Identifying Types of Wildlife Poop

Just as wild animals themselves can be dangerous and carry potentially harmful diseases and parasites, their waste is no different.

Below, you’ll find a complete guide to help you identify the poop of some of the most common backyard guests.

Coyote Poop

Coyotes are an [**important part of the ecosystem**](https://www.friscotexas.gov/DocumentCenter/View/24389/Coyote-Fact-Sheet#:~:text=As%20the%20top%20carnivore%20in,foxes%2C%20which%20helps%20boost%20biodiversity.), and the conservation of this interesting native species is important. However, it’s important to know if you have these canine visitors in your area for your well-being. Not only can their waste pose significant health risks by spreading parasites, but the animal behind the poop can also pose a threat to chickens and small pets.

[**Coyote poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/coyote-scat-how-to-tell-if-a-coyote-pooped-in-your-yard/) is often large and tubular, and it can resemble a knotted rope with many different pieces. The most distinguishing feature are the tapered, curly ends. If you’re able to safely take a close look, you may notice signs of their most recent meals, such as fur, bones, and even the remains of berries and grasses. In most cases, you’ll also be able to see parasites.

At first glance, it can be difficult to distinguish a dog’s poop from a coyote’s. However, a dog’s poop will not often contain animal remains. Parasites are also uncommon. If you’re unable to get a look at the actual contents of the waste itself, however, you can look at its overall appearance. Where a dog’s poop is soft, making it an unfortunate mess to step in, a coyote’s is firmer, even hard in some cases. It’s also larger, and the curly ends set it apart.

Squirrel Poop

Wondering exactly what type of animal has decided to take up residence in your attic? Want to know who is visiting your bird feeder? Identifying [**squirrel poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/squirrel-poop-what-do-squirrel-droppings-look-like/) is basic in wildlife poop identification. This is because squirrels can be found everywhere in the world except for Australia and Antarctica, making them one of the most common species around.

Since they are all rodents, squirrels have similar waste to that of rats and mice. This can make it difficult to differentiate between poops. However, there are a few clues to look out for.

[**Squirrel**](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/squirrel/) waste can come in many colors, ranging from dark brown to tan to reddish. It comes out in little pellets with rounded ends. These rounded ends, plus their size of around ⅜ inches, can make it easy to tell apart from rat waste. (You’ll learn how to identify rat poop later on in this list!)

Squirrels are intelligent animals that like to construct “bathrooms.” This means that they will usually use the restroom in the same place, allowing all their pellets to accumulate.

Like all rodent waste, squirrel poop can carry diseases and parasites, making it a health hazard.

Chipmunk Poop

[**Chipmunk droppings**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/chipmunk-droppings-how-to-tell-if-youre-looking-at-chipmunk-poop/) also resemble rat and squirrel waste. Like squirrels, chipmunks are selective about where they choose to use the restroom. This is because they are a prey species, and their waste can lead predators to their homes. By creating a special restroom area, they can better cover their scent and location, helping to keep them safe.

This can make it difficult to tell if you have chipmunks nearby, however, especially if you’re not sure what you’re looking for!

In the Goldilocks of rodent droppings, [**chipmunk**](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/chipmunk/) waste falls right in the middle. Similar to rice in appearance, chipmunk poop is larger than a mouse’s poop but smaller than a rat’s poop. It can also range from brown to black, while rat droppings are only black, and mouse poop is much lighter.

Chipmunk waste can carry a lot of different types of viruses. Many of these can be dangerous to humans. As a result, special guidelines are in place to help ensure that you can safely remove droppings from your home. For instance, you should wait one week before picking them up, allowing for the viruses to become inactive.

Raccoon Poop

Aside from rats and mice, raccoons are probably one of the most common visitors to show up in urban and suburban environments. Although they’re most common in forests, prairies, and meadows, they can also be found rooting through your outdoor belongings and trash. They’re not picky eaters in the slightest, so many different things can attract them to your home.

How do you know if you’ve been visited by one of these adorable creatures? Look for their waste, of course!

