

Northern Wolverine Project

2000/01 Year End Report

Wolverine Ecology in Plateau and Foothill Landscapes 1996-2001

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March 2001

**Forest Renewal Activity # 712260
Funding for this wildlife/habitat inventory has been provided by
Forest Renewal BC.**



Acknowledgments

The Northern Wolverine Project has been successful because of the many people and agencies who have participated in one way or another. The following people and organizations are owed a great deal. Funding was provided by Forest Renewal BC's Research and Inventory Programs, by Slocan Forest Products Ltd., by the Ministry Of Environment, Lands & Parks, Wildlife Branch and the Ministry Of Environment, Lands & Parks, Resource Inventory Committee. The project has benefited from the enthusiasm and skills of talented staff and contractors over the past four years. These include Garth Mowat, Erin Rafuse, Virgil Hawkes, Dave Lewis, Corinna Hoodicoff, Jens Proche, Debbie Wellwood, Bill Harrower, Don Reid, Vanessa Larsen, Maria Leung, Tim Ennis, Dennis Jones, Jacques Perrealt, and Skye Perreault. Helen Schwantje and Malcolm McAdie provided excellent veterinary services. Larry Frey and Eric Steir of Vanderhoof Flying Services and Keith Connors of Northern Lights Air provided skilled fixed wing services. Ray Curry of Pacific Western Helicopters and Greg Altoff of Altoff Helicopters provided the bulk of helicopter services. Marty Siebert of Parsnip Reach Custom Milling went out of his way to get trap building materials to us. The project has had more than 50 volunteers donate their time and skills. Local trappers have contributed advice, knowledge and wolverine carcasses to the project. These include Dennis Jones, Brian Reiersen, Ray Reiersen, Robert Quadvleig, Jurgen Traude, William Alexander, Tom Gratton and Robert Tomah, Chico Crossland, Jarle Sundve, Murray McCulloch, Lawrence Napier, Herb Green, Gordon Smith, T.H. Shoots and Denys Bell. The community of Germansen Landing has always been supportive, particularly the Muller's, Perreault's, Beshers's, Reiersen's (all of them), Cress's and the Lepka's. Numerous cooperators have made working in a large, remote area much easier. These include Fletcher Challenge Canada, Timberwest Ltd., Slocan Forest Products Ltd., Finlay Forest Industries, Donohue Forest Industries, Abitibi Consolidated Inc., BC Hydro Peace-Williston Wildlife Compensation Program, and the Omineca-Peace regional office of the Ministry of Environment, Lands & Parks. Jim Tuck, Dana Becker, and Steve Dowling of the Ministry Of Environment, Lands & Parks in Mackenzie provided invaluable support. Particular thanks are due to Fraser Corbould and Mari Wood of the BC Hydro Peace-Williston Wildlife Compensation Program, Rich Weir and Tony Bowser of Artemis Consulting and Doug Heard, Doug Wilson, Glen Watts, Chris Ritchie, and Bill Arthur of the Ministry Of Environment, Lands & Parks in Prince George.

Executive Summary

The Northern Wolverine Project was initiated in 1996 to document the distribution and abundance of wolverine in plateau and foothill landscapes. The overall objective was to improve the basic ecological knowledge on wolverine, (*Gulo gulo*) in order to facilitate better science-based management. This report summarizes data collected from 1996 until March 2001.

The 8900 km² study area for the Northern Wolverine Project was established on the west side of Williston Reservoir in the Manson, Omineca, Osilinka, and Mesilinka drainages. Four biogeoclimatic zones and 7 subzone/variants are represented within the study area. The study area contains considerable forest harvesting activity, major logging roads, a power transmission corridor, a hydro-electric reservoir, and sixteen registered traplines.

Forty different wolverine were live-trapped and instrumented with radio-transmitters (collars or implants) during the reporting period. Radio-instrumented wolverine were located on a weekly to monthly basis during the reporting period. Home ranges averaged 405 km² for adult females, 1366 km² for adult males, 1229 km² for subadult females, and 3513 km² for subadult males. Adult females were located at higher elevations, on average, than all other sex and age classes during all seasons. They made substantial use of alpine and subalpine habitats, particularly when raising young. Primary food items during this period were caribou and marmots. Adult males and subadult females were found at high elevations during the breeding season; they and subadult males, made substantial use of low elevation habitats at all other times of the year. Moose were the most common food type during these times. All sex and age classes used older aged forests far more than other successional stages. Snow trailing activity indices were greatest in the old growth successional stage.

Survivorship rates were 79% overall, with adult females having the highest rates (91%) and subadult males the lowest (27%). Sources of mortalities of monitored wolverine included trapping, con-specific mortality, predation, highway collisions, and natural causes. Seven of 11 adult females monitored during this period had maternal dens in one or more years. Maternal dens were located in high elevation forest, subalpine cirques, and talus slopes.

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1.0 Introduction

Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) are uncommon to rare throughout most of British Columbia (Hatler 1989). The mainland subspecies (*G.g. luscus*) is on the provincial "Blue List" classifying it as vulnerable (CDC 2000). Vancouver Island Wolverine (*G.g. vancouverensis*) is on the provincial red-list (CDC 2000). Wolverine are classed as vulnerable by COSEWIC. Wide ranging forest carnivores such as wolverine and grizzly bears have been recognized as sensitive species provincially (CDC 2000; Hatler 1989), nationally (COSEWIC 1993) and internationally (Banci 1994) due to their large space requirements, low reproductive rates and poor juvenile survival. Populations of wolverine have declined dramatically in the continental US and Eastern Canada (Banci 1994), and Sweden (Linden et al. 1994) due to many factors including habitat loss, overharvest and a changing prey base.

Wolverine populations in British Columbia are managed as Class 2 furbearers (Hatler 1989) and legally harvested for their pelts. Class 2 furbearers are "those that move among and between traplines, are vulnerable to over-trapping, and generally not found in manageable numbers within a single registered trapline" (Hatler 1989). In BC open trapping seasons for wolverine exist in BC Environment regions 3,4,5,6, and 7. There are no trapping seasons in regions 1,2, and 8 (MOELP 2000). Wolverine may be particularly sensitive to over-harvest, due to their low densities and low reproductive rates. Provincial annual harvests ranged from a decade average low of 166.5/year (1950-1959) to a decade average high of 425.7/year (1970-1979) (Table 1). The harvest of the last decade has ranged from a low of 97 to a high of 236 (Table 2). No provincial population estimate exists for wolverine.

Table 1. Mean annual British Columbia wolverine harvest by decade (1920 – 1999)

Decade	Mean Annual Harvest
1920-1929	253
1930-1939	230
1940-1949	219
1950-1959	166.5
1960-1969	190.7
1970-1979	425.7
1980-1989	232.5
1990-1999	168

Table 2. Annual British Columbia wolverine harvest for 1985-1999.

Year	Harvest
1985	162
1986	206
1987	192
1988	187
1999	113
1990	127
1991	142
1992	236
1993	97
1994	186
1995	135
1996	230
1997	152
1998	123
1999	160

Banci (1994) summarized the available information for wolverine in North America; much of what follows is a summary of her account. Wolverine are the largest member of the mustelid family. They range in average size from 9-10 kg (females) to 13-14 kg (males) on average. Adult males are typically 30%-40% heavier than adult females. Home ranges of adult wolverine range from 100 to 900 km². This variability may be related to differences in abundance and distribution of food. Male home ranges are typically larger than those of females. Wolverine occur throughout a variety of habitats; they are found in boreal forests, tundra, and the western mountains. Wolverine appear to do best in relatively undisturbed remote mountainous areas (Banci 1994). Wolverine use habitats as diverse as old-growth forest and tundra. They may have an affinity for high elevations and a tendency for seasonal vertical migrations in mountainous areas. Wolverine habitat is probably best defined in terms of adequate year-round food supplies in large sparsely inhabited wilderness areas, rather than in terms of particular types of topography or plant associations. Protected areas likely play a significant role in the conservation of this species. Connectivity of protected areas at a regional scale (between landscape units and protected areas) may be important in maintaining wolverine. Preferences for structural and other features of forest stands have been suggested to be related to food availability and temperature requirements. Overhead cover and structural features of forested stands may be important for natal and maternal dens.

Wolverine are active year round. Habitat use and energetic demands are likely most pronounced during winter when food resources may be most concentrated. Nutritional demands are greatest in females while kits are nursing from early spring to summer. Wolverine are opportunistic feeders, thought to be primarily scavengers, but they spend considerable time hunting small and medium-sized prey. Large mammal (particularly ungulate) carrion is considered the most important part of their diet. Medium and small-sized mammals (ground squirrels, marmots, snowshoe hare, porcupine, and squirrels) become primary prey when carrion is not available. Ground-nesting birds (ptarmigan, grouse,

waterfowl) seasonally comprise a part of their diet where available. Magoun (1987) described winter and summer food habits in Alaska in an area with a paucity of large herbivores in winter. Ground squirrels and caribou were the primary food items by weight with small mammals and birds a minor component. Ground squirrels were more prevalent in summer months, although were also fed upon in winter. Rausch and Pearson (1972) reported on a sample of 193 stomachs from trapped animals in Alaska and Yukon in which 51% had empty stomachs, 14% had moose remains, 9% had caribou, and 12% had snowshoe hare. Their sample was all winter specimens; however, they speculated that ground-nesting squirrels were important in summer. Gardner (1985) analyzed 35 colons from winter-killed wolverine in Alaska. Moose occurred in 24.7%, caribou in 20%, microtines in 20%, birds in 11.4%, squirrels in 8.6%, snowshoe hare in 5.7%, porcupine in 2.9%, and beaver and muskrat in 2.9% of the samples. Based on foraging records for study animals, moose were less important in summer in his study area. At this time, squirrels, birds, and microtines were more important. Copeland (1996) analyzed 95 scats and 22 foraging site collections from wolverine in Idaho. Thirty-five percent of the samples were associated with natal and rearing dens of females. Ungulates (deer, elk and moose) were most common (44% occurrence in summer, 46% in winter). He reported little difference between winter and summer food habits. Banci (1987) sampled 411 stomachs from winter trapped wolverine in Yukon. She found an average of 1.3 prey types per stomach. Ungulates were present in 35.7%, snowshoe hare in 18.5%, and porcupine in 10.9% of samples. Ungulates were found in 38.8% of male stomachs and 30.3% of females. Vegetation was found in 49.6% of stomachs and 23.1% were empty. The only seasonal changes reported were in November where porcupine and snowshoe hare were more frequent than other months. In a summary of wolverine literature, Hatler (1989) suggested that ungulates are highly important in winter diets with small mammals and birds of increasing importance at other times.

Because of the perceived importance of marmots as a food source to adult females in this study area, a pilot study was initiated in 1998 to determine hoary marmot habitat suitability and estimate marmot abundance in the alpine zone of the Northern Wolverine Project study area (Figure 1). Ennis (1998) summarizes the results from the habitat suitability objective of the study. Reid (1999) summarizes the results from the marmot abundance objective of the study and provides recommendations for both objectives in the 1999 field season. This report summarizes the 1998 and 1999 results of the study.

Reproductive rates are low in wolverine. Females may breed for the first time at 1-2 years of age. Litter sizes range from 1 to 5. Litter sizes likely increase up to about an age of about 6 years (Banci 1994). Pregnancy rates reach peak levels in the 3-6 year age classes and decline thereafter. Age of reproductive senescence is unknown. Juvenile mortality may be considerable, and has been estimated at an average of 1.5 young/litter during the first summer. Reproductive rates are likely tied to the nutritional status of females.

There is a recognized need and demand for appropriate information on species which range over large areas, and exist in relatively low densities (Banci 1994, Lofroth et. al. 1996). Habitat management for these species will likely require actions on regional, landscape, and stand scales, and as such require a hierarchical and comprehensive approach to research. Little information existed in BC for wolverine,

particularly for demographics, population dynamics, movements, habitat use, foraging and food habits and reproduction. Less information existed on the effects of forest harvesting, road building and silviculture on these characteristics.

At present, inventory data are unavailable for wolverine in B.C. Forest management activities which influence prey populations, disturb denning areas, and improve access for trapping may indirectly place considerable pressure on wolverine populations. In order to improve consideration of wolverine in forest management decisions, reliable techniques for assessing trends in population size need to be developed. This is especially important as wolverine were not considered in the Standardized Inventory Methods Manuals produced by the Resource Inventory Committee.

This research is designed to obtain important baseline movement, home range, habitat use, food habit, and population information on wolverine in plateau and foothill landscapes, and to develop reliable cost-efficient methodologies for inventory. A similar, complimentary research program (Krebs 1993) is being conducted to examine these parameters in interior mountainous environments in the southeast portion of BC. Considerable effort has been made to co-ordinate the research planning, design, methodology, and implementation of these two projects so as to ensure compatibility of results. This will greatly increase the applicability of results.

The primary objective of this research program is to increase the knowledge base of wolverine ecology in BC, and develop appropriate census methods for wolverine to ensure that habitat and population management programs are based in sound scientific information. As such, our research objectives are:

- Examine seasonal habitat use and movement patterns of wolverine at regional, landscape, and stand scales in plateau and foothill landscapes (SubBoreal Spruce, Spruce Willow Birch, Boreal White and Black Spruce, Engelmann Spruce Subalpine Fir and Alpine Tundra biogeoclimatic zones (Meidinger and Pojar 1991));
- Examine foraging patterns and food habits of wolverine, particularly as they relate to other predators and ungulate populations;
- Examine parameters of population dynamics including size, mortality and natality;
- Compare the above aspects of wolverine ecology with those of wolverine in Interior Wet Mountain Forests (Interior Cedar Hemlock, Engelmann Spruce Subalpine Fir zones);
- Develop genetic markers to enable DNA fingerprinting (microsatellite technique) of wolverine from hair follicle tissue;
- Field test a variety of DNA collection methods;
- Estimate wolverine population size using the DNA technique in two ecologically distinct study areas (Revelstoke, Williston Reservoir).
- Recommend operational procedures for census of wide-ranging forest carnivores, and
- Facilitate test of this methodology on an operational basis.

This report summarizes data collected during the January 1996 to March 2001 period.

2.0 Study Area

The study area is approximately 8900 km² in size and is located in the Omineca, Manson, Mesilinka, and Osilinka River drainages of the Williston Reservoir basin in north-central British Columbia (Figure 1). The study area is in the Manson Plateau and Southern Omineca Mountains ecosections, and includes Sub-Boreal Spruce, Boreal Black and White Spruce, Spruce Willow Birch, Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir, and Alpine Tundra biogeoclimatic zones (Meidinger and Pojar 1991) (Table 3; Figure 2). Elevations range from 675m to 2200m. The study area is contained within Natural Disturbance Type 3 - Frequent Stand Initiating Events - (MOF 1995). It has experienced considerable forest harvesting on its eastern periphery and in the northern half, particularly on the eastern half of the Butler Ranges, and the Mesilinka, and Osilinka River drainages. The western and southern portions of the area (with the exception of the Manson River valley) have had relatively little forest harvesting. Major Forest Service Roads transect the study area on the west side of Williston Reservoir, and up the Manson, Mesilinka, Osilinka, Tenakihi, and Usilika Rivers, and Wasi Creek drainages. The study area is bounded on the east side by the Williston Reservoir impoundment of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. An electrical transmission line parallels the major forest service road to the Kemess Mine. Sixteen registered traplines are contained in whole or in part within the study area. Reported annual wolverine harvests in the study area during the 1993 to 1997 period ranged from 0 to 4.

Table 3. Biogeoclimatic composition of the Northern Wolverine study area.

Zone	Subzone/Variant	Area (km ²)	Percent of Study Area
AT	P	1531.8	17.2
ESSF	MV3	3772.5	42.3
	MV4	45.8	0.5
SBS	MK1	364	4.1
	MK2	1351.2	15.2
	WK2	427.2	4.8
BWBS	DK1	1355.5	15.2
LAKE		64	0.7

The Alpine Tundra biogeoclimatic zone has the harshest climate of the study area (Pojar and Stewart 1991). Long-term average temperatures for this zone are likely below freezing. Much of the precipitation falls as snow, and snow fall and drift accumulations can vary from as little as none on barren wind swept slopes to as much as 4-5 m in protected basins. Major vegetation types include krummholtz conifers, dwarf shrub, alpine grass, herb meadows, lichen, and/or bare rock. Within the study area, the Engelmann Spruce Subalpine Fir zone occurs just below AT and just above SBS or BWBS. Climate is relatively cold and moist with much of the precipitation falling as snow (Table 4).

Table 4. Long term average snow depth (cm) for the Upper Germansen Snow Monitoring Station.

Month	Mean Snow Depth
January	83
February	97
March	114
April	122
May	109
June	38

Habitats are primarily coniferous forest dominated, with subalpine parkland/krummloltz at upper elevations. Tree species are dominated by Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir. Lodgepole pine is the common seral tree species. Two variants of the moist very cold subzone occur within the study area (Table 3). These are characterized by an ericaceous shrub layer, a sparse herb layer, and a dense moss layer. Climate of the Sub-Boreal Spruce zone is characterized by severe snowy winters and relatively warm moist short summers. Mean daily minimum and maximum average temperatures collected within the study area range from monthly lows of -38°C to highs of 23°C (Table 5). Daily snowfall and snow accumulation data are summarized in Table 6. Coniferous forests are dominated by hybrid white spruce and subalpine fir. Lodgepole pine, aspen, paper birch and cottonwood are common seral species. Black spruce occurs as a climax species in wet sites. Two subzones (moist cool and wet cool) with three variants occur within the study area (Table 3).

Table 5. Mean daily minimum and maximum recorded temperature ranges (by month) for SBS weather stations in the Northern Wolverine Project study area ($^{\circ}\text{C}$).

Month	Minimum	Maximum
September	5.15	15.1
October	-1.2	4.3 to 5.5
November	-18.7 to -6.4	-11.9 to 8.0
December	-15.1 to -12.8	-7.9 to -4.6
January	-38.8 to -16.7	-32.4 to -9.7
February	-17.0 to -9.5	-5.9 to -1.4
March	-12.9 to -6.8	-1.4 to 2.5
April	-3.8 to -2.5	5.5 to 8.6
May	3.8	19.6
June	6.8	23.0

Table 6. Mean daily snowfall (by month) and accumulated snowpack ranges for SBS weather stations in the Northern Wolverine Project study area (cm).

