

# CRYPTID FIELD GUIDE

## Tracks, Tips & Tactful Encounters

A Practical Reference for Civilians Operating in Areas of Confirmed or Suspected Cryptid Activity

COMPILED BY THE FIELD RESEARCH DIVISION  
WHATTHECRYPTID.ONLINE · CIVILIAN EDITION · VOLUME I

■ **ADVISORY:** *This guide does not guarantee survival. It improves the odds of your remains being identifiable, which the Field Research Division considers a meaningful improvement.*

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*CLASSIFICATION: CIVILIAN OPEN ACCESS — Distribution authorised to members of the public operating in regions with active or historical cryptid presence. Do not share with the entities described herein. Several of them can read.*

## INTRODUCTION

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# A Note from the Field Research Division

You are reading this guide, which means one of two things: either you are curious about cryptids in a general, recreational sense, or something has already happened and you are looking for answers.

In either case, welcome. You have come to the right place.

The Field Research Division has spent considerable time — more than any of us would like to admit — documenting, cataloguing, and occasionally fleeing from the creatures described in this guide. We have compiled our findings into the volume you now hold, in the sincere hope that it proves more useful to you than it did to several of our former colleagues, whose current whereabouts remain a matter of active inquiry.

This guide is not intended to frighten you. The creatures described within are not inherently malevolent. They are simply operating according to their own natures, which happen to be, in several documented cases, incompatible with human survival.

*We wish you the very best.*

— *The Field Research Division, WhatTheCryptid.online*

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## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

### Usage Notes

This guide is organised into five sections. Sections 1 through 3 deal with identification, encounter management, and evidence collection respectively. Section 4 provides a consolidated threat assessment for quick reference in the field. Section 5 contains the Golden Rules, which should be memorised before entering any woodland area, marsh, highway underpass, or basement after dark.

Where possible, read this guide before an encounter rather than during one. We recognise this is not always practical. If you are reading this guide during an encounter, skip directly to Section 2 and do not make sudden movements.

*FIELD NOTE: The creatures in this guide are listed in order of encounter frequency within each section. This is a practical decision and should not be interpreted as a ranking of danger. The Rake is not less dangerous because it appears later. It is, arguably, considerably more so.*

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**SECTION ONE**

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## Track Identification

The following field descriptions are provided to assist civilians in identifying evidence of cryptid passage. If you have found tracks matching any of the below, the Field Research Division recommends calmly re-entering your vehicle, driving to the nearest populated area, and reconsidering your hobby of camping alone.

### **BIGFOOT (Sasquatch)**

*Gigantopithecus pacificus (disputed)*

**Track characteristics:** Bipedal. 38–60 cm in length. Five toes, wide ball of foot. Stride length 1.2–2.1 metres. Depth suggests body mass of 200–400 kg. The impression often smells faintly of wet fur and poor decisions.

**Field note:** If fresh, the subject is close. If warm to the touch, the subject is very close. If the track is moving while you watch it, please stop watching it.

**Known habitat:** Dense forest, mountain regions, occasionally your campsite perimeter.

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### **MOTHMAN**

*Homo volans (Field Research designation)*

**Track characteristics:** Taloned, three-toed impression. Wing-tip drag marks visible in soft ground at approach and departure points. Perch marks on roof guttering, power lines, and bridge infrastructure consistent with a 2–3 metre wingspan.

**Field note:** Mothman does not leave tracks in the traditional sense. What you find is evidence of where it was standing before it decided to stop standing there. The distinction matters.

**Known habitat:** Bridge infrastructure, industrial areas, locations of imminent structural failure.

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### **THE WENDIGO**

*Spiritus famis (Field Research designation)*

**Track characteristics:** Elongated bipedal. Irregular gait. Toe impressions deeper than heel, consistent with a forward-leaning pursuit posture. Stride can exceed 3 metres when active. Claw scoring visible on nearby trees at heights up to 4 metres.

**Field note:** The Wendigo does not stop moving. If you find tracks and follow them to see where they lead, you will find out where they lead. The Field Research Division does not recommend this.

**Known habitat:** Northern wilderness, deep woodland, anywhere far from other people.

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## THE DOGMAN

*Canis bipedum (Field Research designation)*

**Track characteristics:** Canine paw print, but bipedal stride. Front impressions present but shallow — used for balance rather than locomotion. Overall track pattern suggests something that decided walking upright was more efficient, which is a deeply unsettling conclusion.

**Field note:** The Dogman has been reported at speeds exceeding 50 km/h on two legs. Running is not discouraged, but should be understood as a gesture of intent rather than a viable strategy.

**Known habitat:** Rural roads, forest edges, highway margins at night.

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## THE RAKE

*Unknown. Attempts at classification have not concluded.*

**Track characteristics:** Quadrupedal. Four long, narrow finger-like impressions per print. Claw depth 2–4 cm in firm soil. Approach tracks frequently found at the perimeter of structures — houses, tents, parked vehicles. Departure tracks rarely found, as the Rake tends to remain.