Like with all wild animals, it’s important to avoid interacting with a raccoon if you happen to find one in your yard. Although they can be extremely cute, they are also extremely dangerous, and they can spread diseases and viruses to humans. They may also bite or scratch! As a result, if you notice that you have a raccoon in your yard, make sure to take the proper precautions to keep them away. This includes securing trash and pet food.

Believe it or not, [**raccoon poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/raccoon-poop-what-does-raccoon-scat-look-like/) looks quite similar to dog poop. They both have tubular feces that are typically a couple of inches long. One of the best ways to identify a raccoon’s waste is to look for any food that may have passed through its digestive system. This typically includes seeds or undigested grasses and berries.

Raccoons create what are known as community latrines. This means that different raccoons living in the same area frequently use a single “restroom.” The bulk of waste accumulated in a single area paired with the unique, strong odor produced by their feces can make it easy to locate this spot around your property.

Groundhog Poop

One of the largest types of rodents, groundhogs, also known as woodchucks, are some of the cleanest animals around when it comes to waste. In fact, a groundhog could be living near your home for a long time before you even realize it. While you may find signs of their residence elsewhere, you’ll rarely find [**groundhog poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/groundhog-poop-everything-youve-ever-wanted-to-know/).

This is because groundhogs build underground latrines. While other types of rodents have special areas for using the restroom, few other species create their own concealed bathroom!

If you do happen to come across a groundhog’s waste, you can identify it by its shape and size. Their droppings are small, dark brown ovals.

Rat Poop

After learning more about squirrel and chipmunk waste, you may have a bit of an idea of what to expect when it comes to [**rat poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/rat-poop-what-do-rat-droppings-look-like/). However, while all rodent waste is similar in many ways, you’ll also find that there are several differences.

Unlike other types of rodents, rats aren’t all that sanitary when it comes to their bathroom habitats. While squirrels and groundhogs will have set areas to use the bathroom, this isn’t the case for rats. Rats will use the bathroom whenever they need to, even while walking! This can result in scattered pellets all around your home or wherever the rat has taken up residence.

When it comes to identifying rat droppings, you’ll find that they are small, dark, and cylinder-shaped. When you first see them, you may think they are raisins or even coffee beans. However, their droppings are much thinner than either of these.

Mouse Poop

While it may seem like [**mouse poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/mouse-poop-what-do-mouse-droppings-look-like/) would be identical to that of a rat’s, you’ll be surprised to learn that they’re actually quite different! The most notable difference is in size. Mouse droppings can be so small that you may miss them altogether or mistake them for dirt. They are brown and around the size of a grain of rice.

While you may be able to find mouse droppings around your house, you’ll probably notice other signs of this tiny critter before you find their waste. This includes scraps of cotton and fabric where they build their nests, gnaw marks on furniture, or scratching sounds.

Cockroach Poop

Have you ever considered that insects “use the bathroom” in your home? It can be an unsettling fact but a true one, nonetheless. For instance, cockroaches can leave waste all throughout your house.

When it comes to [**cockroach poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/cockroach-poop-identifying-roach-droppings-vs-mouse-droppings-and-others/), it can actually easily be mistaken for mouse poop. In fact, since [**cockroach**](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/cockroach/) droppings are small, dark pieces similar to grains of rice, it can be almost impossible to tell them apart. The best way to distinguish these two types of droppings is to consider where you find them.

Cockroaches are able to access areas that mice cannot, such as underneath your appliances. This is thanks to their small, flat bodies. As a result, if you’ve found a questionable dropping in a tight crevice, then it is likely from a cockroach rather than a mouse.

Turkey Poop

Whether for hunting purposes or out of curiosity, you may be wondering if you ever have any turkey visitors in your yard. While you can stake them out in the early morning hours, an easier way to know is to search for [**turkey poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/turkey-poop-everything-youve-ever-wanted-to-know/).

Surprisingly, turkey poop isn’t like most of the bird droppings you’ll see on benches, tables, or on your card. In fact, at first glance, you may even mistake turkey poop for mammal droppings!