Month	Daily Snowfall	Snow depth
November	0.4 to 1.5	1.6 to 37.8
December	3.0 to 3.7	31.2 to 51.6
January	1.4 to 6.4	20.5 to 90.3
February	1.0 to 3.2	45.8 to 87.6
March	0.5 to 2.4	40.4 to 88.4
April	0 to 0.3	10.7 to 76.1

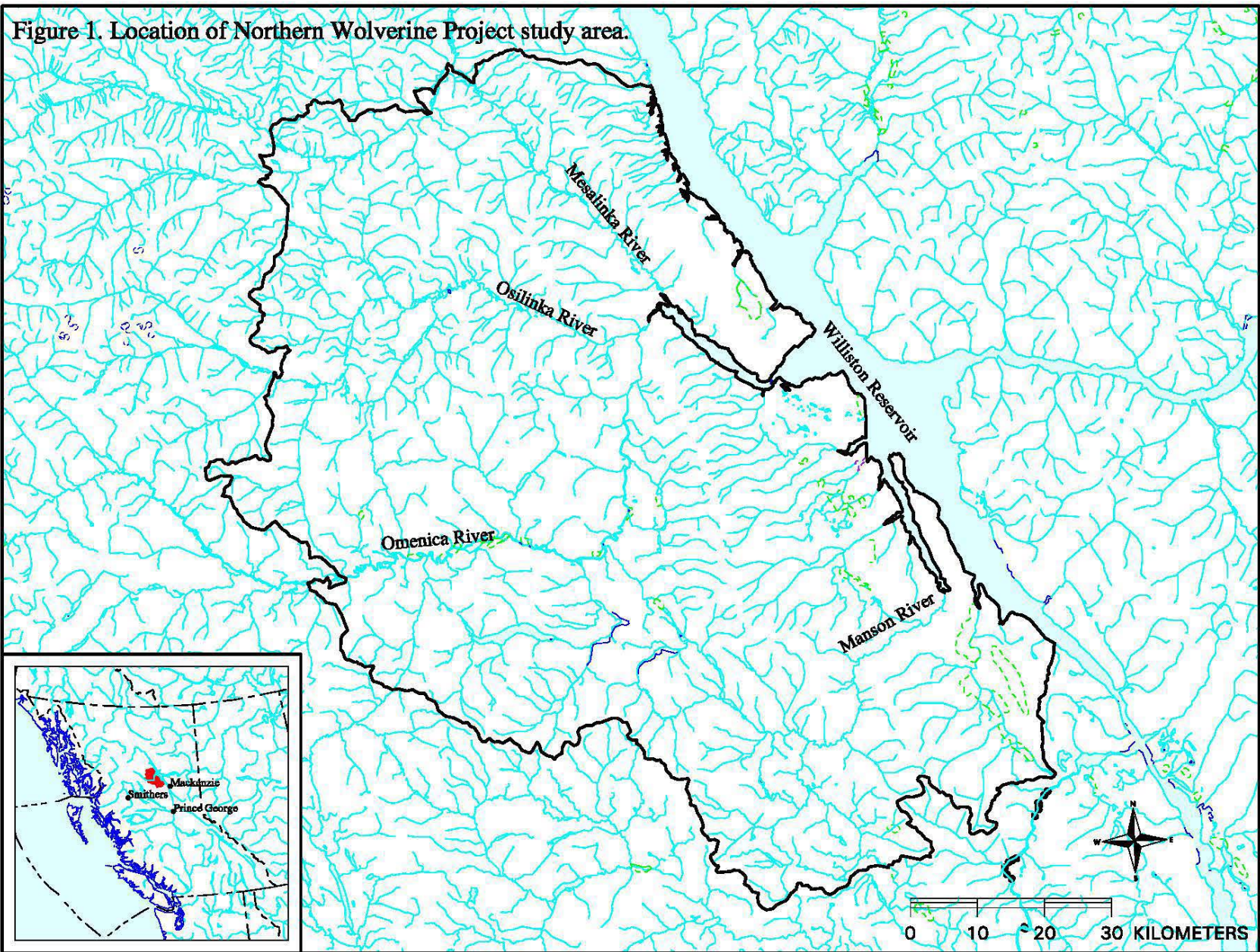
The Boreal White and Black Spruce zone occurs within portions of the Manson, Omineca, Osilinka, and Mesilinka drainages. Its lower extent in these drainages is likely influenced by the extent of cold air drainage. This zone has long very cold winters and short growing seasons. Mean daily minimum average temperatures collected within the study area are as low as -44°C (Table 7). Daily snowfall and snow accumulation data are summarized in Table 8. Major tree species within the study area are white spruce, black spruce, lodgepole pine, and balsam poplar. Only one subzone (dry cool) occurs within the study area (Table 3).

Table 7. Mean daily minimum and maximum recorded temperature (by month) ranges for BWBS weather stations in the Northern Wolverine Project study area ($^{\circ}\text{C}$).

Month	Minimum	Maximum
September	n/a	n/a
October	n/a	n/a
November	-22.8 to -9.7	-14.9 to -3.0
December	-19.7 to -19.0	-4.0
January	-44.0 to -33.0	n/a
February	-11.6 to -8.0	-2.9 to 2.2
March	-12.2 to -10.4	-2.6 to 0.9
April	-6.6 to -6.3	2.8 to 7.2
May	n/a	n/a
June	n/a	n/a

Table 8. Mean daily snowfall (by month) and accumulated snowpack ranges for BWBS weather stations in the Northern Wolverine Project study area (cm).

Month	Daily Snowfall	Snow Depth
November	0.8 to 1.8	7.5 to 36.7
December	7.3	43.8 to 48.3
January		52.5
February	1.0 to 5.0	49.5 to 78.7
March	0.6 to 2.2	50.4 to 86.2
April	0.4	79.8



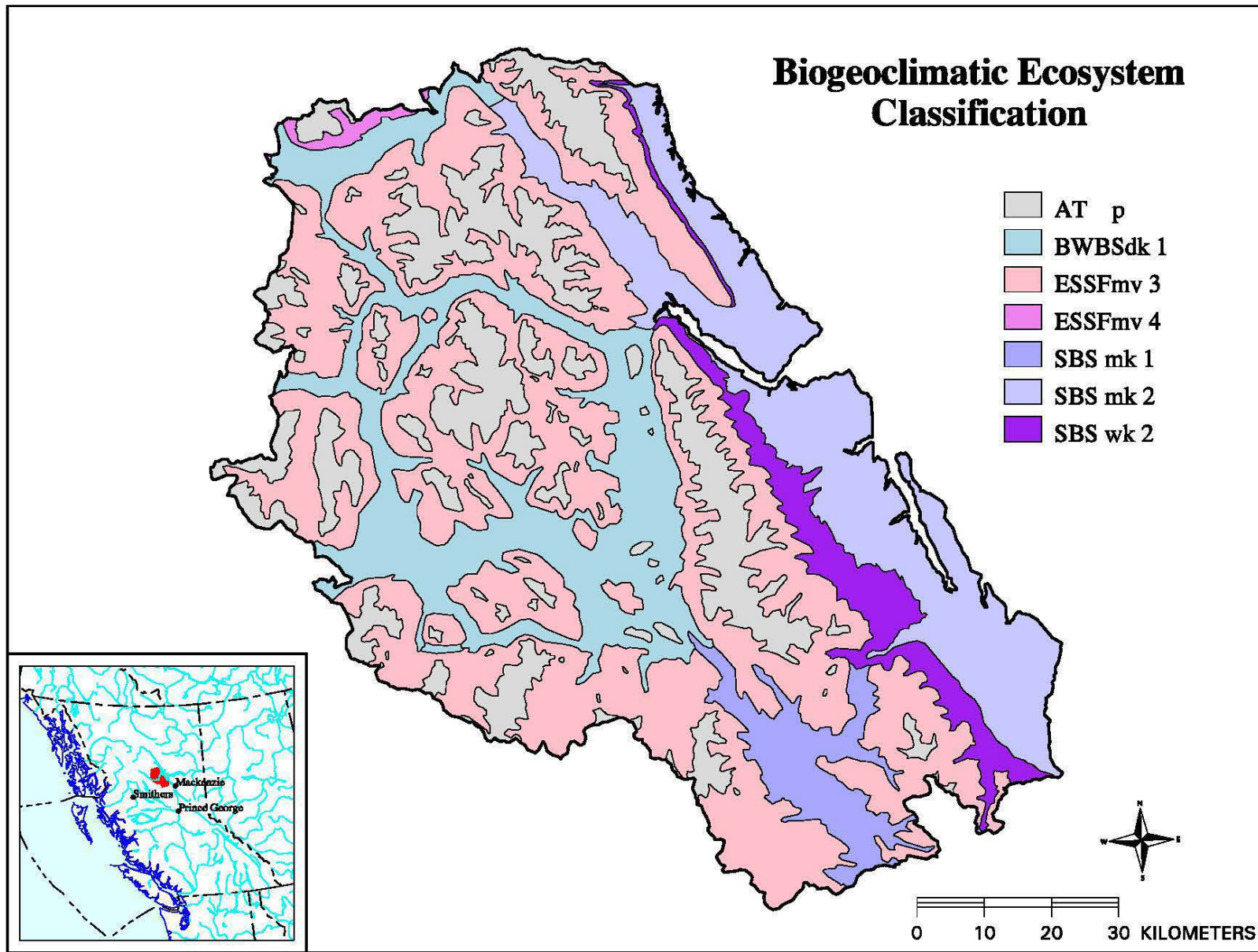


Figure 2. Biogeoclimatic ecosystem classification for the Northern Wolverine Project study area.

3.0 Methods

3.1 Capture and Handling

Wolverine were captured in log cabin traps constructed within the study area (Copeland et. al. 1995), and in portable barrel traps. The number of traps used varied between trapping sessions (Table 9).

Table 9. Number of traps used for trapping sessions.

Session	Log Cabin Traps	Barrel Traps
Fall 1996	29	3
Fall 1997	39	2
Fall 1998	24	1
Winter 1996	16	6
Winter 1997	37	6
Winter 1998	35	0
Winter 1999	24	0
Winter 2000	33	0

Traps were set in riparian habitat, on ridge tops and in timbered corridors between cutblocks. All captured wolverine were immobilized, aged, sexed, weighed, measured. All captured wolverine were also examined for tooth wear, evidence of lactation and scarring, and were fitted with radio transmitters and numbered coloured ear-tags (Nasco Farm and Ranch Inc.). In 1996-1997, immobilizations were performed by trapping crews and wolverine were fitted with radio collars (Telonics MOD 335 equipped with mortality switches). In 1998, radio transmitter collars were abandoned in favor of radio transmitter implants (Telonics Model IMP-400). A veterinarian immobilized animals, implanted transmitters, and supervised animal handling. Tissue samples were retained from ear-tag plugs in year 1 of the study to be used for DNA analyses for population methodology estimation. Hair samples were taken from all captured wolverine for the same purpose. Blood samples were taken from captured wolverine whenever possible, in years 2 and 3 of the study, for baseline serum documentation. Wolverine were allowed to fully recover within the live-traps before being released. Fisher were also captured in traps, and were processed in a similar manner as part of a concurrent study Weir (1997, 1998, 1999) (reference); whereas, other non-target species captured were released from traps. All live-capture, handling, and immobilization was conducted in accordance with BC Environment Animal Welfare Policy.

Most wolverine were immobilized with Telazol. Dosages were administered by pole syringe at a concentration of 10 mg/kg for the estimated weight of each animal. Immediately following immobilization, the upper left premolar was removed and coloured ear tags were fitted. Telazol was an insufficient anesthetic for the performance of the radio implantation surgeries. Isoflourine gas was used in these cases after an initial immobilization with Telazol. Gaseous isoflourine was used in a 1.5 to 3.0 percent mixture with oxygen, and was administered to effect. Isoflourine is an effective

anesthetic for these procedures; however, as the Telazol had generally been metabolized by the animal, the moment that the gas administration ceased, the animal would begin to awaken. Following surgery, isoflourine was continued to allow completion of standard immobilization procedures such as morphometric measurements, tooth removal, and ear tagging. If only a radio collar was fitted, physical measurements were made immediately following ear tagging, tooth removal, and collar fitting. When possible, physiological responses of the animal were monitored throughout the immobilization.

Data collected were general information, pharmacological information, morphometric characteristics, and physiological information (Appendix 1). Physiological information, including respiration rates, heart rates, rectal temperature, and capillary response times were recorded. Data collection for these variables was sporadic, as it was not always possible to collect consistent information during the immobilizations. At some immobilizations no physiological information was collected, and at others a series of observations were made of all variables throughout the immobilization.

The reproductive status of female wolverines was assessed during spring capture sessions. Percentages of reproductive females were determined by assessing whether females had rubbed or swollen nipples or were lactating.

3.2 Movement and Home Range

From March 1996 until March 1999, wolverine were radio-located once weekly when possible, using a Cessna 182 aircraft. Beginning in April 1999, the monitoring regime was changed from this extensive format to one of intensive monitoring during specific time periods corresponding to wolverine seasons (see section 4.3.1). During the maternal denning season, female wolverine were located as often as every other day. Where access permitted, wolverine were monitored more intensively using ground based telemetry for portions of the year. Aerial location information included coordinates, broad ecosystem unit (Province of BC 2000), forest cover, elevation, site description, and location accuracy (Appendix 2). Relocation flights were coordinated with those conducted to locate study populations of caribou, wolves, and fisher in the same study area (Weir 1997, 1998, 1999). Location data were analyzed using adaptive Kernel techniques (Worton 1989), utilizing the program Home Ranger (Hovey 1997).

3.3 Habitat Use

3.3.1 Landscape Scale

Landscape scale habitat use analyses (Lofroth 1993) were conducted using Bonferonni use/availability statistics (Neu et al. 1974). These analyses examine annual and seasonal selection and habitat composition of home ranges by biogeoclimatic zone. Landscape scale habitat use also was evaluated by examining frequency distributions, which described relative use of biogeoclimatic zones and elevations over seasons. Habitat data and elevations of wolverine locations were documented during relocation flights.

3.3.2 Stand Scale

Stand scale habitat analyses were examined by analyzing use of habitat within individual home ranges, conducting site investigations at selected locations, and conducting snow-tracking surveys. Habitat data were collected at site investigations to describe structural characteristics of wolverine foraging, travel, and denning habitat. Habitats were classified within biogeoclimatic zones to broad ecosystem unit (Province of BC 2000). Due to the size of the study area and its diversity of habitat types, these were then grouped into yet broader habitat classes. Wolverines are wide-ranging and occur in relatively low densities; consequently, the study area is very large. , Wolverine locations were frequently difficult to access to conduct site investigations. As a result, site investigations of radio-transmitted wolverine were conducted opportunistically during snow tracking or following ground or aerial telemetry locations. Wolverine activity sites were accessed by helicopter, snowmobile, snowshoe, or hiking. Site investigations were also conducted at wolverine activity sites as a result of snow-tracking or visuals of unknown wolverine. Opportunistic site investigations, conducted during snow-tracking, were primarily focused on activities other than travel (i.e. beds, kills, caches or feeding sites). During site investigations, the general area of the wolverine location was thoroughly searched for evidence of wolverine activity. In winter wolverines were fore-tracked and back-tracked from the location to determine the wolverine's activities (Appendix 3). Habitat description forms were used to describe the location, habitat, terrain, vegetation, and activity (Appendix 4). Photographs were taken of representative habitats and evidence such as beds, dens, and/or carcasses. All scats encountered were collected for food habits analyses.

All known maternal dens were located by aerial telemetry and accessed by helicopter. An initial brief investigation was made of the den while the den was active. Efforts were made to minimize disturbance of the area. All dens were visited at least once while there was still snow on the ground, but after the female had left the area. Habitat description forms were used to describe the location, habitat, terrain, vegetation and wolverine activity. A den description form, including den measurements, was also completed (Appendix 5). Photographs were taken of the den and representative habitats. All scats observed were collected.

3.3.3 Snow Tracking

Habitat analyses were also examined by conducting snow-tracking surveys. Wolverine tracks were located during the months of November through March by visiting aerial locations of known wolverine, or by opportunistic location of wolverine tracks during daily field work. Tracks were followed from the point of interception both forwards (fore-tracking in the direction of wolverine travel) and backwards (back-tracking in the opposite direction of wolverine travel) at least 1 kilometre in each direction, or until tracking could not be continued due to physical barriers (e.g. open water), loss of tracks in bad conditions, or loss of daylight. Data recorded during each session included length of track and straight line distance traveled, behaviours and activities observed, habitat types and site information. Activity indices were calculated as

the ratio of actual distance traveled to straight line distance traveled. Wolverine were tracked opportunistically during the 1998/99 winter field season and systematically during winter 1999/2000 and 2000/2001. Data reported here include that collected up to and including March 2001.

3.4 Food Habits

Wolverine food habits were examined by analyzing the contents of scats collected in the course of the study, and the stomachs of carcasses that were submitted by trappers from the BC Environment Omineca/Peace and Skeena regions. Included in these analyses were those carcasses obtained from study animal mortalities. Carcasses were kept frozen until the time of necropsy. Stomachs were then removed and kept frozen until such time as contents could be processed. The stomachs were cut open and contents rinsed through a series of standard Canadian soil sieves with decreasing mesh size of 6.35, 5.6, 2.0 and 1.0 mm. Scats were soaked in water and also rinsed and sieved in the same manner. Stomach and scat contents were placed into petri dishes and dried in a fume hood for 24 hours. Samples were separated into animal guard hair, bone fragments, feathers and other components (vegetation, garbage etc.). Animal guard hairs were spread out onto a 100 grid cell sampling sheet. Hairs were sampled from 10 randomly selected grid cells. Guard hairs were placed on green acetate, sandwiched with two microscope slides, held together with bulldog paper clips and heated to soften the acetate (after Moore et al. 1974, Park 1991). Guard hairs were examined under a compound microscope. Medullae and scale structure of guard hairs were examined and compared with illustrations (Park, 1991), photographs (Moore et al. 1974) and slides of known specimens. Bones and feathers were identified, where possible, using reference collections from the University of Victoria Anthropology and Biology departments.

Foraging habits of study animals were examined by recording predation and scavenging information from wolverine radio-locations, and snow-tracking, site investigations, and incidental observations.

3.5 Marmot Habitat Suitability

In 1998, a pilot study was conducted in two study areas; one study area was at the northern end of the Wolverine Range, and the other study area was at the southern end of the mountain range located on the western side of the Mesilinka River. In 1999, research was only conducted in the Wolverine Mountains study area. In 1999, the study area was located between the northern end of the Wolverine Mountains and Mount Porter to the south. The study area was within the Alpine Tundra (AT) and the upper edge of the Engelmann Spruce Subalpine Fir (ESSF) biogeoclimatic zones.

The methodologies used in the pilot study in 1998 were also used in 1999 and are provided in Reid (1999). One change was made to the classification of talus in the habitat suitability methodology in 1999. The talus vegetation type was subdivided into

three types, ribbon talus, extensive talus, and un-vegetated, (as recommended by Reid 1999). In 1998, observation polygons for marmot abundance were subjectively selected, and in 1999 observation polygons were randomly selected. In 1999, two people conducted 14 days of fieldwork between July 29 and August 11.

3.6 Population Parameters

Wolverine were live-captured in log cabin traps and fitted with radio-transmitters from January 1996 to March 2000. From March 1996 until March 1999 wolverine were radio-located once weekly when possible using a Cessna 182 aircraft. Beginning in April 1999, the monitoring regime was changed from this format to one of intensive monitoring during specific time periods corresponding to wolverine seasons. Wolverine were monitored at least once every three weeks during the April 1999 to March 2001 time period. During the maternal denning season, female wolverine were located as often as every other day. Where access permitted, wolverine were monitored more intensively using ground-based telemetry for portions of the year.

Vital population rate data collected included: natality, juvenile and adult survival, and mortality sources. Natality information was obtained by examining placental scars and corpora lutea (Banci and Harestad 1988) of carcasses of study animals and those submitted by trappers. Natality of study animals was examined by visits to maternal den sites and opportunistic observation of females with kits. Study animals whose transmitters switched to “mortality” mode were located and investigated as soon as possible. Survivorship rates reflect the known fate of known (radio-transmitted) wolverine only. They do not include data on additional known wolverine mortalities within the study area during this period. Survivorship of collared wolverine in the study area was calculated using staggered entry design Kaplan-Meier analysis (Pollock et al 1989).