**Field note:** If you find Rake tracks, the correct response is to go somewhere else and stay there. If the tracks lead to your home, the Field Research Division recommends an extended holiday.

**Known habitat:** Proximity to occupied structures. It prefers to come to you.

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## SECTION TWO

## Encounter Protocols

The following protocols have been compiled from survivor accounts, field observations, and the personal notes of researchers who are no longer with the Division. Each cryptid responds differently to human presence. What works for Bigfoot will not work for the Rake. Please read all entries before your encounter, not during it.

### BIGFOOT

#### DO

- ✓ Remain calm and still.
- ✓ Speak in a low, non-threatening tone. Bigfoot is curious, not inherently hostile.
- ✓ Offer food if available. Documented preferences include berries, fish, and gas station beef jerky.
- ✓ Back away slowly, maintaining eye contact. Do not turn your back until at least 50 metres away.

#### DON'T

- ✗ Do not run. This activates a pursuit instinct that Bigfoot appears to find equally surprising.
- ✗ Do not use flash photography. Bigfoot finds this aggressive and has excellent night vision regardless.
- ✗ Do not attempt to capture video while narrating your feelings. The footage is never usable.
- ✗ Do not whistle. The Field Research Division does not know why. We simply advise against it.

**Survivability: HIGH — assuming compliance with the above and no unusual decisions.**

### MOTHMAN

#### DO

- ✓ Accept the situation. The Mothman appearing to you is not something you caused.
- ✓ Document the encounter from a safe distance.
- ✓ Review any upcoming travel plans, particularly those involving bridges.
- ✓ Check structural reports for infrastructure you use regularly.

#### DON'T

- ✗ Do not attempt to follow the Mothman. It is not leading you somewhere you want to go.
- ✗ Do not assume the warning is metaphorical.
- ✗ Do not post about the encounter before heeding the warning. Priorities.
- ✗ Do not look into the eyes for extended periods. Documented effects include temporary blindness.

**Survivability: MODERATE to HIGH — depending on how seriously you take omens.**

## THE SKIN WALKER

### DO

- ✓ Trust your instincts. If someone seems slightly wrong, act on that instinct.
- ✓ Ask questions only you and the real person would know the answer to.
- ✓ Create distance immediately if the answers are incorrect or delivered in the wrong tone.
- ✓ Contact the actual person by independent means to confirm their location.

### DON'T

- ✗ Do not let it inside.
- ✗ Do not let it know you have noticed.
- ✗ Do not say its name aloud. The Field Research Division cannot confirm this risk but recommends precaution.
- ✗ Do not ask it to prove its identity. It has had time to prepare.

**Survivability: MODERATE — contingent on how quickly you trust your instincts.**

## THE WENDIGO

### DO

- ✓ Move toward populated areas immediately.
- ✓ Make noise. Large groups deter approach.
- ✓ Keep moving. The Wendigo responds to stillness as opportunity.
- ✓ Stay on established paths where it has less advantage.

### DON'T

- ✗ Do not separate from your group under any circumstances.
- ✗ Do not go back for equipment you have dropped.
- ✗ Do not assume it has stopped.
- ✗ Do not attempt to outrun it in a straight line. Change direction repeatedly.

**Survivability: LOW to MODERATE — strongly influenced by proximity to other people.**

## THE RAKE

### DO

- ✓ Do not move.
- ✓ Breathe slowly.
- ✓ Wait.
- ✓ If it moves toward you, refer to the Field Research Division's advanced encounter guide at [WhatTheCryptid.online](http://WhatTheCryptid.online).

### DON'T

- ✗ Do not make eye contact.
- ✗ Do not make a sound.
- ✗ Do not check your phone. The light will be visible.
- ✗ Do not assume the encounter is over until morning. The Rake is patient.

**Survivability: VARIABLE** — the Division has documented both very short and surprisingly lengthy encounters.

**SECTION THREE**

## Evidence Collection

The value of cryptid evidence is directly proportional to its quality and inversely proportional to how frightened you were when you captured it. The Field Research Division has reviewed thousands of submitted photographs. The following guidance is intended to improve that situation.

### Photography

- Use the highest resolution your device allows. Cryptid photography is not the time to be saving storage space.
- Stabilise the camera against a solid surface. Blurry photographs interest no one, including the cryptid.
- Capture wide establishing shots before zooming. Know where the subject is before you narrow your frame.
- Photograph any physical evidence — tracks, disturbances, broken branches — immediately after the encounter.
- Do not use filters. The Field Research Division reviews a great deal of filtered cryptid photography and it helps no one.

### Audio Recording

- Most modern phones record audio at sufficient quality. Begin recording before you have identified the sound source.
- Remain silent while recording. Commentary added in the moment is rarely useful and frequently embarrassing.
- Record ambient sound for at least 60 seconds after the subject has apparently departed. Several significant vocalisations occur in the silence after an encounter.
- Note the time, date, and precise location in a follow-up voice memo immediately after.

