Your quick-start guide to the identification of small mustelids

1. Is it smaller than a rabbit? **NO**
   - **YES**
     - Does it have a black tail tip? **YES**
       - Stoat
     - Does it have a defined brown & white ‘bandit’ mask? **YES**
       - Polecat ferret
     - Irregular line between brown & cream fur? **YES**
       - Irish Stoat *Only present in Ireland*  
     - Wavy line between brown & cream fur? **YES**
       - Weasel
   - Dark brown face & no visible white above mouth? **NO**
     - **NO**
2. Is it larger than a domestic cat? **NO**
   - **YES**
     - Dark brown/black body with small white patch under chin? **YES**
       - Mink
     - Body chestnut to dark brown except large creamy yellow patch on throat? **YES**
       - Pine marten
     - Irregular line between brown & cream fur? **YES**
       - Polecat
   - Irregular line between brown & cream fur? **NO**
     - **NO**
     - Wavy line between brown & cream fur? **NO**
       - Otter
     - Wavy line between brown & cream fur? **YES**
       - Weasel
Small mustelid tracks and signs

**Scats**

Left: **Otter** (10cm x 1cm)
Right: **Mink** (5cm - 8cm x ≤1cm)

Left: **Weasel** (3cm - 6cm)
Right: **Stoat** (4cm - 8cm)

**Pine marten**

(4cm - 12cm x 0.8cm - 1.8cm)

**Mink**

(2.5cm - 4cm x 2cm - 4cm)

**Pine marten**

(Females: 4cm x 4.5cm)
(Males: 5.5cm x 6.5cm)

**Weasel**

(1.3cm x 1cm)

Left: **Weasel** (3cm - 6cm)
Right: **Stoat** (4cm - 8cm)

**Polecat**

(≤7cm x 0.5cm - 0.9cm)

**Polecat**

(3cm - 3.5cm x 2.5cm - 4cm)

**Otter**

(5cm - 7cm)

**Stoat**

(2cm x 2.2cm)

---

This page: Otter print photograph © Paul Chanin
Stoat prints photograph © Hollie Walker

Overleaf: Stoat & Weasel photographs © Frank Greenaway
Polecat ferret & Otter photographs © Johnny Birks
Polecat photograph © Jane Parsons

Irish stoat photograph © Carrie Crowley
Mink photograph © Henry Schofield
Pine marten photograph © Bill Cuthbert