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Capture and Handling

4.1.1 Capture

A total of 40 individual wolverine were captured 99 times during eight capture sessions (Tables 10 and 11). Twenty male and 20 female wolverine were captured, with the majority of female wolverines captured during the first two years of trapping. Sixteen were subadults and twenty four were adults when captured. Some wolverine, such as W03, were recaptured as many as 10 times. Several traps were damaged by wolverines attempting to chew their way out. Some attempts at escape were successful, resulting in 4 captured animals escaping prior to processing. Two trap related mortalities occurred, one when a trap door closed onto a wolverine, breaking the animals back. This previously collared wolverine had to be euthanized. The second trap mortality occurred when a wolverine attempted to escape, and was caught between the trap door and the lower half of the trap, and was asphyxiated.

Wolverine were monitored for a variety of time periods (Table 10). This was as a result of problems with maintaining collars on wolverine, as properly fitting collars is difficult. A collar fitted too loose will be easily slipped and little data collected, a collar fitted too tight will abrade hair, and possibly skin, resulting in injury to the animal. Precautions taken when fitting collars meant that many animals shed their collars, along with additional collars lost due to premature release of the rot-a-way inserts. Some animals were monitored for as little as 3 months (W28). With the high costs and time investments in trapping wolverine, losing study animals due to premature breakage or slipped collars was unacceptable. Subsequent to this, many collars slipped over animal's heads. These problems resulted in the change to the use of surgically implanted transmitters.

Capture success was influenced by weather conditions (Table 12). Wolverine capture successes were poorest in very cold temperatures. Capture successes were greater (although not significantly) when daily minimums were below freezing and daily maximums were above freezing than during all other weather conditions (ANOVA $p=0.28$). It is hypothesized that these weather conditions allow for formation of a crust on the snow, enabling much easier travel. In addition, these weather conditions also increase odor from bait. Total captures also reflect this pattern (Figure 3). Many other species were captured in wolverine traps (Table 13). Log cabin traps were more successful in capturing wolverine than barrel traps (Table 12), although the latter offer the advantage of portability.

Table 10. Summary table of animal capture and monitoring history.

WOLVERINE NUMBER	NAME	SEX	AGE CLASS AT FIRST CAPTURE	ACTUAL AGE AT FIRST CAPTURE	NUMBER OF CAPTURES	DATES MONITORED
W01	Nina	F	subadult	Unknown	3	18/02/96→05/12/96 02/02/97→09/05/97
W02	Naomi	F	adult	4	4	20/02/96→11/06/96 16/02/98→15/12/98
W03	Wayne	M	subadult	<1	10	20/02/96→12/06/96 24/02/97→08/07/97 16/03/98→09/09/99
W04	Houdini	M	adult	5	4	08/03/96→21/03/96 23/03/97 17/03/98→25/03/96
W05	Arnie	M	adult	Unknown	1	12/03/96→29/08/96
W06	Alison	F	subadult	Unknown	1	21/03/96→24/07/96 23/03/97
W07	Diana	F	adult	3	4	23/03/96→21/08/96 06/03/97→24/09/97 06/03/98→22/11/99
W08	Halley	F	adult	Unknown	1	25/03/96→12/06/96
W09	Marley	F	subadult	Unknown	3	11/04/96→11/10/96 01/03/97→08/07/97 26/11/97→09/12/97
W10	Cara	F	adult	Unknown	2	12/04/96→11/06/96 30/03/97→10/06/98
W11	Stella	F	adult	2	2	12/04/96→21/08/96
W12	Moose	M	adult	Unknown	1	14/01/97→07/03/97 18/03/98→26/08/98
W13	Maxine	F	adult	Unknown	2	31/01/97→26/06/97 18/03/98→26/08/98
W14	Magnus	M	subadult	<1	1	06/02/97→09/07/97
W15	BibBob	M	adult	10	3	21/02/97→15/06/97
W16	Abigail	F	adult	Unknown	2	22/02/97→21/11/97
W17	Jacques	M	subadult	Unknown	3	24/02/97→01/08/98
W18	Luba	F	adult	6	3	02/26/97→03/09/97
W19	Kahn	M	adult	Unknown	2	26/02/97→05/06/97 03/03/99→23/06/00
W20	Borris	M	adult	5	2	27/02/97→28/05/97
W21	LeahRuth	F	adult	Unknown	2	27/02/97→14/07/97
W22	Jessica	F	subadult	<1	1	22/03/97→08/08/97
W23	Mars	M	adult	Unknown	1	01/04/97→16/09/98
W24	Helene	F	adult	Unknown	1	13/04/97→11/02/98
W25	Davis	M	adult	Unknown	1	30/10/97→16/09/98
W26	Thor	M	adult	1-2	2	07/11/97→16/06/99
W27	Quill	M	subadult	Unknown	1	20/11/97→18/12/98
W28	Lola	F	subadult	Unknown	3	21/01/98→22/04/98
W29	Merlin	M	adult	Unknown	2	28/02/99→18/12/00
W30	Aurora	F	subadult	Unknown	1	13/11/98→28/03/00
W31	Luna	F	subadult	1-2	8	05/03/99→present
W32	Orion	M	subadult	1	1	06/03/99→16/06/99
W33	Aries	M	subadult	1	1	20/03/99→14/01/00

W34	Double Trouble	F	adult	6	4	01/03/99→26/08/98
W35	Payback	M	adult	5	3	01/03/98→15/12/98
W36	Porter	M	adult	2	1	26/02/00→present
W37	Tsaykeh	F	subadult	1	1	07/03/00→present
W38	Loki	M	subadult	<1	2	17/03/00→31/05/00
W39	Nancy	F	adult	3	1	21/03/00→present
W40	Hazel	M	subadult	Unknown	1	22/03/00→20/09/00

Table 11. Capture session dates.

Session	Dates
Winter 1996	Jan 16/96 - Apr 17/96
Fall 1996	Nov 17/96 - Dec 12/96
Winter 1997	Jan 8/97 - Apr 15/97
Fall 1997	Oct 29/97 - Nov 30/97
Winter 1998	Jan 14/98 - Mar 25/98
Fall 1998	Nov 5/98 - Nov 25/98
Winter 1999	Feb 24/99 - Mar 25/99
Winter 2000	Feb 18/00 - Mar22/00

Table 12. Wolverine live-capture success as a function of weather and trap type (captures/100 trapnights).

Session	Overall	Wx #1	Wx #2	Wx #3	Wx #4	Log Cabin Traps	Barrel Traps
Fall 1996	0		0			0	0
Fall 1997	0.46		0.55	0.34		.48	0
Fall 1998	0.45		0.48	0		.46	0
Winter 1996	1.41	0	1.08	1.82	1.46	1.81	0.31
Winter 1997	2.06	0	1.55	2.62	0	2.21	1.25
Winter 1998	2.43		2.04	3.02		2.43	
Winter 1999	3.69		2.72	4.33		3.69	
Winter 2000	1.58	0	1.02	2.17	0	1.58	
Mean	1.51	0	1.35	2.04	1.46	1.58	0.31

Wx #1 - minimum and maximum daily temperatures are below -25 °C

Wx #2 - minimum and maximum daily temperatures are between -25 °C and 0 °C

Wx #3 - daily minimum temperatures are below 0 °C and daily maximum temperatures are above 0 °C

Wx #4 - daily minimum temperatures are above 0 °C

Note: Numbers in **bold italics** are for trapping sessions which, based on the average number of trapdays/capture for that session, had too few trapdays to be likely to capture a wolverine. Mean capture rates are based only upon the numbers not in bold type.

Figure 3. Wolverine total captures by temperature regime.

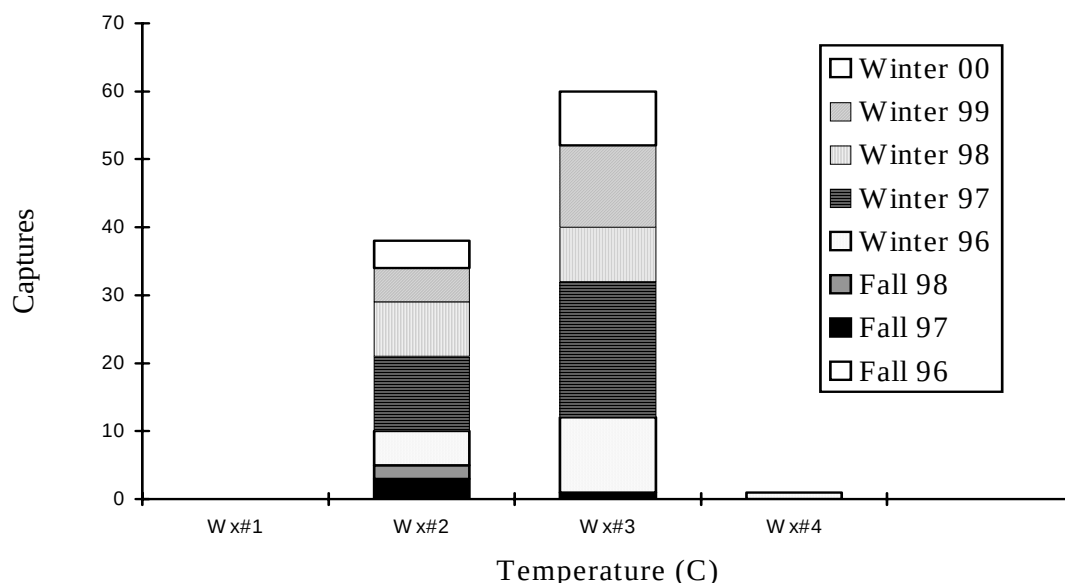


Table 13. Live capture summary by trapping session

Trap Session	Total Trapnights	Live Captures								
		Wolverine	Fisher	Marten	Mink	Ermine	Wolves	Foxes	Bears	Lynx
Fall 96	375.5	0	3	4	0	0	0	1	0	0
Fall 97	864	4	1	40	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fall 98	444.5	2	10	17	1	0	0	5	1	0
Winter 96	1202	17	6	24	0	0	1	1	0	0
Winter 97	1505.5	31	12	58	1	1	0	3	0	0
Winter 98	657.5	16	8	23	0	0	0	0	0	0
Winter 99	461	17	2	36	0	0	0	1	0	1
Winter 00	761	12	7	122	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	6271	99	49	324	2	1	1	12	1	2

4.1.2 Morphometrics

The average weight of captured wolverines was 10.7 kg (± 2.6 , $n=51$) with a maximum reported weight of 16.3 kg (W15) and a minimum of 7.1 kg (W09). Average overall body length was 81.3 cm (± 10.2 , $n=48$), with a maximum of 109.0 cm (W35) and a minimum of 58.5 cm (W18). The averages for head and neck girths were 29.7 (± 8.0 , $n=16$) and 30.6 (± 2.3 , $n=47$) respectively. Weights, nose to tail body lengths, head and neck girth data are presented for each age and sex class in Table 14.

There was a pronounced sexual dimorphism between male and female wolverine. Hash (1987) also reports sexual dimorphisms. Males are 30 percent heavier and 10 percent longer than females. Banci (1994) reports a similar dimorphism of 30-40 percent in weight and 8-10 percent in length. Dimorphisms in this study are similar; adult males are 47.3% percent heavier and 11.2 longer than adult females.

Wolverine in this study area may be smaller than wolverine from other areas. Although observed weights are within reported ranges for wolverine, they are at the lower end of the range. Hash (1987) reported weight ranges for males of between 14 and 27.5 kg, and for females of between 7 to 14 kg. Wolverine weights in this study were 10.3 to 16.3kg for males and 7.5 to 11.0kg for females. Adult body lengths are within reported measurements of 65 to 105 cm (Hash 1987). Hash, however, does not report body length differences between males and females. Adult wolverine in this study are between 58.5 cm and 109 cm long, straddling Hash's (1987) overall range. Female weights fall well within reported ranges; however, males within this study area are generally smaller than those elsewhere.

Wolverine likely have seasonal and annual weight changes. These changes may relate to differences in food availability and type between seasons and years. Some wolverine show changes in capture weights between years. For example, the weight of W03 ranged from 10.5 kg in 1996 to 12.5 kg in 1997 with both measurements recorded in the same month; however, in 1998 his weight dropped to 11.3 kg. Females may also undergo these changes. W02 varied from 8.9 to 10.4 kg showing a drop in weight between 1996 and 1998, and W07 varied only from 8.5 kg to 9.5 kg in four captures between 1996 and 1998.

Typical sexual dimorphism is present in head circumferences and neck girths with males head circumference being 19 percent larger than females (Table 14). Male neck girths were also 21 percent larger than females. However, the most notable feature of this analysis is a comparison between the two measures. In adult animals, a difference of only 0.4 cm was observed between head and neck girths. It is therefore understandable why collars fitted on animals with such a small neck to head ratio would not remain on the animal throughout yearly weight changes.

Foot dimension data indicates little sexual dimorphism (Table 15). Overall mean foot dimensions for adult wolverine were 7.3 cm (+/-1.3, n=50) by 8.6 cm (+/-2.5, n=49) for the front feet and 7.1 cm (+/-1.1, n=23) by 12.7 cm (+/-4.9, n=23) for rear feet. Current literature has suggested energy requirements for mustelids during winter travel is directly related to foot loading (Raine 1981). Since female wolverine have significantly smaller weights than males but similar foot sizes, it could be hypothesized that sinking depth during winter travel is reduced for females. Reduced sinking depths may mean lower energy requirements for travel, and an increased ability to travel in adverse snow conditions and proportionately more energy to put into reproduction. Male and female wolverine have different elevational habitat use patterns (see landscape scale habitat use section 4.3.2). These differences may be facilitated by reduced foot loading in females, easing travel in difficult snow conditions.

Despite these observations, a continual problem has been the collection of consistent foot dimension measurements. A standardized measure, possibly even an impression, is needed to accurately document foot dimensions. Changes in snow conditions also make it difficult to assess both track dimensions and sinking depth. Again, a standard measurement of track dimensions similar to that of the foot dimension measurements is needed, along with a standard measure of snow conditions.

Table 14. Summary of physical characteristics of captured wolverine (mean +/-std. dev. (sample size in parentheses)).

	Sex	Subadult	Adult
Weight (kg)	Male	11.6 +/- 1.2 (7)	13.4 +/- 1.6 (19)
	Female	8.3 +/- 0.8 (11)	9.1 +/- 0.9 (20)
Body Length (cm)	Male	85.6 +/- 5.6 (7)	86.5 +/- 10.9 (18)
	Female	75.9 +/- 7.3 (11)	77.8 +/- 9.1 (18)
Head Girth (cm)	Male	33.4 +/- 4.7 (2)	36 +/- 1.4 (2)
	Female	29.9 +/- 1.1 (3)	27.4 +/- 9.6 (9)
Neck Girth (cm)	Male	29.9 +/- 4.7 (5)	33.9 +/- 2.1 (17)
	Female	28.1 +/- 1.1 (11)	28.5 +/- 1.9 (14)

Most females were caught in the first two years of the study. In the first year of the study females comprised 73 percent of wolverine captured. This fell to 56 percent in year two, 50 percent in years three, 14 percent in year 4 and 33 percent in year 5 (Table 16).

Table 15. Summary of foot dimensions of captured wolverine (mean +/-std. dev. (sample size in parentheses)).

	Sex	Subadult	Adult
Front Width (cm)	Male	6.8+/-0.7(6)	7.7+/-1.4(17)
	Female	6.7+/-1.4(10)	7.4+/-1.2(17)
Front Length (cm)	Male	8.8+/-2.5(6)	9.8+/-2.6(16)
	Female	7.1+/-1.9(10)	8.4+/-2.5(17)
Rear Width (cm)	Male	6.9+/-0.6(4)	7.3+/-1.3(8)
	Female	6.7+/-0.2(5)	7.5+/-1.6(6)
Rear Length (cm)	Male	12.3+/-5.6(4)	14.4+/-4.9(8)
	Female	10.5+/-5.3(5)	12.6+/-4.6(6)

Table 16. Reproductive status of female wolverine at time of capture.

Year	Female percentage of captures	Non-reproductive females	Reproductive females
Spring 1996	73% (n=8)	62.5%	37.5%
Spring 1997	56% (n=9)	70.0%	30.0%
Spring 1998	50% (n=4)	100%	None
Spring 1999	14% (n=3)	100%	None
Spring 2000	50% (n=3)	33.3%	66.7%

4.1.3 Immobilization Physiology

Fifty-eight of 59 immobilizations were begun with Telazol. Dosages were administered at 10 mg/kg of the estimated body weight. The average dose received by all animals was 14.0 mg/kg actual body weight (std. dev =8.0, n=59). Table 17 gives a breakdown of average doses of Telazol received by each age and sex class. Ranges for first effect and induction times are large. First effect times ranged from less than 1.0 to 39.0 minutes and induction times range from 2.0 to 73.0 minutes. Considerable variation exists within these times, as well as between age and sex classes, with no real trends apparent within these classes (Table 18). Both first effect and induction times are small for animals that receive the total estimated dose of Telazol for their weight. First effect times for a single administered dose are all under 4 minutes and induction times for a single administered dose are under 13 minutes. If the animal did not receive the entire dose during the initial attempt to administer the drug, both times increase with the number of successive attempts. Additional injections of Telazol after a significant amount of the drug has been metabolized, seemed to produce little or no increase in anesthetic effect.

Table 17. Summary of average total volume (mls of 100mg/ml) Telazol received by wolverine.

	Sex	Subadult	Adult
Actual Dose Received (mg/kg)	Male	1.8	1.1
	Female	1.5	1.1

Table 18. Summary of mean first effect and induction times for handled wolverine (minutes (sample size in parentheses)).

	Sex	Subadult	Adult
First Effect Time (min)	Male	0.5 (1)	0.6 (6)
	Female	0.6 (2)	0.6 (6)
Induction Time (min)	Male	25.6 (4)	15.5 (15)
	Female	10.9 (8)	6.8 (16)

Other drugs were also used during immobilizations. In three of these cases only partial doses of Telazol were given, due to problems with drug delivery. On two occasions ketamine was used to immobilize animals which either did not receive or did not respond to Telazol. W31 received three partial injections during a 20-minute (16.5 mg/kg total) period, and still maintained some activity. A knock down injection of ketamine (3.1 mg/kg) was used to complete the immobilization. In the second wolverine (W32), a dose of 150 mg of Telazol (14.0 mg/kg) was administered in two injections over 14 minutes. This was insufficient to immobilize the animal. Two injections of ketamine (20.6 mg/kg) were used to complete the immobilization. On the third occasion, the wolverine (W19) was given six partial injections of Telazol (24.3 mg/kg). The excessively high dose can be attributed to Telazol crystallization, in either the syringe or the vial, hampering administration and/or metabolism of the drug. Following the injections, the animal was allowed to recover and injections of ketamine/metatomadine (4.3/4.3 mg/kg), Telazol/metatomadine (3.6/2.9 mg/kg), and finally two injections of ketamine/xylazine (25.7 mg/kg total) were given to subdue the animal. In two other immobilizations, ketamine was used as a top-up drug to maintain sedation during handling. As expected, ketamine top-ups did not increase or deepen immobilization but did delay recovery slightly.

In a single case (W03), a ketamine/metatomadine (13.1/11.7 mg/kg) combination was used as the initial immobilization drug. Subsequently, atropine sulfate (0.2 mg/kg) was administered 20 minutes into the immobilization to speed a slow heart rate. The immobilization was ended after approximately 50 minutes with two injections of the antagonist atipamazol (0.3 mg/kg total).