### Physical Evidence

- Do not touch track impressions. Photograph before any casting or handling.
- Plaster casting of tracks can be done with materials from any hardware store. A casting guide is available on the website.
- Hair or tissue samples should be collected with gloves and stored in a sealed container. Do not smell them. Several researchers have made this error.
- If you find an object that appears to have been left deliberately, photograph it in place before moving it.

### What Not to Do

- Do not shout "Did you see that?" This announces your presence and ends the encounter.
- Do not immediately share footage to social media before backing it up in at least two other locations.

- Do not return to the site alone within 48 hours. Go with at least one other person and agree in advance on a departure protocol.
- Do not contact local law enforcement before exhausting other options. Their capacity to assist is, historically, limited.

SECTION FOUR

## Threat Assessment Chart

The following chart consolidates the Division's current threat assessments for the five most commonly encountered cryptid types. Ratings are on a scale of 1 to 5 and represent average documented encounters. Individual encounters may vary significantly.

CRYPTID	AGGRESSION	STEALTH	ENCOUNTER LIKELIHOOD	SURVIVABILITY
Bigfoot	●■■■■	●●■■■	●●●■■	●●●●●
Mothman	●■■■■	●●■■■	●●●■■	●●●●■
Skin Walker	●●●●■	●●●●●	●●●■■	●●●●■
Wendigo	●●●●●	●●●■■	●●●■■	●●■■■
The Rake	●●●●■	●●●●●	●●●■■	●●■■■

**Bigfoot:** Curious more than hostile. Survivability assumes non-provocation.

**Mothman:** Not aggressive. Survivability relates to heeding warnings, not direct conflict.

**Skin Walker:** High stealth the primary danger. By the time you know, it knows you know.

**Wendigo:** Actively hostile when hungry. Survivability sharply reduced in wilderness.

**The Rake:** Extremely high stealth. Encounter likelihood higher than most suspects.

*These ratings represent consensus assessments based on documented encounters. The Field Research Division acknowledges that encounter conditions vary and that 'survivability' is a statistical measure, not a personal guarantee.*

## SECTION FIVE

## The Ten Golden Rules

These rules have been distilled from decades of field research, survivor testimony, and the contents of journals recovered from sites of unexplained disappearance. They should be treated as non-negotiable.

- 1**      **If you heard it, it already knows you heard it.**  
 Sound carries differently in active cryptid environments. The creature you heard is aware of your awareness. Adjust accordingly.
- 2**      **Never go back for something you dropped.**  
 Whatever you dropped is not worth what going back for it will cost you. The Field Research Division has documented this outcome repeatedly. The item is never worth it.
- 3**      **If the animals have gone quiet, go quiet too.**  
 Wildlife silence is the most reliable early warning system available to civilians. Respect it. Do not fill the silence with conversation. Do not ask "what's wrong with the animals?" out loud.
- 4**      **Do not separate from your group.**  
 If someone suggests separating, do not separate. If you are already alone, proceed directly to Rule 5.
- 5**      **Move toward light and people.**  
 Every cryptid in this guide has a documented aversion to populated areas or artificial light. Neither is a perfect deterrent, but both improve your position considerably.
- 6**      **Do not investigate the noise.**  
 The noise is not a cat. It is not the wind. It is not your neighbour arriving late. The noise is the thing, and investigating it confirms your location to the thing. Do not investigate the noise.
- 7**      **Trust what you saw.**  
 The instinct to rationalise an encounter is natural and extremely dangerous. You saw what you saw. Treat it as real information and make decisions accordingly.
- 8**      **Leave before you are certain it is gone.**  
 Waiting until you are certain an encounter has concluded means waiting longer than is safe. Leave when you think it might be over. This is the correct timing.
- 9**      **Tell someone where you are going.**  
 This is standard wilderness advice that becomes significantly more relevant in areas of cryptid activity. It is ignored most often by the people who needed it most.
- 10**     **The absence of evidence is not the absence of the cryptid.**  
 Not finding something does not mean it is not there. The Rake, in particular, is present in far more locations than the absence of its tracks would suggest. Assume the environment is active until you are in a different environment.

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That is either a very good sign or a very bad one. The Field Research Division does not have enough information to say which.

**JOIN THE CRYPTID CREW** Monthly cryptid lore. Memes. Field updates. New game releases. And the occasional warning from the Mothman. Free to join. Unsubscribe at any time. (Though we note that several subscribers who unsubscribed have not been heard from since. Correlation unclear.)

## WhatTheCryptid.online

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*This guide is provided for entertainment purposes. The Field Research Division is not responsible for encounters resulting from failure to follow the protocols herein, encounters resulting from following them correctly, or whatever is currently outside your window.*