One of the most important things to know about turkey poop is that males and females pass different-sized droppings. This is because of their anatomy, which can change the shape of their waste. Males have large J-shaped droppings, while females have coil-shaped poop. Both have uric acid present in their waste, like other birds. This can cause it to have a white color in some areas.

Bat Guano

[**Bat poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/bat-poop-what-does-bat-guano-look-like-whats-it-used-for/) actually has a very specific name: guano. Bat feces are not like most of the droppings you’ve learned about so far, which is one reason why it has a different name. First, because they eat mostly fruits and vegetables, there’s not a lot of undigested material in their waste. However, sometimes you can find seeds or leftovers from the insects they’ve eaten.

As for size and shape, bat guano is small and round. It’s also very crumbly and can turn to a dust-like texture when touched. However, like most types of wildlife waste, bat guano can pose a serious health risk to humans. As a result, you should make sure that you never touch it, especially without proper personal protection.

Interestingly, in some areas of the world, bat guano chemicals have been known to turn animals orange!

Bear Poop

Nobody wants to walk out of their house one day and come nose to nose with a bear. This is especially true for people with small pets that go outside in the wee hours to use the bathroom, which can lead to dangerous run-ins. As a result, learning to identify [**bear poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/bear-poop-what-does-bear-scat-look-like/) is important for your safety and the well-being of your pets.

Bear scat can actually change in appearance based on the season. In the spring, bears are known to fill up on grasses and insects, giving their waste a green appearance. In the summer and fall, you’ll notice more berries and fruits. Not only can their waste change on a season-to-season basis, but it can also change on a day-to-day basis. It all depends on what these opportunistic eaters have recently had on their menu!

There are also several different species of bear. This can lead to some differences in the appearance of their waste, such as contents, color, and size. Most bears have tubular waste that is filled with the scattered remains of their digested meals. Grizzly bears have larger feces than the smaller black bears, although they’re otherwise nearly identical.

Mountain Lion Poop

When it comes to [**mountain lion poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/mountain-lion-poop-everything-youve-ever-wanted-to-know/), you will be looking for droppings completely different from what you find in your kitty’s litter box.

First, [**mountain lions**](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/mountain-lion/) are much larger than your cat at home. As a result, their waste is also much larger, sometimes up to nearly 10 inches long! They do have similar rope-like droppings, although they can also come out in a single piece.

Like with other types of animals, you’ll also be able to find traces of the mountain [**lion**](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/lion/)‘s most recent meals. This can include indigestible pieces such as bones and hair.

Deer Poop

When you think of [**deer poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/deer-poop-what-does-deer-scat-look-like/), you might think of something similar to horse poop. However, deer poop is actually more similar to rabbit poop.

Deer poop is exceptionally small, especially when considering their size. Since they are herbaceous and spend their days eating grass, leaves, and bark, their waste reflects this. Deer, like cows, are ruminants. This means that their food is digested thoroughly, so you most likely won’t see any remains of food in their small, round, 2-centimeter pellets.

Bird Poop

Chances are, you’re probably quite familiar with [**bird poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/bird-poop-everything-youve-ever-wanted-to-know/). However, healthy bird poop, or droppings, isn’t always the white splatters you’ll find on your outdoor furniture and car. Instead, as many bird owners are sure to have noticed, a bird’s diet plays a large role in the appearance of its droppings.

Healthy bird droppings can come in a variety of colors. Typically, bird poop has the texture of toothpaste, although this can vary in the wild depending on their health.

Skunk Poop

Unlike mountain lion poop, [**skunk poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/skunk-poop-what-does-skunk-scat-look-like/) is actually quite similar to waste you may find in your cat’s litter box. They have small, tubular waste around 1 to 2 inches long that can fall apart when prodded. Aside from size, however, there’s little consistency to a skunk’s waste. This is because, like bears, they can eat a wide variety of diverse food, some of which can vastly change the appearance of their waste.