The anesthetic effects of Telazol have proven effective for handling, and in minor surgical procedures such as ear tagging and tooth removal. If these procedures are performed during the deepest stages of immobilization (i.e. approx. 15 min from the initial injection in ideal situations), little response is noticed in the animal. However, as the anesthetic effect weakens stimuli from painful procedures seem to speed recovery time. This, in effect, stimulates the animal out of the anesthetic.

The use of isoflourine gas in radio implant surgeries has proven highly effective. The rapid responses of an inhaled gas, and the ease with which the sedation can be controlled are the main benefits of gaseous anesthetic. However, the equipment needed to administer a gaseous anesthetic may not always be transportable to the capture locations. The single situation in which this occurred, a single dose of Telazol/metatomadine and one of ketamine/metatomadine were used to immobilize the wolverine. There is some concern, especially in ruminants, that metatomadine may have detrimental effects on late term pregnancies (M. McAdie, pers., comm.). Although this immobilization was performed on a female wolverine, it occurred in a fall trapping session allowing the use of metatomadine. However, care should be taken when using metatomadine on female animals during spring trapping sessions.

There is a large difference between the estimated amount Telazol given and the actual amount needed to immobilize animals. These differences can be attributed to the

increased number of doses required to immobilize animals with multiple injections. It appears that the longer the elapsed time between the initial and final injections, the less effective Telazol becomes. Therefore, until the initial dose has been completely metabolized additional doses of Telazol may have reduced effects. These results are consistent with the recommendation for the use of ketamine to “maintain Telazol initiated anesthesia” (Woodbury 1996).

Some irregularities existed in the administration dose of Telazol. Ambient and drug temperatures, as well as animal stress and condition both seem to influence first effect and induction times. But perhaps the largest effect comes from problems during drug delivery arising from both these factors. At significantly cold ambient temperatures, those at or below -20°C , Telazol can gel or freeze in needle tips, hampering delivery of the drug. Delivery was also hampered by a number of animal behaviors. Animals may bite at needles, sometimes removing syringes. Some drug may be administered orally during this process. Another behavior is a quick or sharp turn or twist at the moment the needle touches the animal. This behavior bends the needle as the animal pulls away, cutting short the administration of the drug. However, proper care when administering drug, and the use of propylene glycol when mixing drugs at cold ambient temperatures, can greatly ease the drug delivery process.

Mean respiration rates for immobilized wolverine were 22.1 breaths per minute (Bpm), with mean values ranging from 10.0 to 60.0 Bpm (Table 19). During immobilizations where successive measurements were taken, respiration rates were stable throughout the immobilization. A single wolverine had an elevated respiration rate during the first measurement. This activity subsided as the immobilization progressed, and is most likely attributed to handling stress (M. McAdie, pers. comm.). Mean wolverine heart rates were 137.0 beats per minute (bpm) and ranged from 90.0 to 200.0 bpm. Again, values were stable throughout immobilizations. A qualitative measure of capillary refill time (crt) was also taken. These results were good, with times generally below the 1 to 2 second time periods.

Rectal temperatures varied from 32.7°C to 39.0°C (Table 19). The mean rectal temperature was calculated to be 36.9°C (± 1.6 , $n=12$). A series of rectal temperatures were taken at only a single immobilization, during which time the wolverine's body temperature dropped from 37.6°C to 35.8°C . This change occurred over a period of approximately one hour, and at an ambient temperature of approximately 10°C . Although drops in body temperature during handling have not been perceived to be a problem with wolverine, it is considered a significant factor during fisher immobilizations. Therefore, body temperature should be monitored during Telazol immobilizations at cold ambient temperatures, or when wolverine are wet.

Table 19. Physiological parameters of wolverine during immobilization (value (sample size in parentheses)).

	Sex	Subadult	Adult
Mean Respiration Rate (Bpm)	Male	12 (3)	12 (7)
	Female	40 (3)	24 ((8)
Mean Heart Rate (bpm)	Male	144 (1)	200 (7)
	Female	113 (3)	129.9 (3)
Mean Rectal Temperature (Celsius)	Male	37.5 (1)	35.8 (4)
	Female	37.3 (2)	37.4 (4)

4.2 Movement and Home Range

Wolverines were monitored using both aerial and ground telemetry. Some single locations were also obtained with remote cameras set up for the development of inventory methodologies. Relocation frequencies varied from a minimum of 4 (W18) locations per wolverine to a maximum of 141 (W07). Home ranges varied in size from as low as 158 km² (W28 - female with location data over a limited time period) to as high as 4572 km² (W03 - dispersing juvenile male) (Tables 20,21). Home range estimates are incomplete for some wolverine, as the majority of sampling has occurred in seasons 1 and 3 due to early collar loss in many animals (Figure 4). Home ranges are plotted in Figures 5 through 15. Home ranges of most adult females are relatively small, and all enclose a significant portion of high elevation habitat (Figure 5). Wolverine W34 is plotted separately (Figure 6) and treated separately due to her transient nature and subsequent early mortality. Adult male home ranges are more than three times as large as adult females (Table 20). Adult male home ranges are shown in Figures 8-12 as through the years of the study numerous animals died and their home ranges were taken over by successors. As a result, plotting all home ranges on the same map produces an undecipherable figure. This is also true for subadult males. Subadult home ranges tend to be larger than those of adults, and may often be a series of disjunct polygons as these animals spend periods of time in one area, then undertake long movements to a new area before presumably setting up their adult home range. Wolverine W03 is the best example in the data set, with a subadult home range more than five times the size of his adult home range (Tables 20,21; Figures 7,8). Movements vary from very little (2-5 kilometers) on a daily or weekly basis to very large (more than 100 km). Three wolverines exhibited very long movements. Wolverine W14 crossed Williston Reservoir twice in the three months he was monitored. His final location was 107 km from his initial capture location. Wolverines W23 and W34 both had one time long distance movements of greater than 100 km. Four wolverine (all male - W14, W23, W25, W36) crossed Williston Reservoir on multiple occasions.

Seasonal home ranges were generally considerably smaller than overall home ranges (Tables 20, 21). Home ranges for season 3 were on average the largest of the seasonal home ranges.

Table 20. Annual and seasonal home range sizes for adult wolverine.

Wolverine	Overall		Season 1		Season 2		Season 3	
	Number of Locations	Home Range Size (km²)	Number of Locations	Home Range Size (km²)	Number of Locations	Home Range Size (km²)	Number of Locations	Home Range Size (km²)
Adult Females								
W02	57	337	14	87	9	109	34	195
W07	141	389	50	178	20	169	71	270
W08	6	565	2	N/A	0	N/A	4	N/A
W10	72	337	24	134	10	238	38	177
W11	12	354	8	155	0	N/A	4	N/A
W13	48	578	15	161	0	N/A	33	342
W16	36	293	15	264	6	285	15	230
W21	25	236	9	122	0	N/A	16	184
W31	74	582	31	226	9	224	34	498
W34	18	1901	9	208	0	N/A	9	112
W39	39	485	15	476	6	360	18	333
Mean¹		405		193		169		279
Adult Males								
W03	74	967	27	559	10	149	37	780
W04	23	925	9	327	1	N/A	13	714
W05	13	493	8	238	0	N/A	5	226
W12	8	527	0	N/A	0	N/A	8	527
W15	24	626	4	N/A	0	N/A	20	321
W19	49	880	12	442	5	473	32	875
W20	17	1593	1	N/A	0	N/A	16	1540
W23	65	1385	22	590	10	144	33	2310
W25	41	3096	12	414	8	576	21	2649
W26	71	1136	14	344	16	171	41	1755
W29	25	1278	8	690	6	1329	11	523
W35	29	2000	7	1288	9	2132	13	743
W36	18	1037	0	N/A	4	N/A	11	828
Mean¹		1366		575		171		1449

1 – includes only those wolverine with more than 20 locations for each overall home range or 15 locations for each seasonal home range

Table 21. Annual and seasonal home range sizes for subadult wolverine.

<i>Wolverine</i>	Overall		Season 1		Season 2		Season 3	
	Number of Locations	Home Range Size (km²)	Number of Locations	Home Range Size (km²)	Number of Locations	Home Range Size (km²)	Number of Locations	Home Range Size (km²)
Subadult Females								
W01	37	1201	7	483	9	76	21	1333
W06	9	758	4	N/A	0	N/A	5	110
W09	39	578	14	433	5	271	20	323
W22	25	1729	11	408	0	N/A	14	1370
W24	26	2306	10	1582	6	78	10	3428
W28	19	158	0	N/A	0	N/A	19	158
W30	15	538	0	N/A	4	N/A	11	335
W37	21	332	4	N/A	6	156	11	200
Mean¹		1229		N/A		N/A		605
Subadult Males								
W03	20	4572	1	N/A	0	N/A	19	4637
W14	16	3978	0	N/A	3	N/A	13	4461
W17	29	2453	10	2202	0	N/A	19	1838
W27	7	3968	0	N/A	7	3968	0	N/A
W32	9	1198	1	N/A	0	N/A	8	1369
W33	12	2036	4	N/A	4	N/A	4	N/A
W38	6	2849	1	N/A	0	N/A	5	118
W40	9	4300	5	3571	0	N/A	4	N/A
Mean¹		3513		N/A		N/A		3238

1 – includes only those wolverine with more than 20 locations for each overall home range or 15 locations for each seasonal home range

Figure 4. Number of wolverine locations by season.

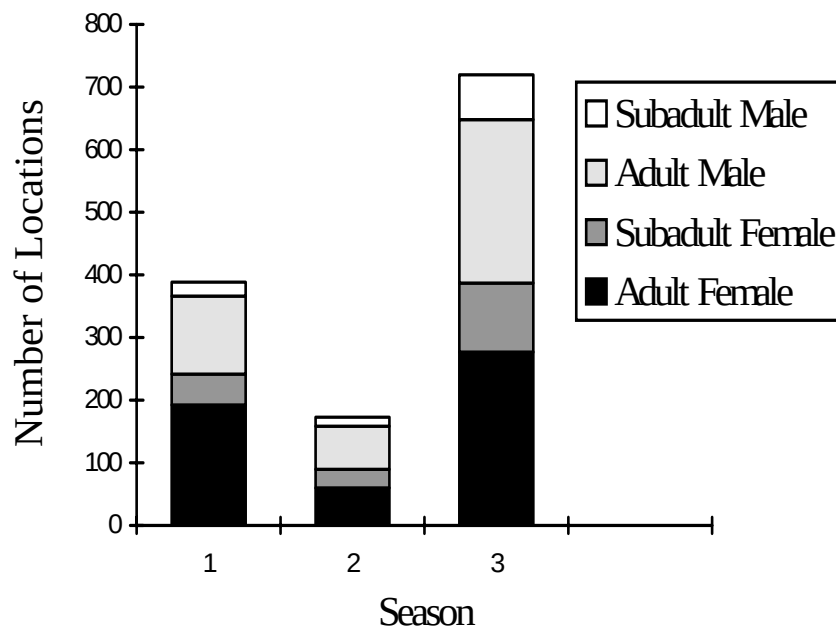
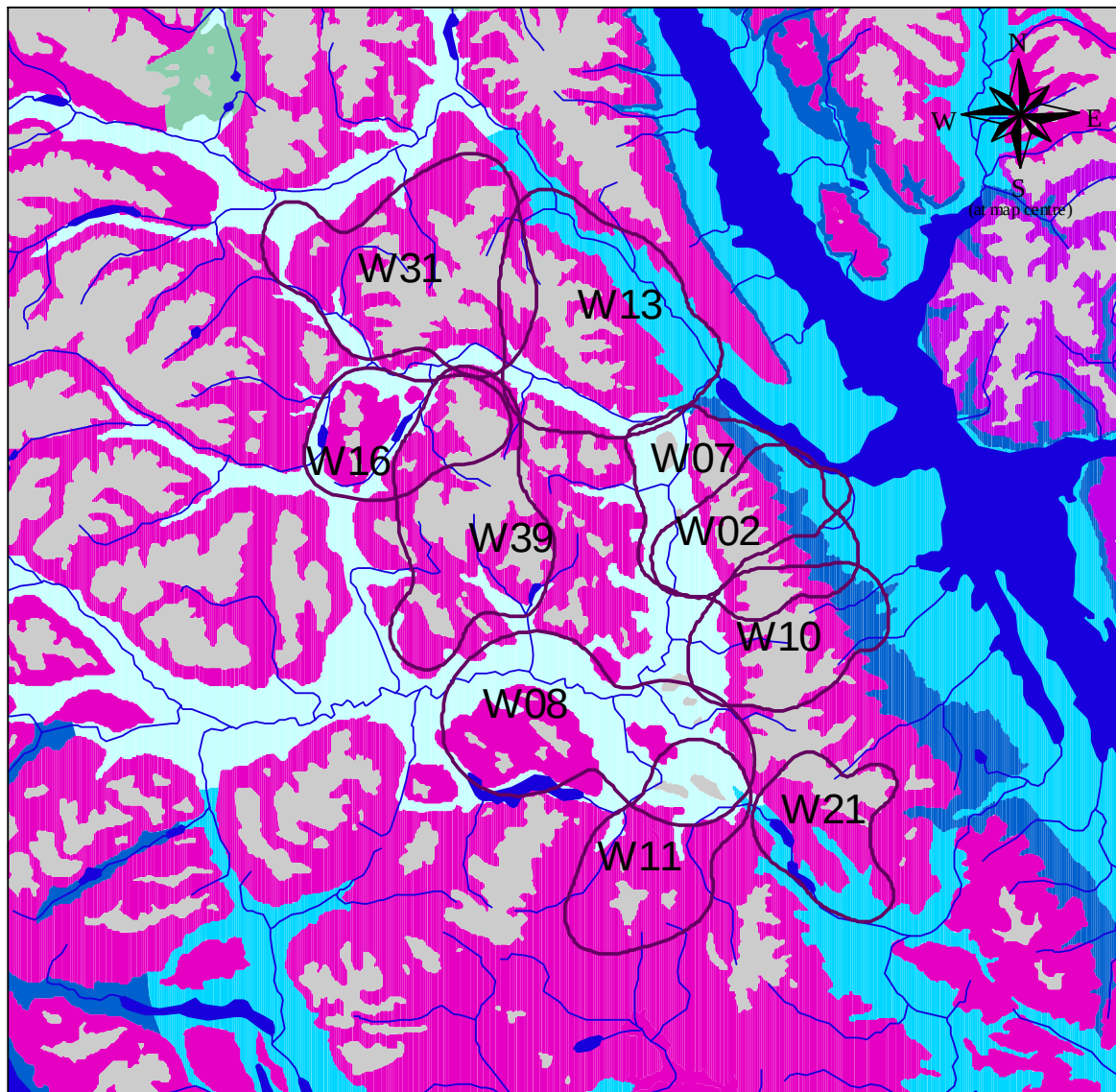


Figure 5. Home range outlines for adult female wolverine.



1:810,000

10 0 10 Kilometers

- Alpine Tundra
- Boreal White and Black Spruce
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Spruce - Willow - Birch

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Figure 6. Home range outline for adult female wolverine W34.

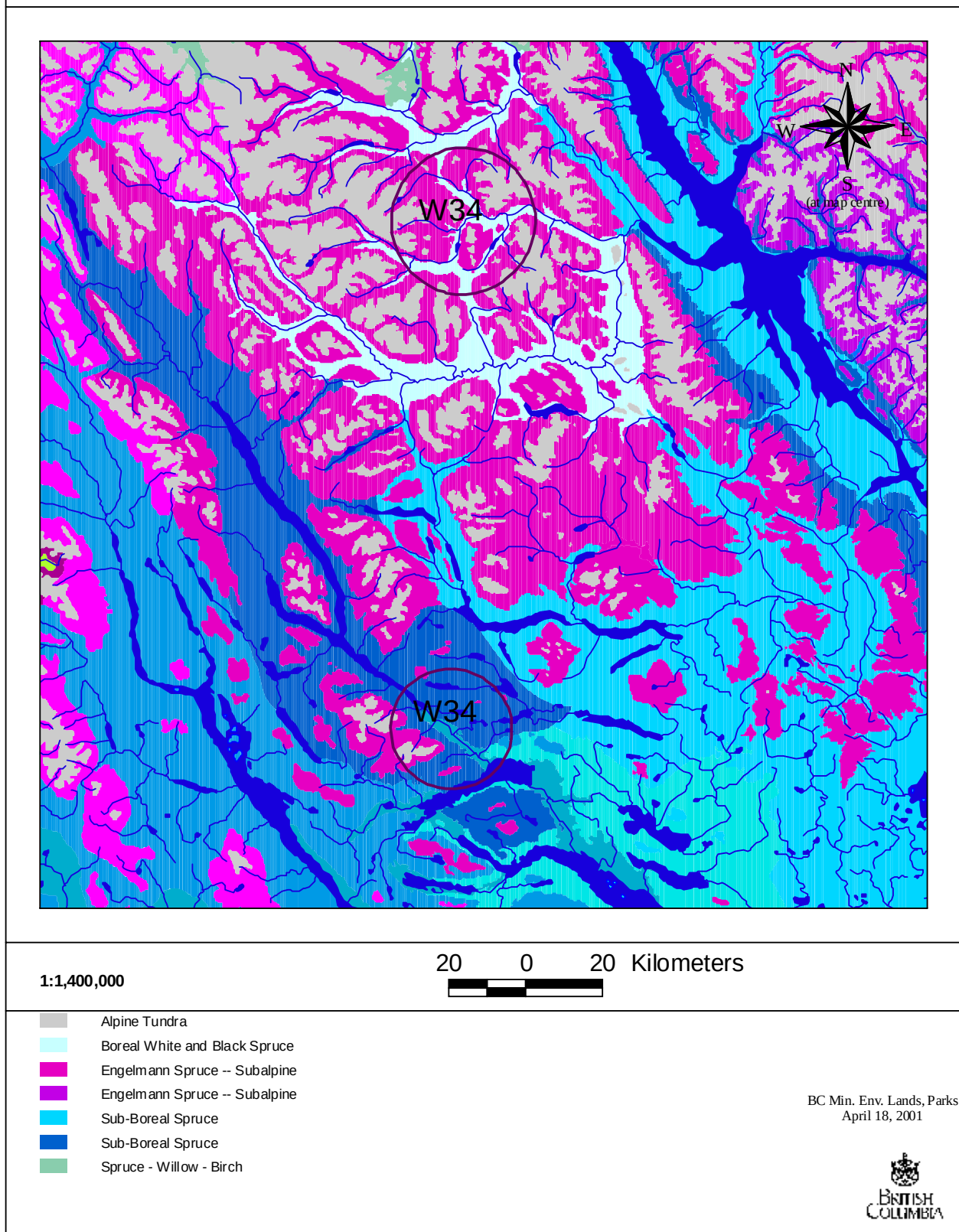
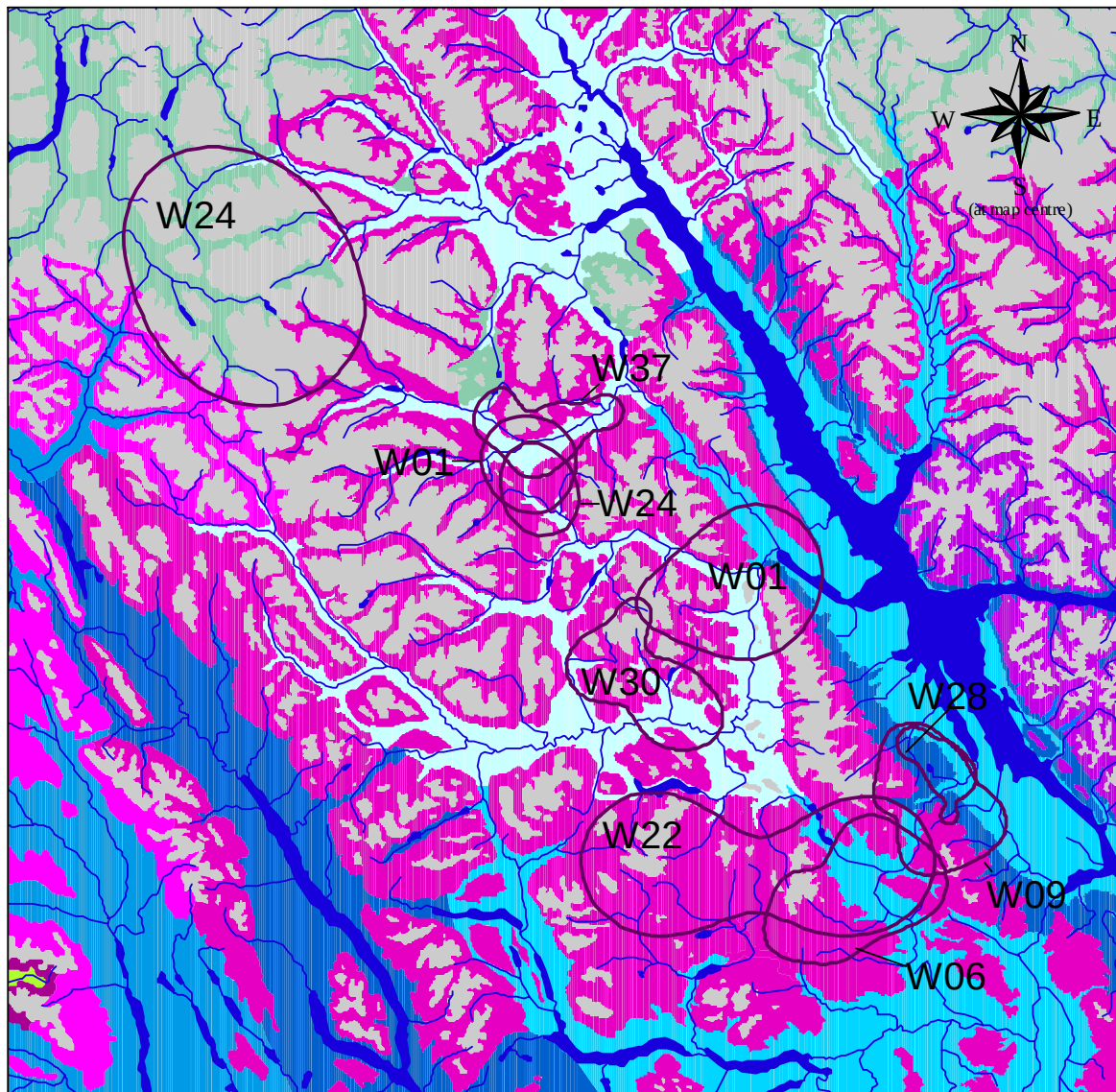


