, but they are much smaller and rounded at the back.

Wild Boar



Print Size

Prehistoric Range: 8cm

Modern Average: Variable

The prints of the wild boar are seldom spotted. They would have eaten the shoots of the reeds and would have enjoyed wallowing in the mud.

Oystercatcher



Print Size

Prehistoric Range: 4-7cm

Modern Average: 6cm

Oystercatchers were one of the most common birds along the coast and their footprints are found with great frequency.

Crane



Print Size

Prehistoric Range: 15cm

Modern Average: 15cm

Cranes are no longer found in the north of England, but during prehistoric times were commonly found in coastal regions. They would have nested on the edge of the wetland.

Dog/Wolf



Print Size

Prehistoric Range: 8cm

Modern Average: Variable

A jawbone of a Neolithic dog was discovered some years ago. It's dating, along with a set of red deer antlers, helped establish the age of these prints. Dogs were domesticated at this time and would have associated with the humans on the beach. However, the most significant dating was done on the sediment itself, which was dated to at least 5,400 BC in the Mesolithic period.