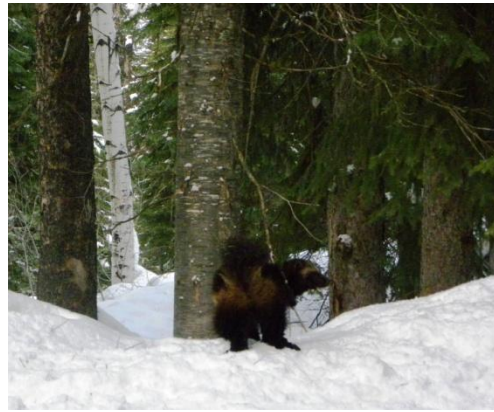


Central Idaho Wolverine and Winter Recreation Research Project

February 2011 Project Partner Update



Our second year of the wolverine and winter recreation research project started right after the New Year, and we have been kept busy all of January. We want to thank all the folks that helped us get up and running through providing training and logistical support.

We have significantly expanded the extent of the study this year, with the wolverine trapping effort and winter recreation monitoring extending from Hazard Lakes on the Payette National Forest through Warm Lake Summit on the Boise National Forest. Additionally, we have a preliminary study that includes recreation monitoring and DNA sampling of wolverines out of Stanley, on the Sawtooth National Forest. We have a crew of 10 full-time and part-time technicians and volunteers based in McCall, and another 2 in Stanley. We want to thank our 4 volunteer interns, who have committed 4 months to the project and come from as far away as Maine, Georgia and British Columbia.

Wolverine Monitoring

We opened our first wolverine live traps on January 10, and had the full suite of 12 traps open by January 13 for the Payette and Boise NF study area. We captured our first wolverine on January 17 – we believe he is M1 or ‘Larry’, the big resident male that we monitored last year roaming around the Hazard Lakes – Granite Lake area. Quick on his heels, we captured F1 or ‘Lilly’ on the 19th – she was also monitored last year and shares the same area with Larry. We are thrilled to have these two very important animals back working for the project! We captured a new animal off the Warren Wagon Road on January 22: F4, nicknamed ‘Jenny’ appears to be a subadult born last February, and we suspect she may be Lucy’s daughter (Lucy or F2 was monitored last year). We have a sample of her DNA, from which we will attempt to identify her parentage. We fitted Jenny with a collar, but she slipped out of it a week later; we hope she will visit our traps again, so we can replace the collar. Lucy (F2) and Bella (F3), both adult females we monitored last year, were captured on the 24th and 25th

and are now also carrying GPS collars that will map their movements and activities. On January 28th, we captured 2 new males: M4 or ‘Mason’ in the Warm Lake area, and M5 or ‘Sergio’ in the Fisher Cr drainage. We fitted the last of the collars we had on hand on these two males. Unfortunately, this early success meant that when we captured M2 or ‘Sid’ from last year, we were forced to release him without a collar. Thankfully, a collar arrived just prior to capturing a new adult female, F5 or ‘Tess’ in the Warm Lake area. She is now working for us – very exciting to have another adult female on the air! New collars have arrived, so we are hoping to capture more animals soon. Nine wolverines within the first few weeks of trapping have us more than pleased with the start of the 2011 project!

As some of you know, we are using new satellite-based trap transmitters, which send us emails with trap status information daily (and immediately when a trap is triggered). These are generally working great, and are allowing quicker responses by our crew to minimize total time that animals are in traps.

Winter Recreation Monitoring

Our Payette/Boise crews started visiting the parking lots to hand out GPS units to recreationists on January 12. Again this year, we are generally finding a wide-spread willingness to carry the units. But, we do have some folks declining to do so, with the most common reason being that ‘they did that last year’. We need our project partners, and especially the Idaho State Snowmobile Association and the Central Idaho Recreation Coalition to encourage your membership to continue to support the project. Each day we are out in the parking lots is a ‘new day’ of data collection, and we ideally need as many groups carrying units as possible – that includes recreation by those folks who recreate the most and know the area the best. Of course, all data collected remains anonymous: we do not take any personal information from recreationists and their participation is voluntary.

We are also pleased that again Brundage Mountain Snow Cat Adventures has their guides wear data loggers for us, and that the Payette Lakes Alpine Yurts and Payette Powder Guides are doing the same. Thanks!

Sawtooth National Forest Pre-Study

Our Stanley preliminary study is gearing up, with trail use counters being installed, and a number of potential future trap sites being baited for DNA and photo sampling. We already have a photo of a wolverine visiting one site, and may have a wolverine visiting at least one other site - we will wait for DNA analyses of snagged hair to confirm.

We have been collecting parking lot counts across the numerous parking areas south of Stanley; this information will be important to help us refine and focus our sampling efforts next year, when we hope to initiate a full study in this area.

Local Businesses Get Involved

We have tried to increase the incentives for recreationists to carry our data loggers, and have approached many more businesses to provide a discount to customers who turn in the units. The positive responses from businesses has been great, and we have 14 businesses in McCall, Cascade and New Meadows offering everything from a free beer to a free cinnamon roll for bringing in units. Our cooperating businesses are: Wraptor, Forester's Club, Salmon River Brewery, Woody's BBQ, Blue Moose Pizza, Roadhouse Java, Hinson's Power Sports, McCall Brewing Co., Howdy's Gas & Grub, Gravity Sports, Wheeler's Pharmacy, CYA Sports, Inc., The Pancake House and Ridley's Family Market. In addition, Outdoor Solutions has generously donated time and materials to modify our GPS collars. While visiting any of these businesses, please thank them for their cooperation with the project.

Local Snowmobilers Help Our Crews

After the big snowfall mid-January, we had some concerns about our ability to break trails into some of the more remote traps. We contacted Sandra Mitchell, ISSA, and she gave us some names of local snowmobilers. Through this contact, we found a great rider able to help us get to a couple. We are in the process of building a list of riders who may be willing to help us break trails on those big snow days. It has been a great opportunity to reach out to local riders and ask for their involvement, with a generous and enthusiastic response. If you are interested, contact Kim at idahowolverine@gmail.com.

We are very appreciative of everyone's help. Thanks!

For more information

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please contact Kim Heinemeyer, Project Scientist at 208-634-8699 or idahowolverine@gmail.com, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in McCall, or the Payette National Forest in McCall.



The Project Partners