Figure 7. Home range outlines for subadult female wolverines.



1:1,400,000

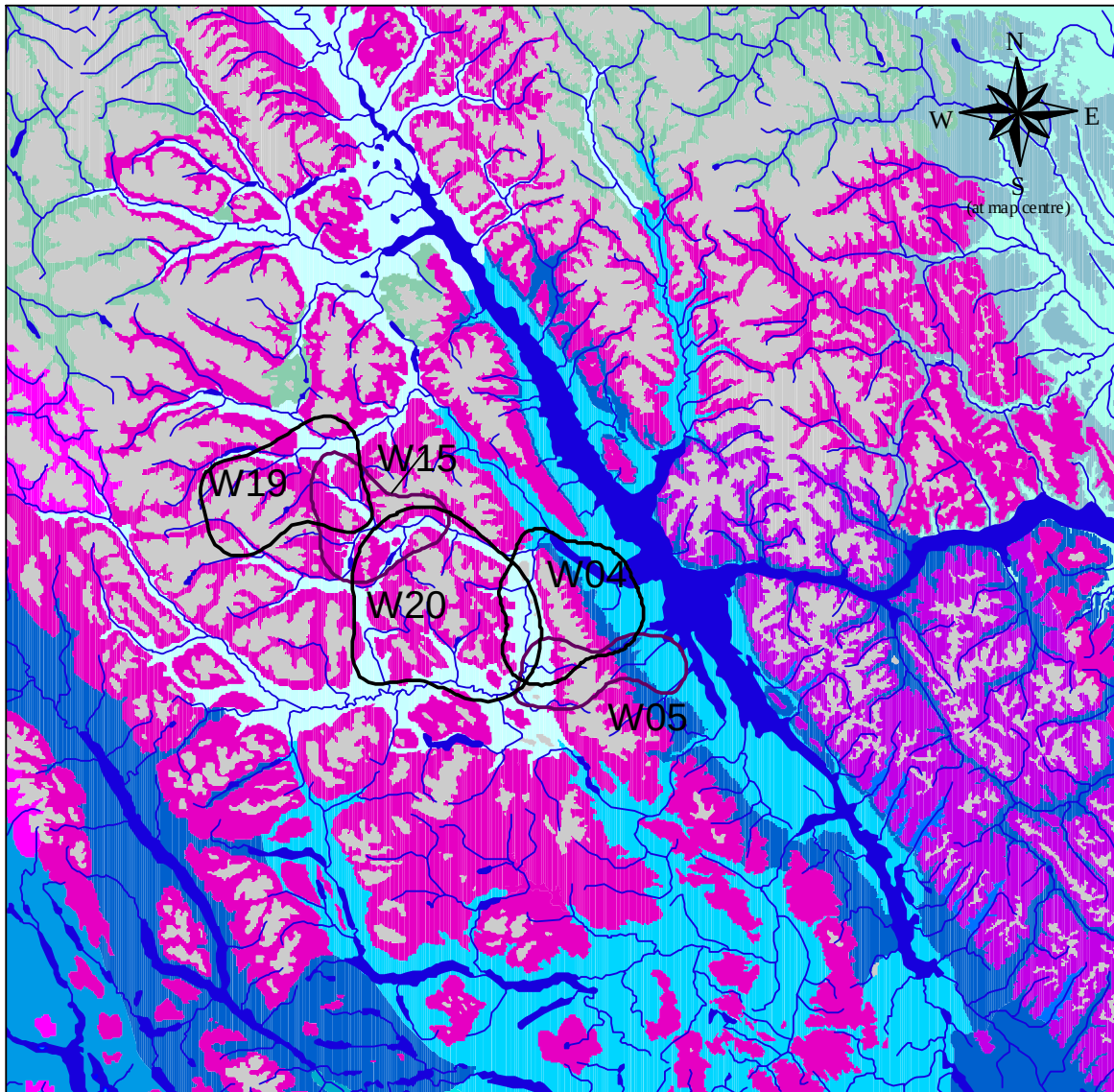
20 0 20 Kilometers

- Alpine Tundra
- Boreal White and Black Spruce
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Spruce - Willow - Birch

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Figure 8. Home range outlines for adult male wolverines 1996/97.



1:1,600,000

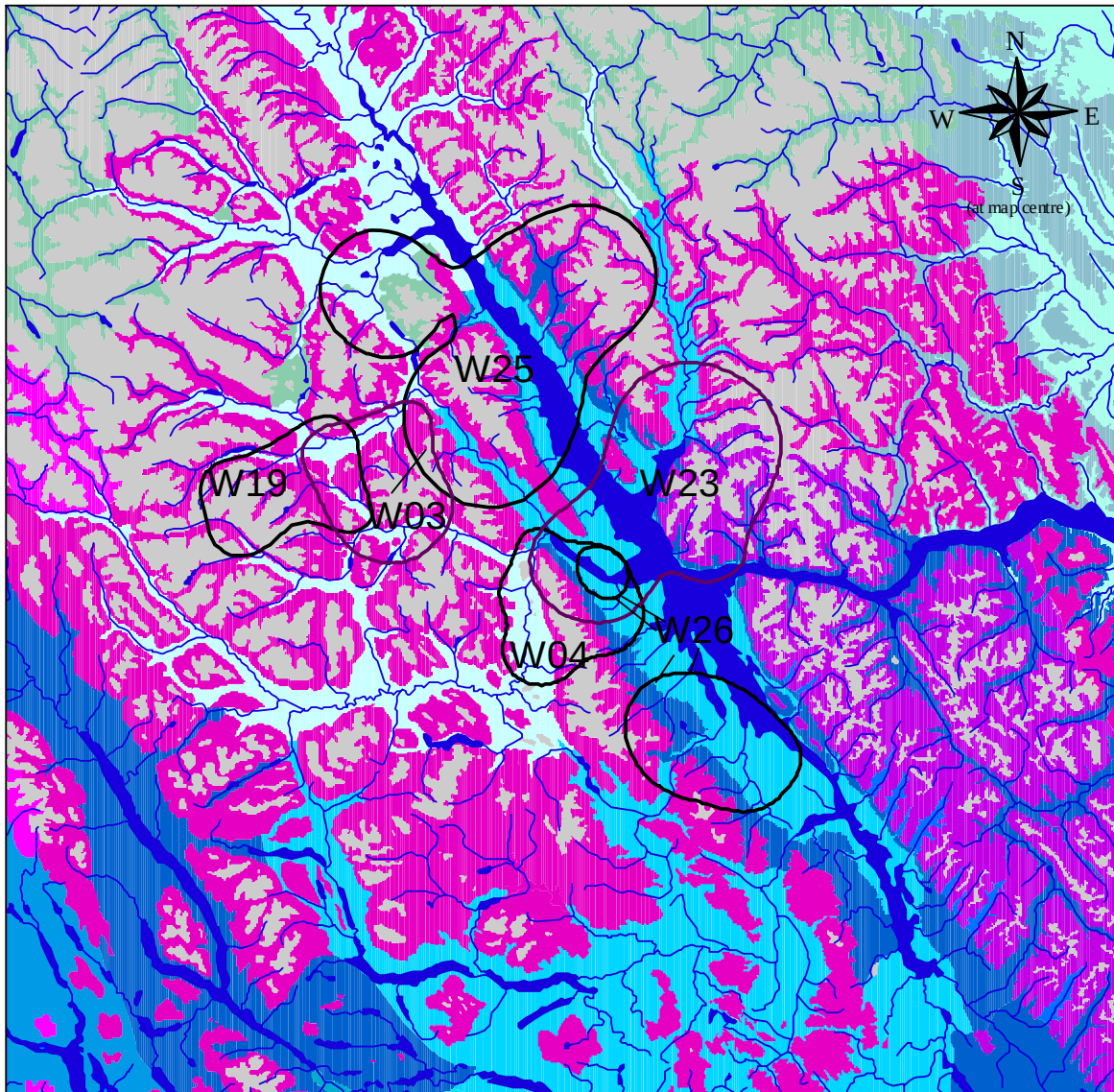
20 0 20 Kilometers

- Alpine Tundra
- Boreal White and Black Spruce
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Spruce - Willow - Birch

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Figure 9. Home range outlines for adult male wolverines 1997/98.



1:1,600,000

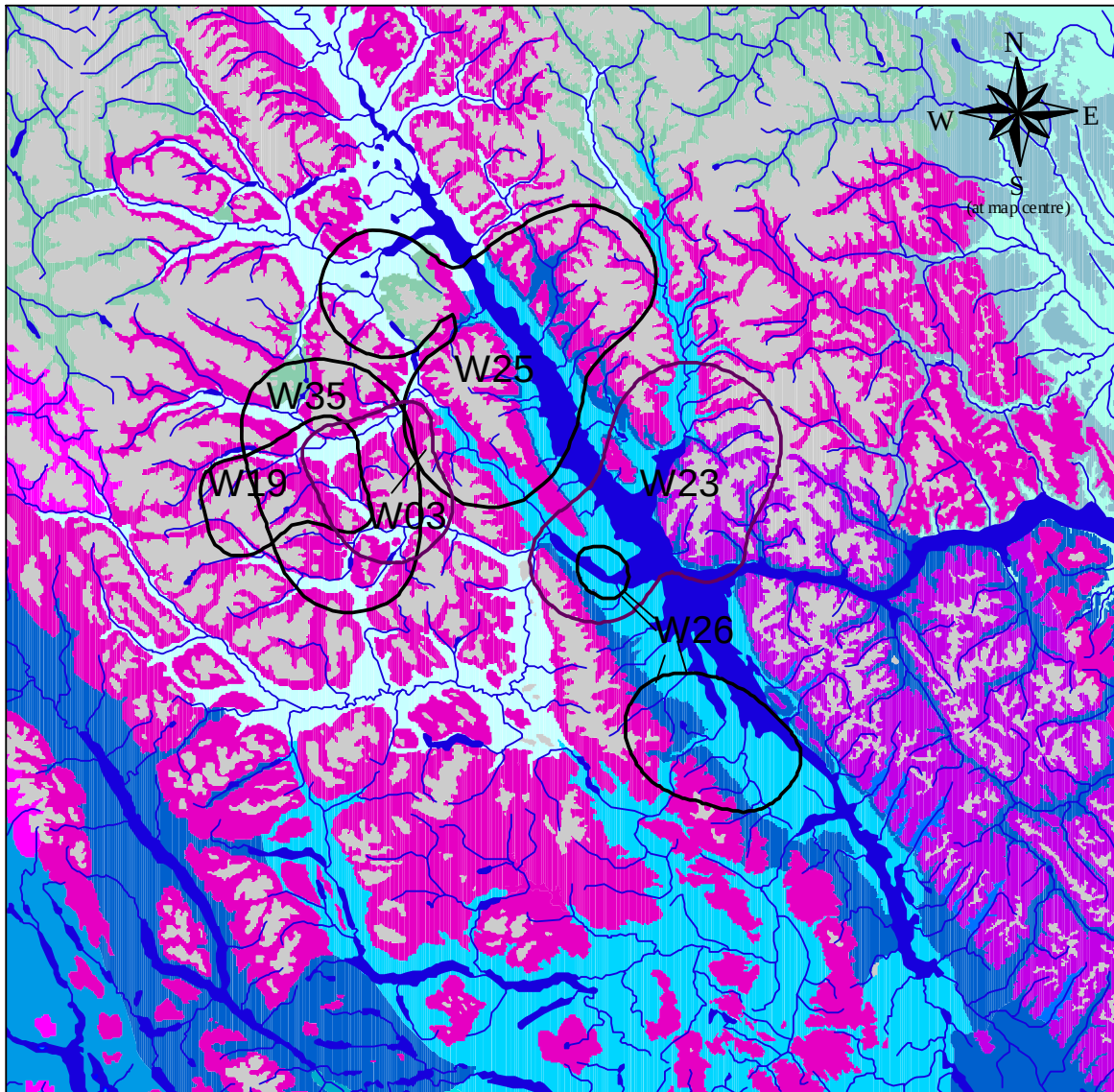
20 0 20 Kilometers

- Alpine Tundra
- Boreal White and Black Spruce
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Spruce - Willow - Birch

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Figure 10. Home range outlines for adult male wolverines 1998/99.



1:1,600,000

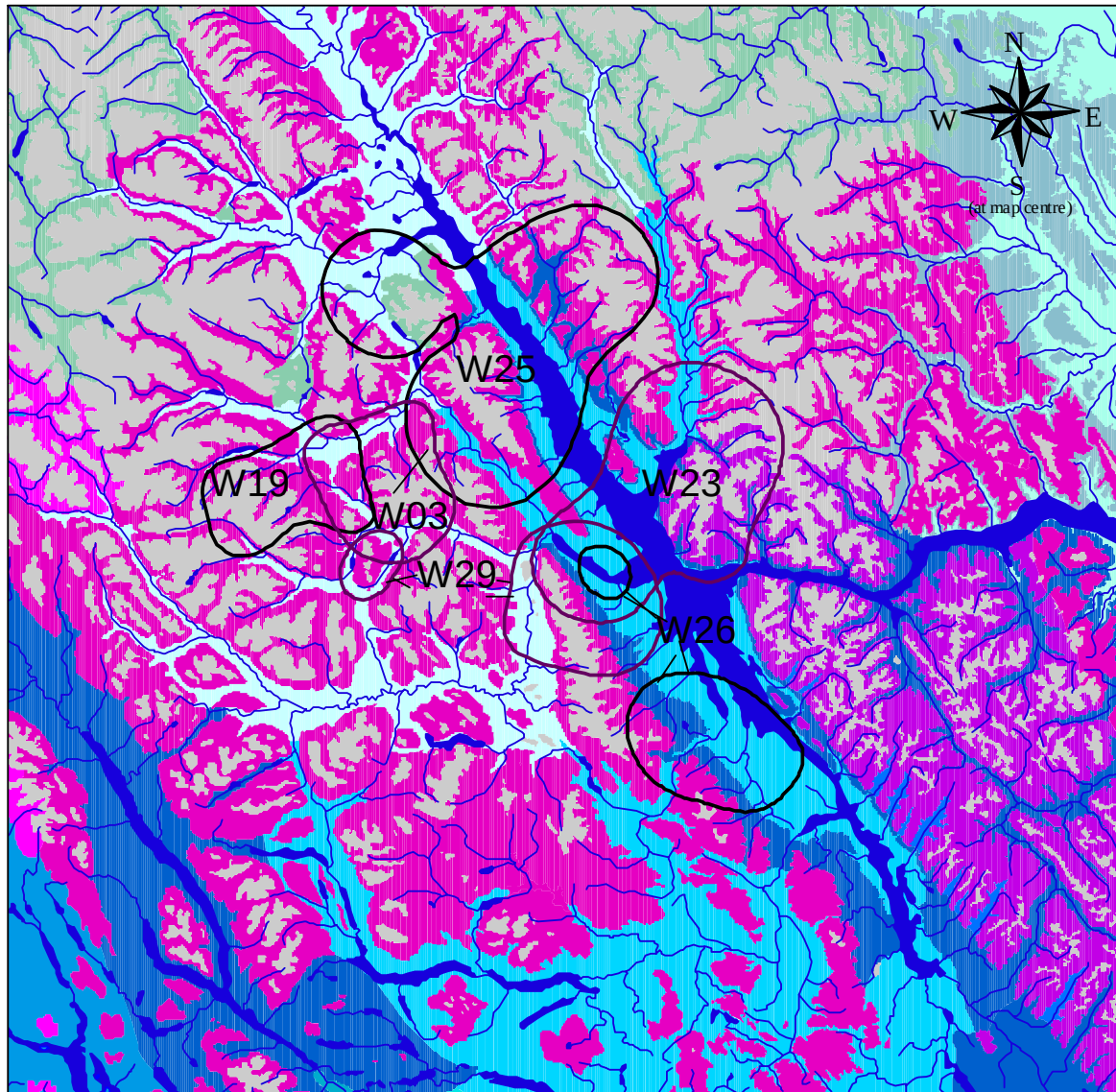
20 0 20 Kilometers

- Alpine Tundra
- Boreal White and Black Spruce
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Spruce - Willow - Birch

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Figure 11. Home range outlines for adult male wolverines 1999/00.