One of the best ways to identify skunk poop is to look for mounds, typically near where you suspect they live. Unfortunately, they don’t have a formal bathroom like groundhogs or squirrels.

Snake Poop

Out of all of the animal waste discussed on this list, [**snake poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/how-do-snakes-poop/) may be the most interesting. After all, few of us have ever considered the bathroom habitats of a snake. So, what exactly does snake poop look like, and how can you identify it?

Unlike other animals that remove food from their insides over the course of several hours or days, snakes defecate all of the waste from a meal at once. In some ways, they are actually quite like birds. They release their feces and urine at the same time, which can cause their poop to look watery with a white hue due to the uric acid found there.

Opossum Poop

The opossum is the only native marsupial in the United States and Canada. They can be common in your yard, rummaging through your trash like raccoons, or even making a home inside your house! Though they’re helpful in eating ticks, they can still spread disease or illness. Not to mention, they could be aggressive when threatened.

Overall, [**opossum poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/opossum-poop-everything-youve-ever-wanted-to-know/) looks almost identical to dog waste. The best way to tell it apart is by the smooth sides of each black tubular piece. Each piece is around 1 to 3 inches long with a slight curl.

You can also identify opossum waste by its smell! Although cute, opossums are known for being a bit smelly, and the same can be said about their droppings!

Lizard Poop

Lizards can come in many different shapes and sizes. As a result, not all [**lizard poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/lizard-poop-what-does-it-look-like/) is created equal, which can make poop identification a little bit tricky.

Like other types of reptiles and birds, lizards will release their waste and urine at the same time. However, lizard waste has a unique feature. Their poop is a long, dark tube with a small white cap on one end, which is essentially their urine!

Frog and Toad Poop

Frogs are some of the most common amphibians. They thrive in most areas, although not all live in water. This means that frogs and toads can easily end up in your yard or your house. Although they are virtually harmless, it’s still best to help these cute critters get back outside. Plus, although their croaking can be interesting to listen to, you may not want it in your house. And what is the best way to tell if you have a frog or toad visitor? Look for their waste, of course!

[**Frog and toad poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/frog-poop-everything-youve-ever-wanted-to-know/) is actually quite large. In fact, it can be as large as a third of their body. That would be similar to a 6-foot-tall human creating 2 feet of poop! As a result, when you first stumble across frog or toad waste, you may think it comes from a larger animal. It is in the shape of a cylinder and is dark brown. If it’s fresh, it’s quite shiny. However, it can quickly dry out and lose this wet appearance.

Iguana Poop

Iguanas are common in warm, humid areas. [**Iguana poop**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/iguana-poop-everything-youve-ever-wanted-to-know/) ranges from light brown to almost black, and the pellets are long and tube-shaped. Like lizards, they also have urine in their waste, although it comes out as white or yellow pellets instead of a white cap.

Identifying Types of Wildlife Poop

Just as wild animals themselves can be dangerous and carry potentially harmful diseases and parasites, their waste is no different.

Types of poop we discussed today:

1. Coyote
2. Squirrel
3. Chipmunk
4. Raccoon
5. Groundhog
6. Rat
7. Mouse
8. Cockroach
9. Turkey
10. Bat (guano)
11. Bear
12. Mountain Lion
13. Deer
14. Bird
15. Skunk
16. Snake
17. Possum
18. Lizard
19. Frog / Toad
20. Iguana

Risks Associated With Animal Poop

One of the main reasons it is important to learn to identify wild animal waste is due to the associated health risks. All animals, even pets, can expose you to hazards through their waste. From parasites to viruses to bacteria, there’s no shortage of risks when it comes to animal waste.

Some of the most common risks associated with animal waste include:

* Different types of worms and parasites
* E. coli transmission
* Cryptosporidiosis
* Trachoma

Animal waste can also contaminate natural food sources and waterways.

[**Watch a Humongous Hippo Show Its True Size and Humiliate 3 Adult Lions**](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/watch-a-humongous-hippo-show-its-true-size-and-humiliate-3-adult-lions/)