

Masters of the Extreme

What do **Snow Leopards**, **Giant Squid** and **Wolverines** have in common?

EXTREME HABITATS
CLOAKED IN MYSTERY
ELUSIVE
DIFFICULT TO STUDY
POORLY UNDERSTOOD

Like other species that live in extreme conditions, wolverines in the Southern Coast Mountain Ranges are facing numerous threats but due to the extreme nature of their habitat not much information has been collected.

Work by government wildlife biologists and St'át'imc Government Services in the watersheds of the Southern Coast Mountain Ranges is hoping to shed some light on this poorly understood carnivore to ensure this wolverine population is healthy enough to sustain itself well into the future.

Wolverines are one of the least studied large carnivores in the world.



Funding Partners

This a joint project of the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, and St'át'imc Government Services, with support from the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program – Coastal on behalf of its program partners BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., Fisheries and Oceans Canada, First Nations and the public, who work together to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife impacted by the construction of BC Hydro dams.

In-kind and other funding is provided by the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, Ministry of Environment, and Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.



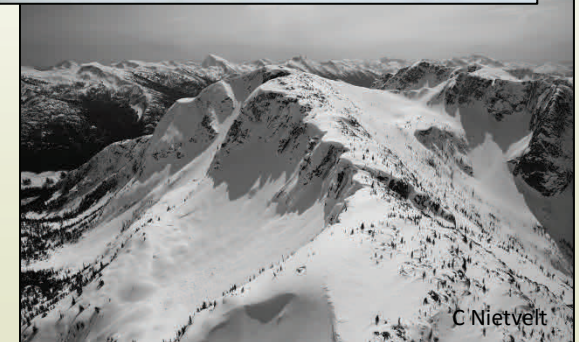
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Wolverines of the Southern Coast Mountain Ranges

Extreme animals in an extreme environment



Wolverines, the Ultimate Winter Warrior...

- Have a stocky, muscular build, short bowed legs and wide, hairy soles, allowing them to power across a snowy landscape with unexpected speed;
- Do not hibernate, instead they forge their way in extreme temperatures and avalanche areas throughout the long winter;
- Have rigidly curved claws that allow for scaling the steepest cliffs;
- Have a deep envelope of fur insulating their core from plunging, -40°C temperatures;
- Kill a large portion of their own food, scavenging only when available. They are capable of killing a moose on their own;
- Have powerful jaws for crushing bones of moose and deer;
- Have a nose that can detect a carcass under the snow after an avalanche up to 6 metres below the surface;
- Have huge territories—a single male can have a home range larger than 1000 km^2 ; half the size of Metro Vancouver; and
- Population is estimated at between 2700—4760 individuals in British Columbia.



POSSIBLE THREATS

HABITAT LOSS

FORESTRY, MINING, & HYDRO-ELECTRIC ACTIVITY

DISTURBANCE

BACKCOUNTRY INDUSTRIAL & RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY

FUR HARVEST

+

LACK OF INFORMATION

Where are they?

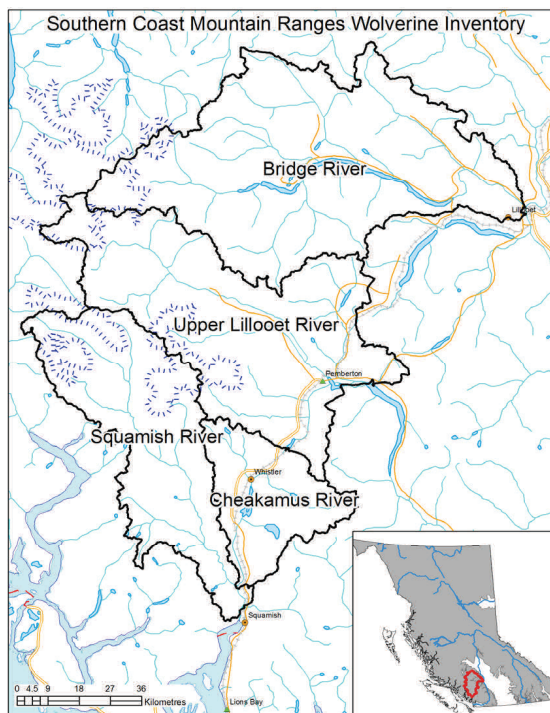
How many are there?

How do our actions affect them?

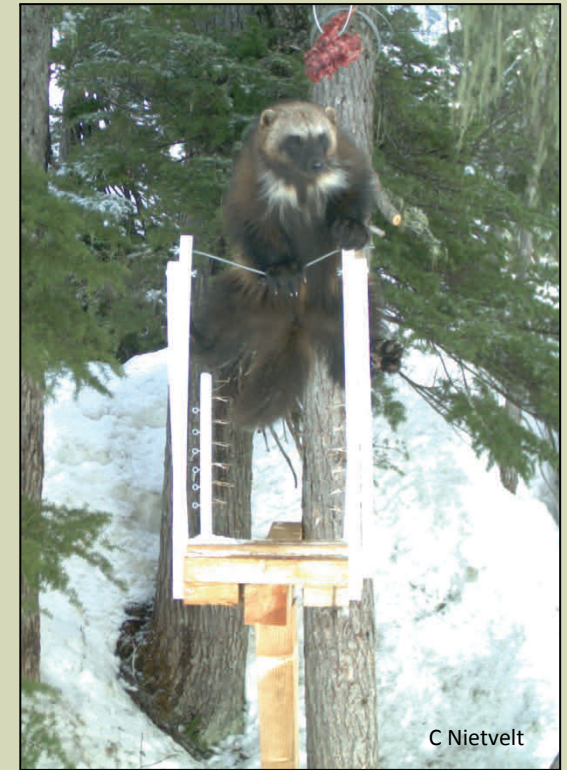
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NEED FOR RESEARCH

RISK TO POPULATION



Watersheds being surveyed for wolverines in the Southern Coast Mountain Ranges.



A wolverine visits a baited monitoring station near Squamish River.

How Do We Get Information?

Researchers have overcome extreme conditions to build numerous monitoring stations throughout the study area. Each station contains:

- A remote camera to capture images of the unique white chest patch used for identification of individuals and;
- well-positioned hair snaggers to collect hair samples for DNA fingerprinting.

By leaving strategically positioned bait and lure at each monitoring station, a wolverine is drawn into the station. Researchers return periodically to retrieve samples which over time will provide important information about the wolverine population in the Southern Coast Mountain Ranges.

*There is no harm to wolverines or any other wildlife visiting these stations.