1:1,600,000

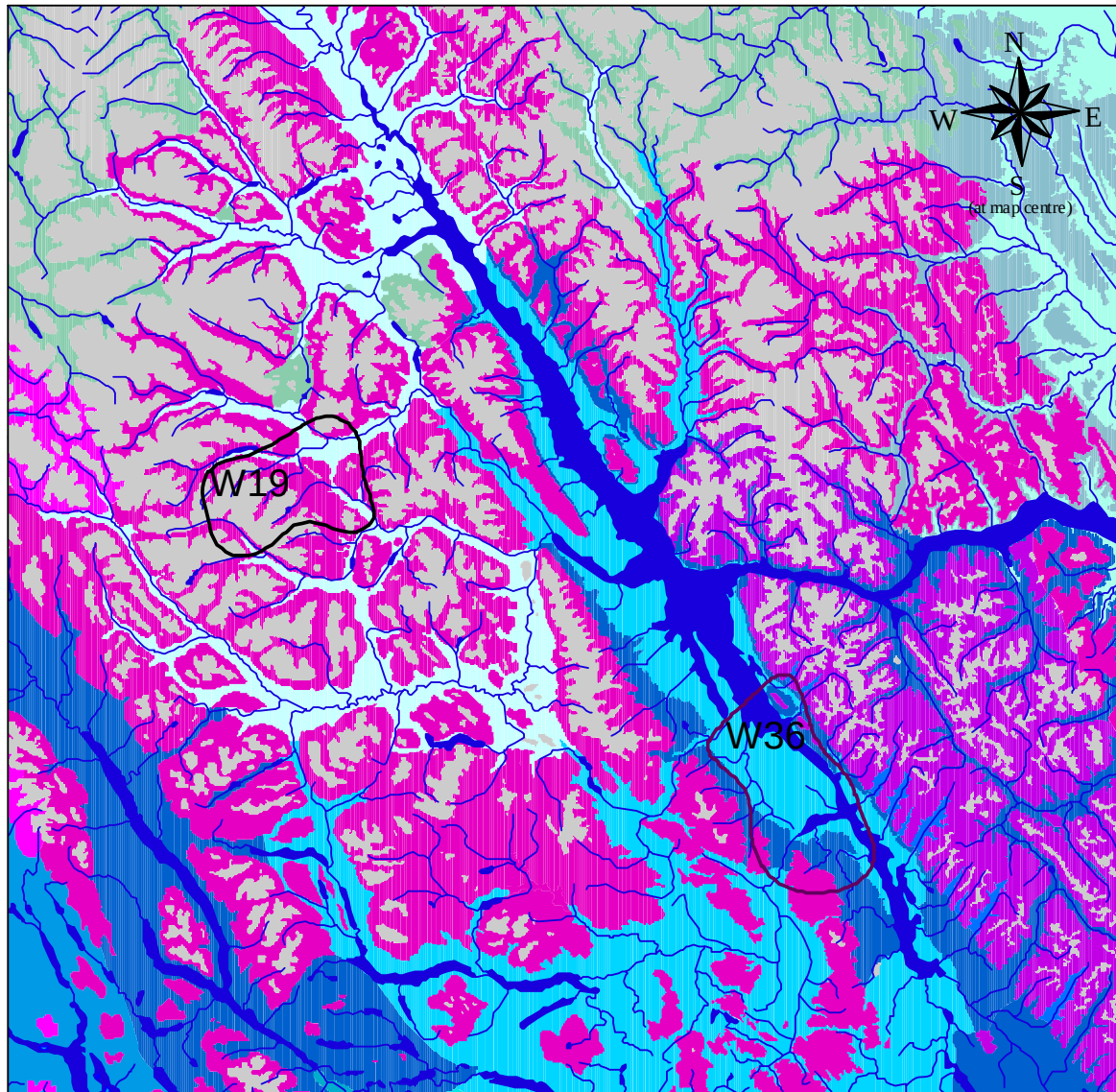
20 0 20 Kilometers

- Alpine Tundra
- Boreal White and Black Spruce
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Spruce - Willow - Birch

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Figure 12. Home range outlines for adult male wolverines 2000/01.



1:1,600,000

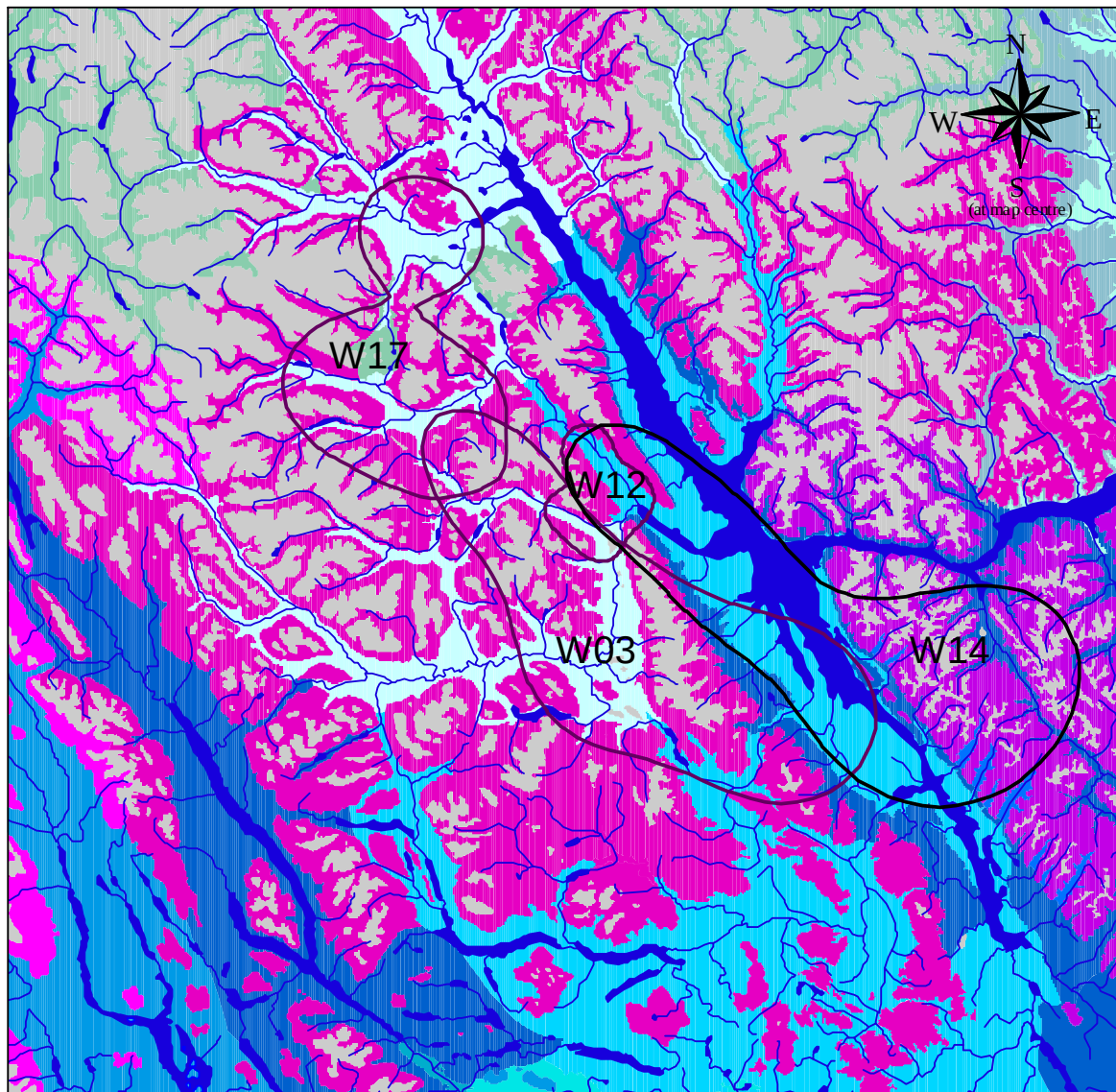
20 0 20 Kilometers

- Alpine Tundra
- Boreal White and Black Spruce
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Spruce - Willow - Birch

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Figure 13. Home range outlines for subadult male wolverines 1996/97.



1:1,600,000

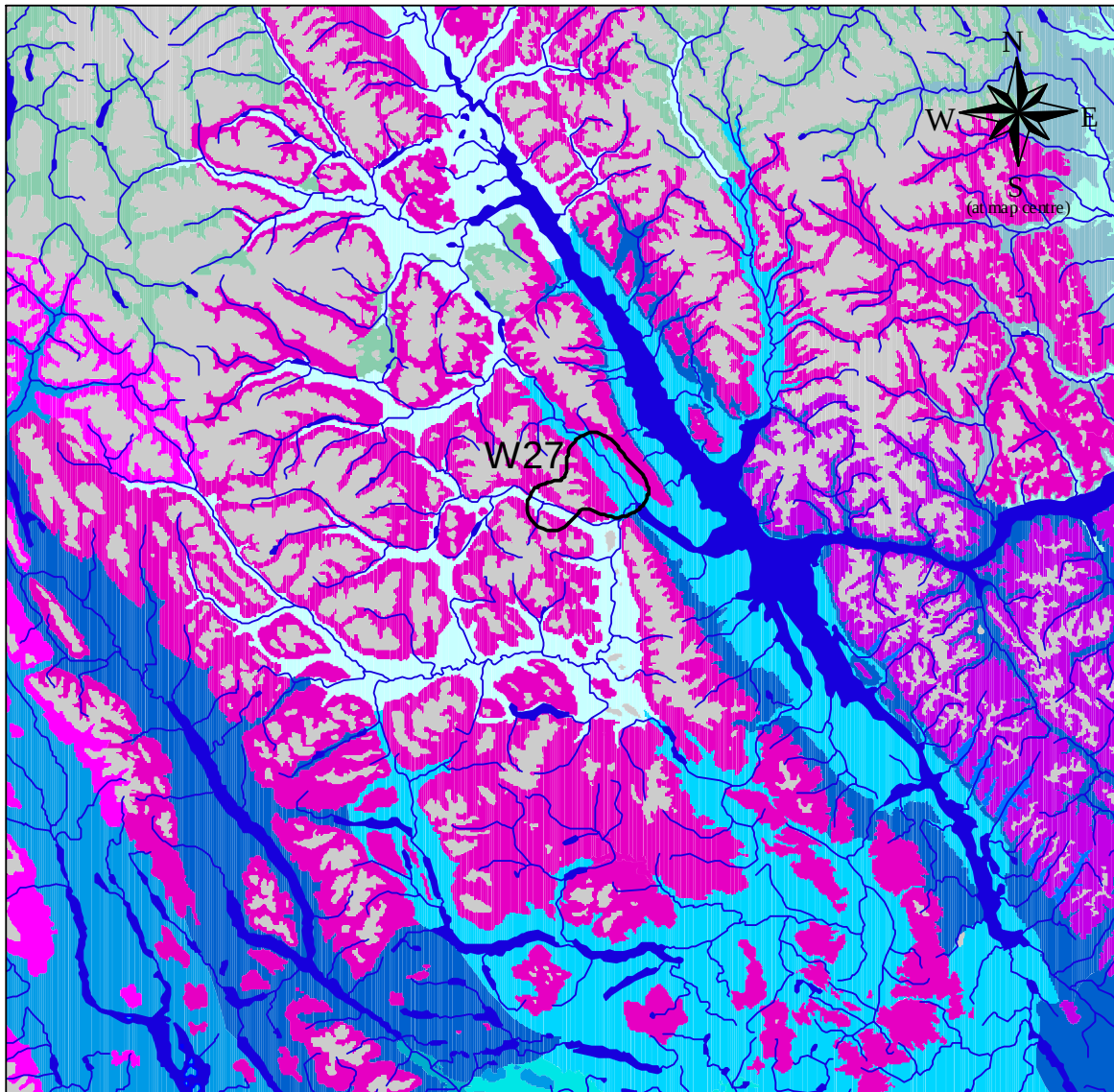
20 0 20 Kilometers

- Alpine Tundra
- Boreal White and Black Spruce
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Spruce - Willow - Birch

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Figure 14. Home range outlines for subadult male wolverines 1997/98.



1:1,600,000

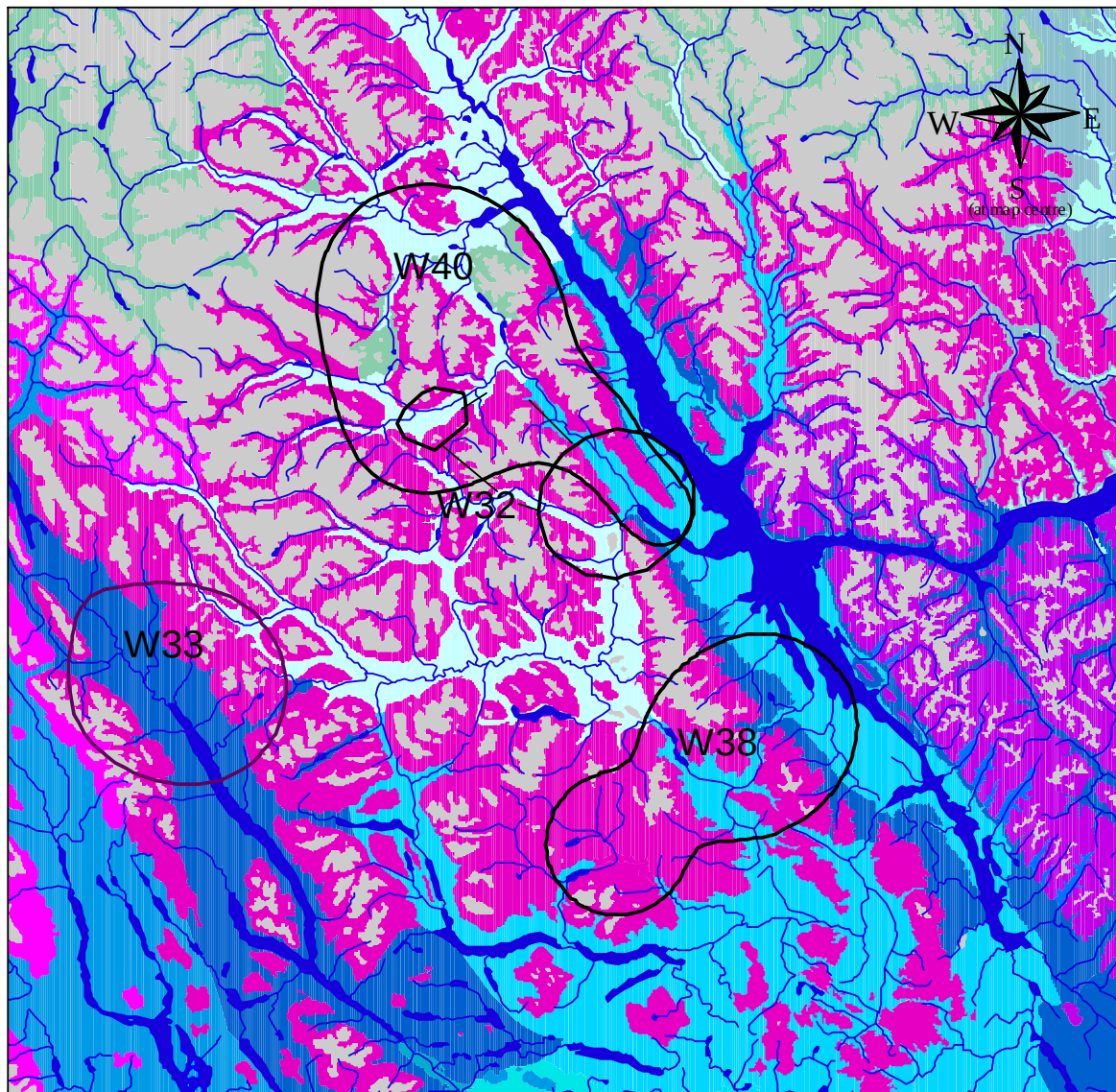
20 0 20 Kilometers

- Alpine Tundra
- Boreal White and Black Spruce
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Spruce - Willow - Birch

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Figure 15. Home range outlines for subadult male wolverines 1999/00 and 2000/01.



1:1,600,000

20 0 20 Kilometers

- Alpine Tundra
- Boreal White and Black Spruce
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Engelmann Spruce -- Subalpine
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Sub-Boreal Spruce
- Spruce - Willow - Birch

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4.3 Habitat Use

4.3.1 Wolverine Seasons

Three seasons of activity were identified for wolverines in the study area. Seasons of activity are periods of the year during which behaviour and habitat use may be consistent and influenced by biological imperatives (e.g. breeding) and weather phenomena (Table 22). Start and end dates for seasons vary among years, depending on major changes in temperature and snow depth.

Table 22. Season dates by year for the Northern Wolverine Project, 1996-2001.

Year	Season		
	1	2	3
1995/96			Dec 16 – Jun 10
1996/97	Jun 11 – Sep 14	Sep 15 – Dec 15	Dec 16 – May 27
1997/98	May 28 – Sep 15	Sep 16 – Dec 15	Dec 16 – May 26
1998/99	May 27 – Sep 15	Sep 16 – Dec 15	Dec 16 – May 31
1999/00	Jun 1 – Sep 15	Sep 16 – Dec 15	Dec 16 – May 30
2000/01	May 31 – Sep 15	Sep 16 – Dec 19	Dec 20 -

Season 1: This period covers most of the summer season. Female wolverine are provisioning young, this is also the mating season for wolverine. This season encompasses den emergence by wolverine kits to the start of marmot hibernation.

Season 2: This period includes fall and early winter. During this period ungulates (and thus carrion) are still relatively dispersed, marmots are in hibernation and foraging options are limited.

Season 3: This period in the primary carrion feeding season and covers winter through late spring. It includes the maternal denning season for adult females.

4.3.2 Landscape Scale

There were few significant selection patterns of habitat included in home range relative to that available within the study area (Table 23). Adult females favoured or were neutral to including AT within their home ranges and avoided or were neutral to ESSF and SBS. On average, however, all females and adult males had a greater percentage of AT in their home range than found in the study area (Table 24). Female home ranges had similar percentages of ESSF as that found in the study area, males had less. Males had higher percentages of SBS in their home ranges than did females.

Composition of seasonal home ranges varied considerably (Tables 25 to 28). Adult females and adult males had much more AT in Season 1 home ranges than in seasons 2 and 3. All sex and age classes had similar amounts of lower elevation SBS and BWBS during season 3.

Table 23. Landscape scale (within study area) selection for home ranges within zones by transmitterd wolverine. Numbers represent the number of animals demonstrating significant selection ($p < 0.05$) or avoidance of inclusion of habitat in within their home range in proportion to availability within the study area.

	AT	BWBS	ESSF	SBS
Adult Female				
Avoid	0	2	3	3
Neutral	5	4	5	5
Select	3	2	0	0
Subadult Female				
Avoid	1	2	1	3
Neutral	3	2	3	1
Select	1	1	1	1
Adult Male				
Avoid	1	2	2	3
Neutral	5	5	6	3
Select	2	1	0	2
Subadult Male				
Avoid	0	0	0	1
Neutral	2	1	2	1
Select	0	1	0	0

Figure 24. Mean ecological composition (percent) of wolverine home ranges (overall home ranges based on at least 20 locations) and Northern Wolverine Project Study area.

Biogeoclimatic Zone	Study Area	Sex and Ageclass			
		Adult Female	Subadult Female	Adult Male	Subadult Male
AT	17.2	27.6	19.2	21.0	17.8
ESSF	42.8	40.5	42.5	36.7	37.2
SBS	24.1	15.2	18.3	23.8	23.6
BWBS	15.2	19.2	19.2	18.8	17.6
SWB	0	0	6.6	3.1	0

Table 25. Ecological composition of adult female wolverine seasonal home ranges.

	Study Area	Season		
Biogeoclimatic Zone		1 (n=6)	2 (n=1)	3 (n=8)
AT	17.2	46.6	36.8	25.2
ESSF	42.5	40.1	30.4	41.5
SBS	24.1	5.9	1.1	14.2
BWBS	15.2	10.2	31.7	19.3
SWB	0	0	0	0

Table 26. Ecological composition of adult male wolverine seasonal home ranges.

	Study Area	Season		
Biogeoclimatic Zone		1 (n=2)	2 (n=1)	3 (n=7)
AT	17.2	33.4	0	18.4
ESSF	42.5	45.3	5.4	40.8
SBS	24.1	11.5	94.6	21.2
BWBS	15.2	9.8	0	18.8
SWB	0	0	0	0.8

Table 27. Ecological composition of subadult female wolverine seasonal home ranges.

	Study Area	Season		
Biogeoclimatic Zone		1 (n=0)	2 (n=0)	3 (n=3)
AT	17.2			17.2
ESSF	42.5			12.7
SBS	24.1			61.6
BWBS	15.2			8.0
SWB	0			0

Table 28. Ecological composition of subadult male wolverine seasonal home ranges.

	Study Area	Season		
Biogeoclimatic Zone		1 (n=0)	2 (n=0)	3 (n=2)
AT	17.2			18.6
ESSF	42.5			41.3
SBS	24.1			10.8
BWBS	15.2			26.4
SWB	0			3

Mean seasonal elevations varied between seasons, and sex and age classes (Figure 16). Adult females were found consistently at higher elevations than all other sex and age classes in all seasons. All sex and age classes were found at higher elevations during the summer months of season 1. Adult females are provisioning young at this time. This is also the mating season and this is likely responsible for bringing adult males and younger females up to these higher elevations. Adult males and all subadults are found primarily at lower elevations consistent with those of wolves during seasons 2 and 3. This may be in response to greater opportunities for scavenging carrion resulting from wolf kills. Monthly elevation patterns reflect seasonal ones; however, with a greater degree of variability.

Mean monthly elevations of wolverine ranged from a low of 800m to a high of 1636m (Figure 17). Adult females show a skewed distribution of locations, with the majority of them at high elevations (Figure 18), with the exception of season 3 when most locations are at low elevation. In the latter part of this season adult females locate maternal dens in high elevation habitats. Adult male and subadult female locations are skewed to lower elevations (Figures 18 and 21) with the exception of season 1. Subadult male locations are all distributed in lower elevation habitats.

Figure 16. Mean elevations of radio-collared wolverine by season.

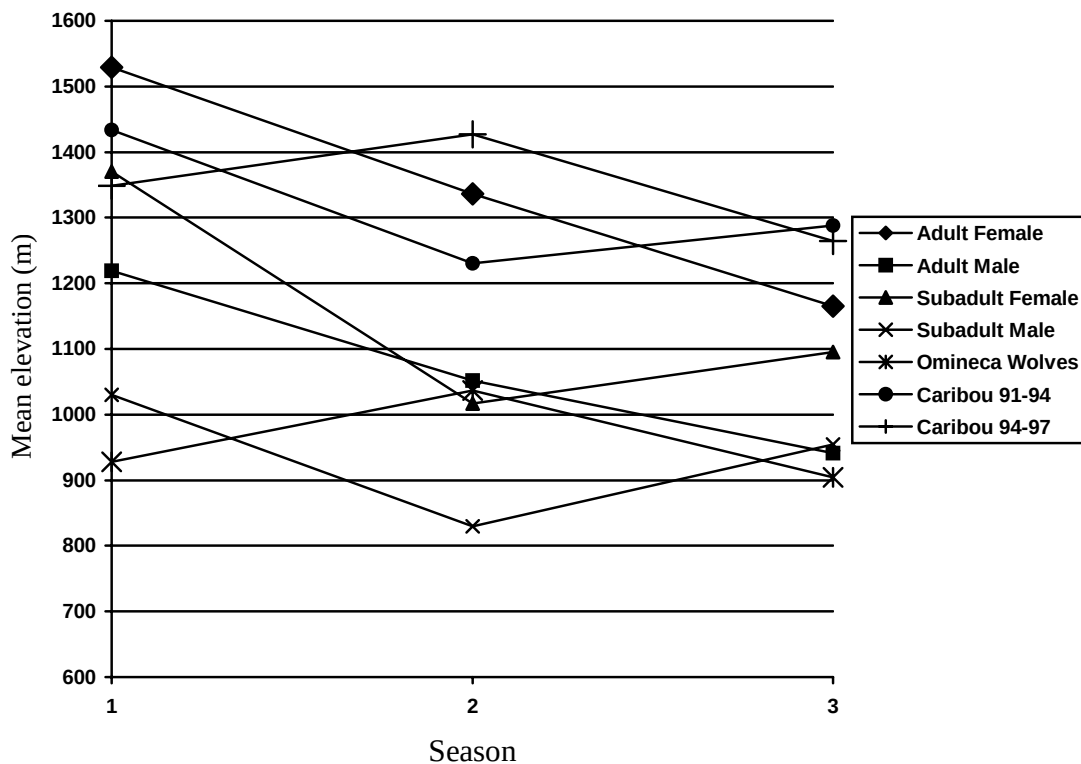


Figure17. Mean monthly elevations for wolverine.

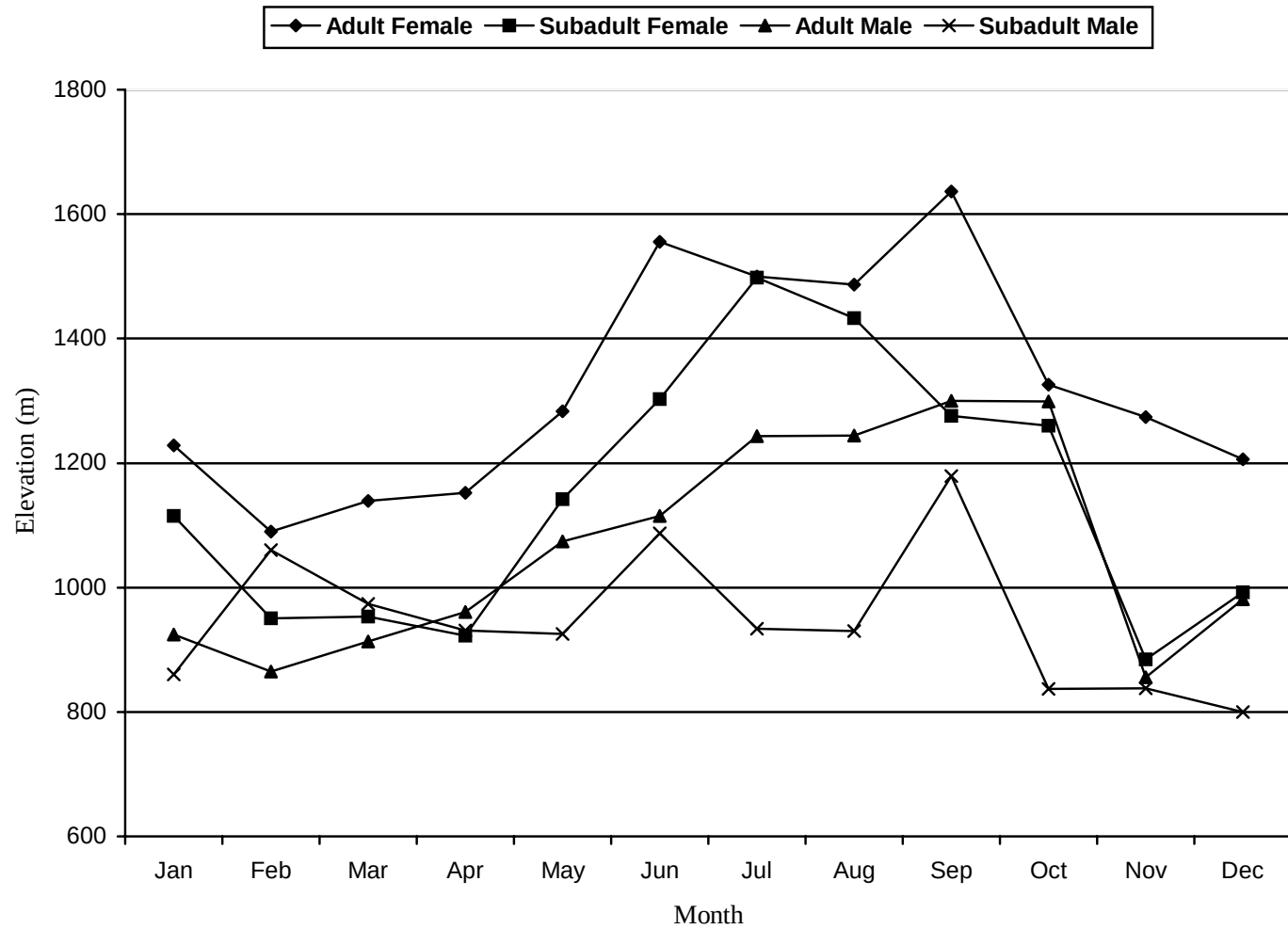


Figure 18. Elevational distribution of locations for adult female wolverine.

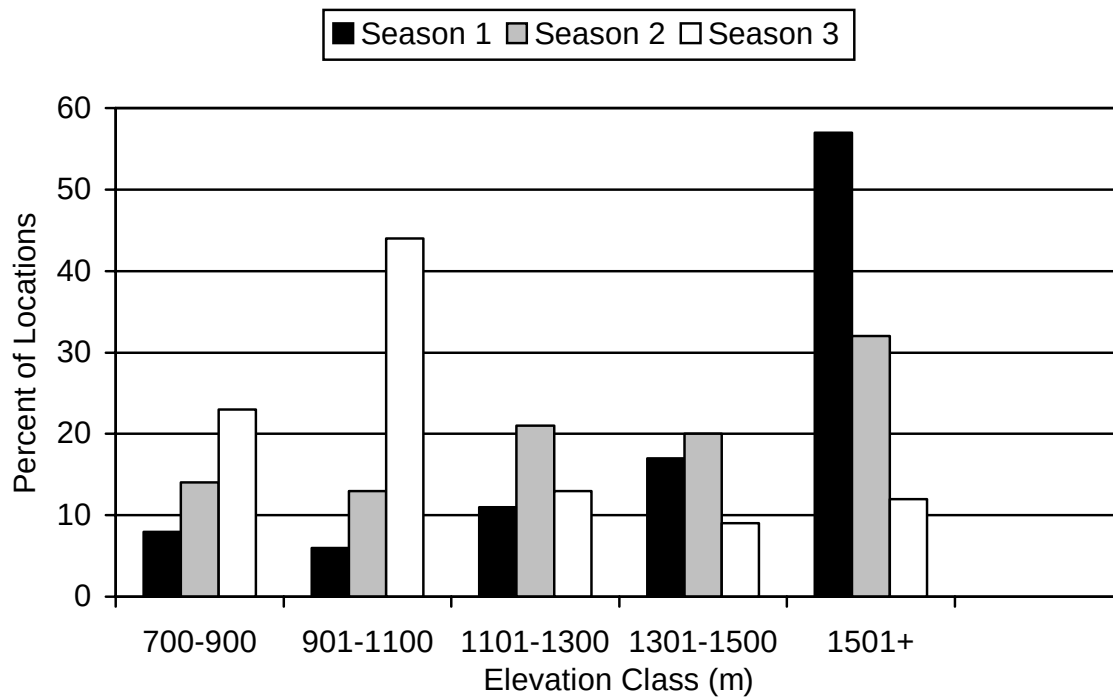


Figure 19. Elevational distribution of locations for subadult female wolverine.

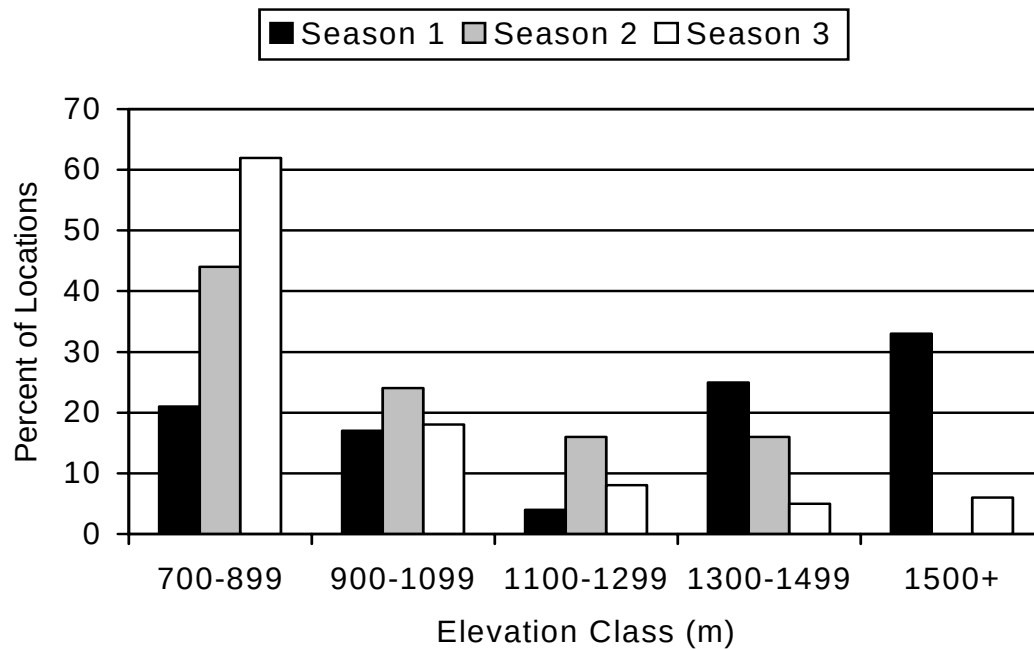


Figure 20. Elevational distribution of locations for adult male wolverine.

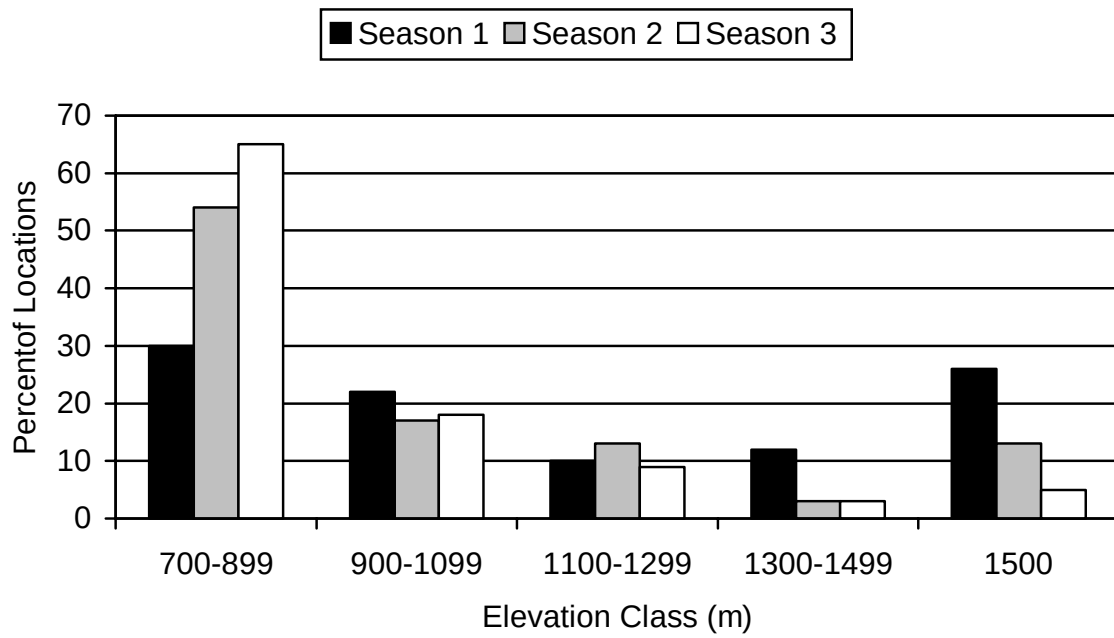
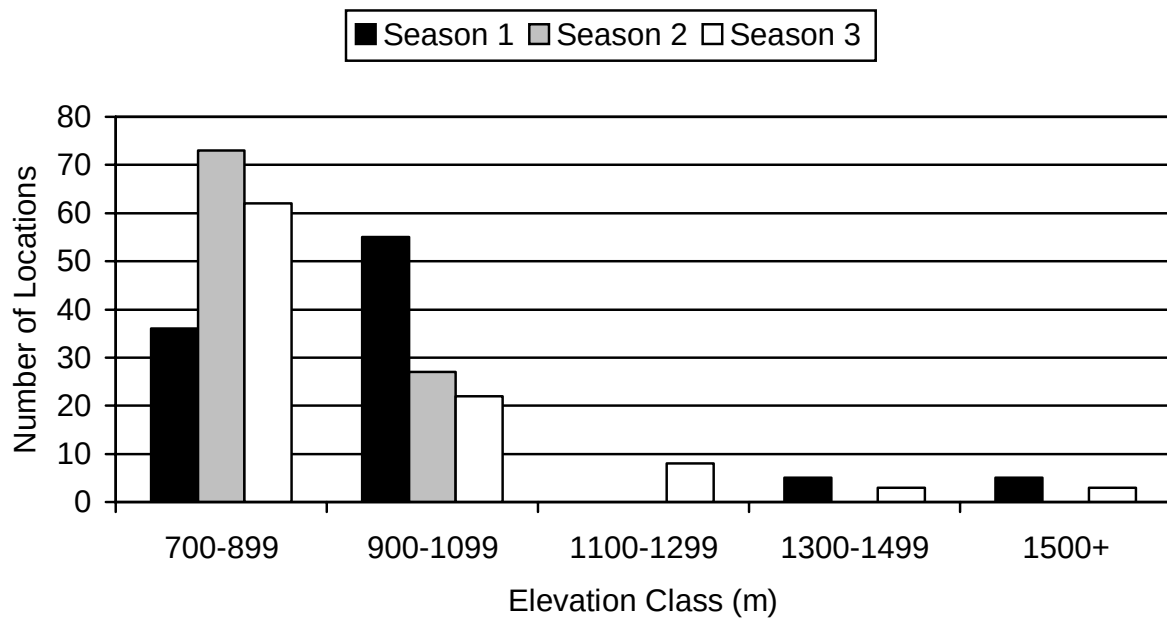


Figure 21. Elevational distribution of locations for subadult male wolverine.



Adult females were located more frequently than other sex and age classes in Alpine Tundra and Engelmann Spruce Subalpine Fir biogeoclimatic zones in almost all seasons (Tables 29-32). In general males of both age classes made more use of Sub-Boreal Spruce and Boreal Black and White Spruce biogeoclimatic zones. Subadult females were located in these zones more frequently than adult females; however, they made more use of the Engelmann Spruce Subalpine Fir zone than did males. During this period, adult females may have maternal den sites at high elevation (all have been located in high elevation ESSF), while they are still foraging at low elevation. The majority of adult female locations in season 1 are in AT and ESSF habitats. At this time, adult females are nursing kits and feeding on marmots and ground nesting birds. Although more use is made of lower elevation SBS and BWBS habitats in season 3, more than half of adult female locations are in AT and ESSF. Adult female home ranges, in general, tend to straddle high elevation habitat. Higher mean elevations during this season may be an artifact of the nature of their home ranges. The elevational distribution of subadult female locations is essentially unimodal, with season 1 being the exception (Figure 19). This is reflected in the distribution of locations by biogeoclimatic zone (Table 30). Adult male wolverine are located most frequently in SBS and BWBS habitats and use AT and ESSF habitats most during mating season (season 1), where they have greater chances of encountering receptive females (Figure 20, Table 31). Subadult male locations are concentrated in the lower elevation SBS and BWBS habitats in all seasons (Figure 21, Table 32).

Table 29. Habitat use of biogeoclimatic zones by adult female radio-collared wolverine (percent of locations by season).

Biogeoclimatic Zone	Season			Overall
	1	2	3	
AT	37	18	6	19
ESSF	46	48	38	42
SBS	8	8	19	14
BWBS	8	23	36	25
SWB	0	0	0	0

Table 30. Habitat use of biogeoclimatic zones by subadult female radio-collared wolverine (percent of locations by season).

Biogeoclimatic Zone	Season			Overall
	1	2	3	
AT	19	4	6	7
ESSF	52	25	18	28
SBS	21	29	48	38
BWBS	8	39	31	26
SWB	0	4	1	1

Table 31. Habitat use of biogeoclimatic zones by adult male radio-collared wolverine (percent of location by season).

Biogeoclimatic Zone	Season			Overall
	1	2	3	
AT	18	6	3	7
ESSF	35	19	11	19
SBS	31	48	44	41
BWBS	16	23	42	33
SWB	0	0	<1	<1

Table 32. Habitat use of biogeoclimatic zones by subadult male radio-collared wolverine (percent of locations by season).

Biogeoclimatic Zone	Season			Overall
	1	2	3	
AT	5	0	5	4
ESSF	27	0	14	15
SBS	23	82	27	33
BWBS	45	18	54	48
SWB	0	0	0	0

The use by wolverine of older forest habitats (see section 4.3.3) is further demonstrated at a landscape scale by an examination of the nature of live capture data, and may be influenced by the presence of human activity. Traps located in isolated patches of forested habitat surrounded by early successional habitats captured no wolverine (Figure 22, Table 33). Capture rates were similar for traps located in large tracts of contiguous forest and traps located in forested corridors in locations remote from human activity. Traps located in forested corridors adjacent to human activity had capture rates 3-4 times higher than the previous two types (ANOVA $p < 0.0001$; Sheffe Multiple Comparison $p < 0.05$). My interpretation is that as proximity to human activity increased, the importance of forested cover (presumably as security cover) increases. I hypothesize that as forest harvesting creates a matrix of cut and uncut stands, wolverine are “funneled” into the uncut forested areas, and that as the proximity to human activity increases wolverine may be more sensitive to the need for forested habitat. As a result their chances of encountering a live trap are significantly increased.

Figure 22. Capture success of wolverine live traps by trap location.

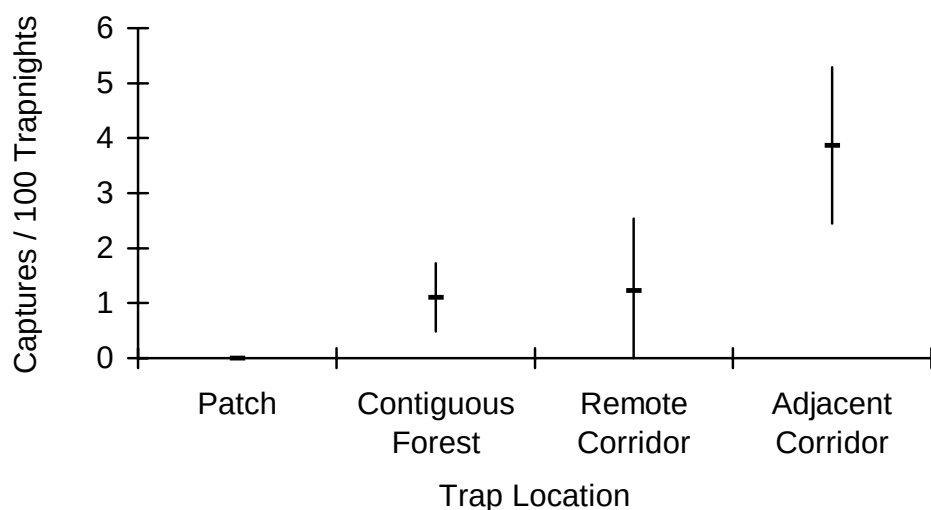


Table 33. Wolverine live-capture success as a function of trap location for all trap sessions (captures/100 trapnights).

Session	Patch	Contiguous Forest	Remote Corridor	Active Corridor
Fall 1996	0	0	0	0
Fall 1997	0	0.25	3.41	0
Fall 1998	0	0.74	0	0
Winter 1996	0	1.11	1.08	5.06
Winter 1997	0	1.5	2.61	4.03
Winter 1998	0	2.11	0	4.28
Winter 1999	0	1.74	0	6.98
Winter 2000	0	1.31	0	3.26
Mean Captures	0	1.10	1.23	3.87
Mean Trapnights/Session	132.5	321.7	196.8	246.6

Note: Numbers in ***bold italics*** are for trapping sessions where, based on the average number of trapdays/capture for that session, had too few trapdays to be likely to capture a wolverine. Mean capture rates and trapnights/session are based only upon the numbers not in bold type.

4.3.3 Stand Scale

Adult female wolverine use a wider variety of habitats than other sex and age classes and depend less upon low upland forests (Figures 23-26). All sex and age classes depend upon this habitat extensively, during season 3. Adult females use parkland, alpine, high upland and low upland forest habitats at various times during the year. All sex and age classes use a wider diversity of habitats more evenly during season 1. This is more pronounced in adult females. Low elevation upland forests are used extensively by subadult females and both age classes of adult males.

Female wolverines primarily use early and late successional habitats, while male wolverine activity is predominantly within late successional habitats (Figures 27-30). These patterns vary seasonally, with most of the early successional habitat use occurring during season 2, when wolverine make the most use of high elevation habitats. The majority of these locations are in herb/shrub and fir parkland habitats in the AT and high elevation ESSF zones. Most locations, however, are in late successional stage habitats (particularly mature and old growth). Overall, more than half of all locations, for each sex and age class are in these seral stages. Relatively little use is made of mid-successional habitats by any wolverine.

Figure 23. Seasonal use of habitat by adult female wolverine.

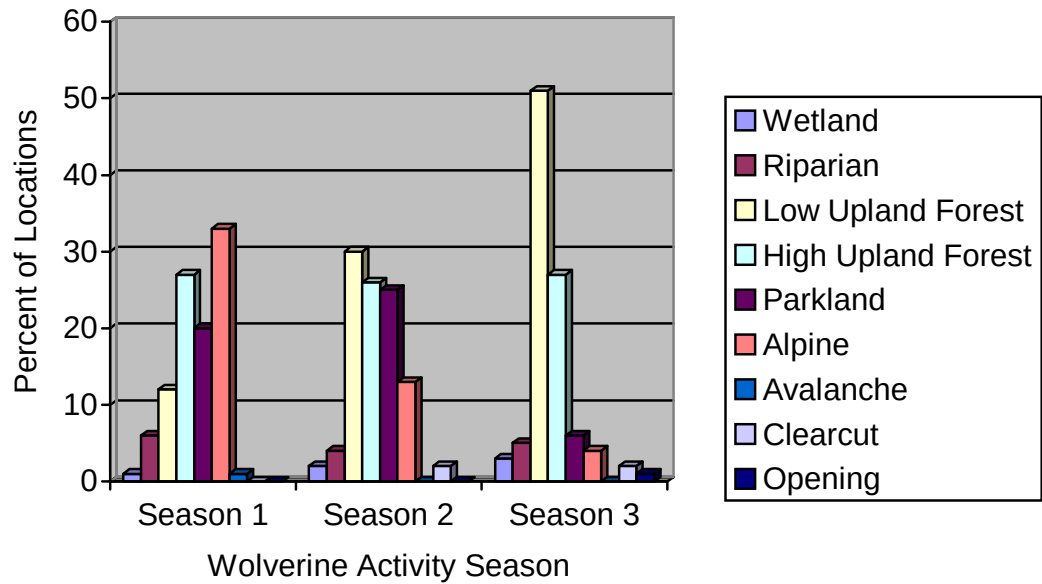


Figure 24. Seasonal habitat use by subadult female wolverine.

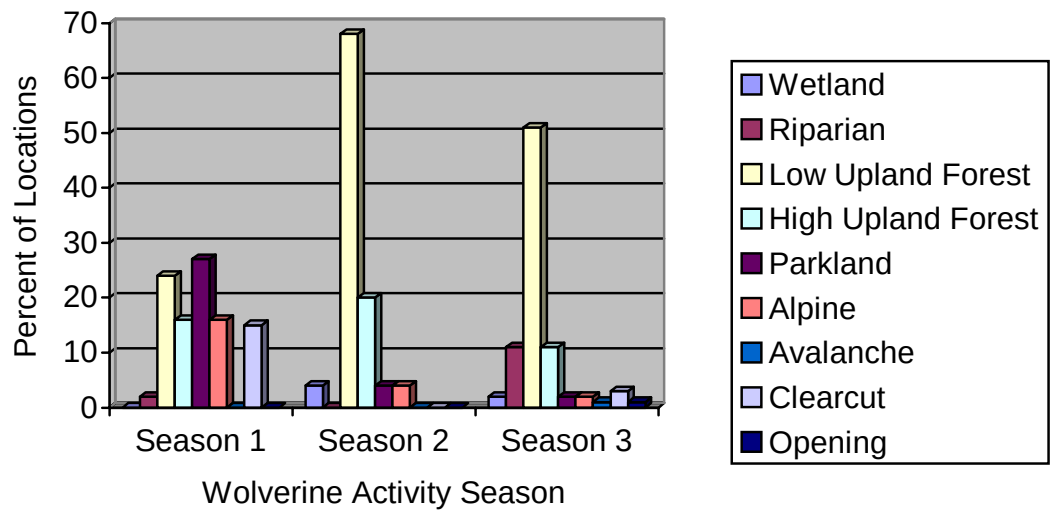


Figure 25. Seasonal habitat use by adult male wolverine.

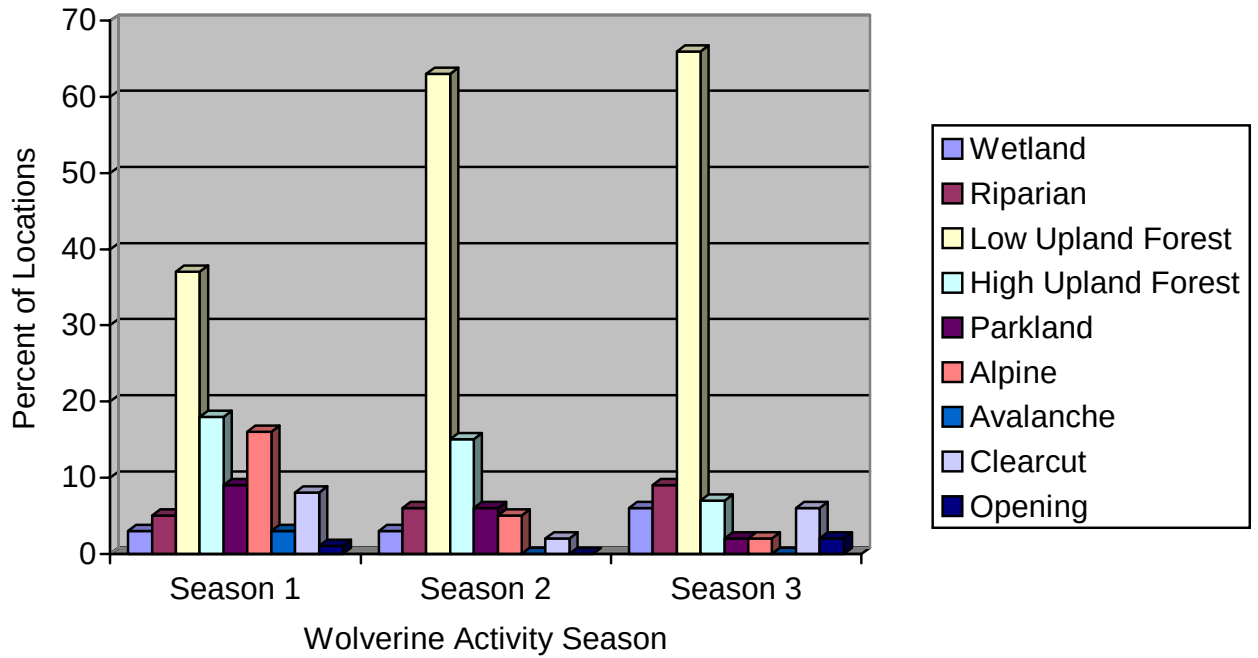


Figure 26. Seasonal habitat use by subadult male wolverine.

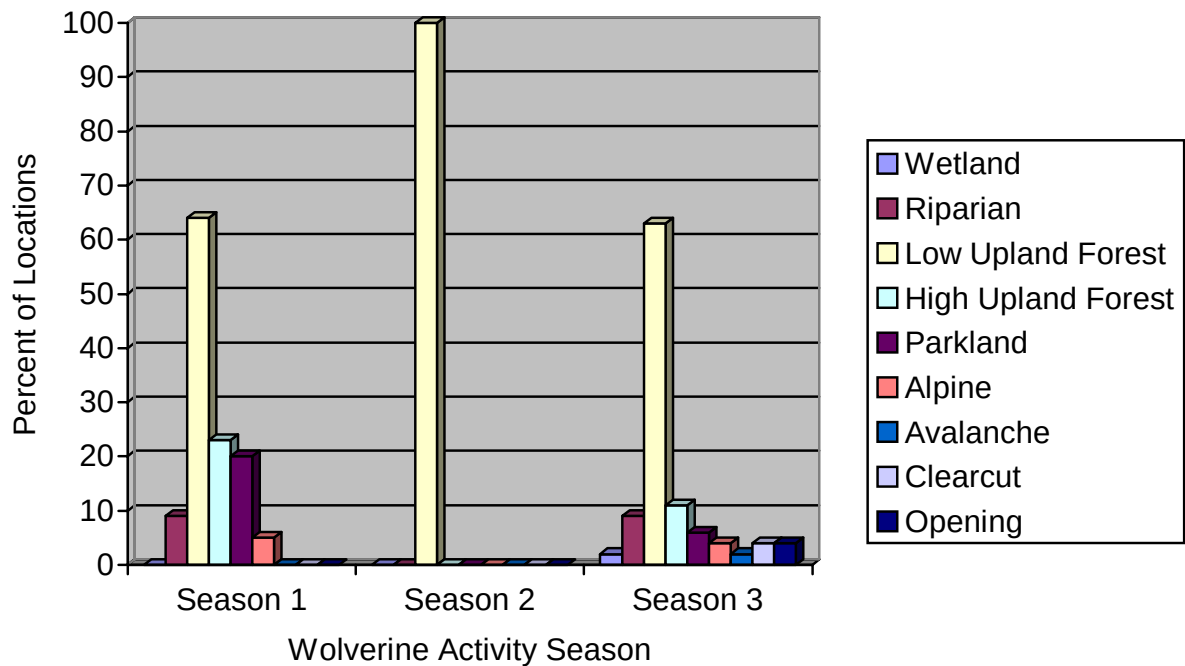


Figure 27. Structural stage use by adult female wolverine.

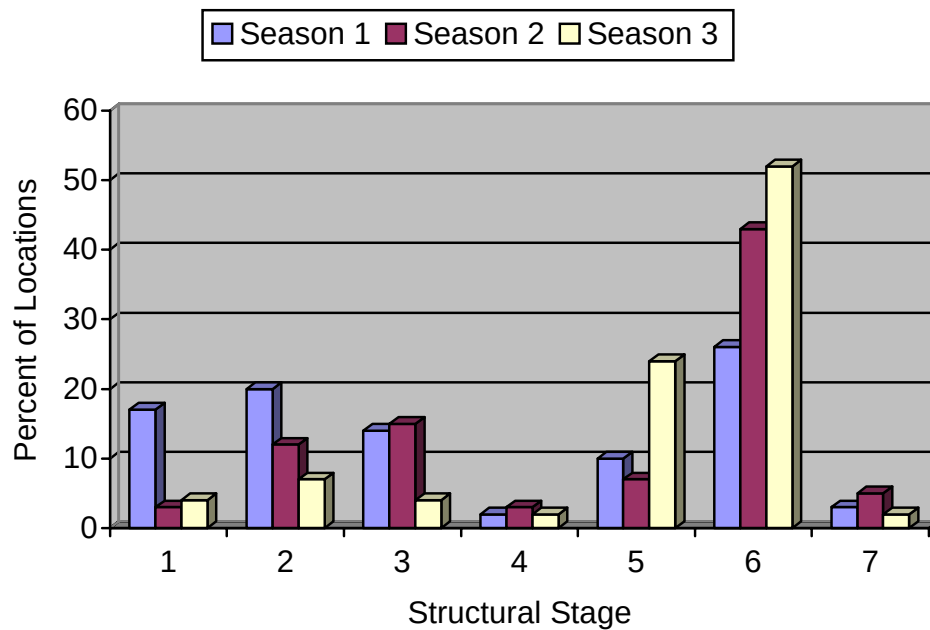


Figure 28. Structural stage use by subadult female wolverine.

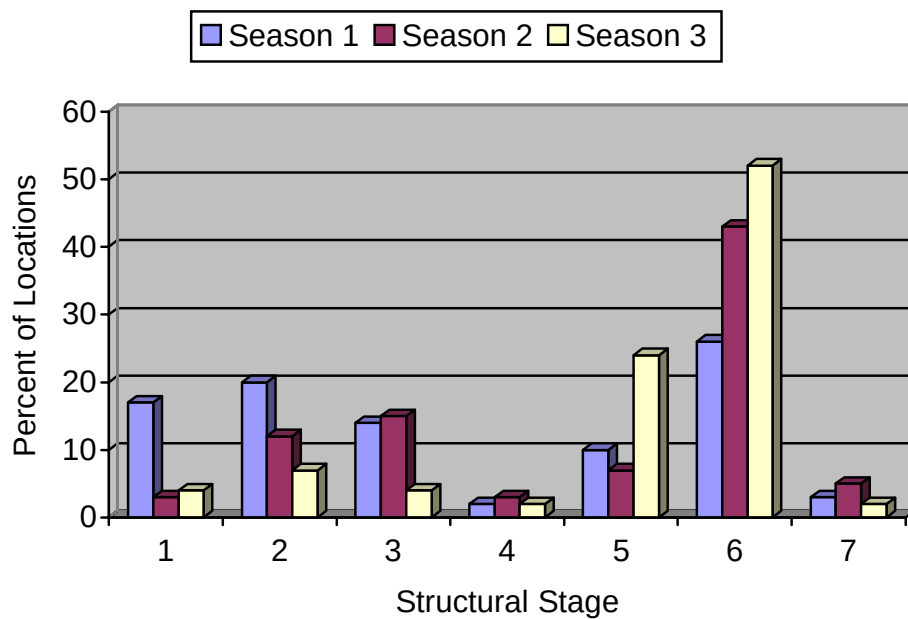


Figure 29. Structural stage use by adult male wolverine.

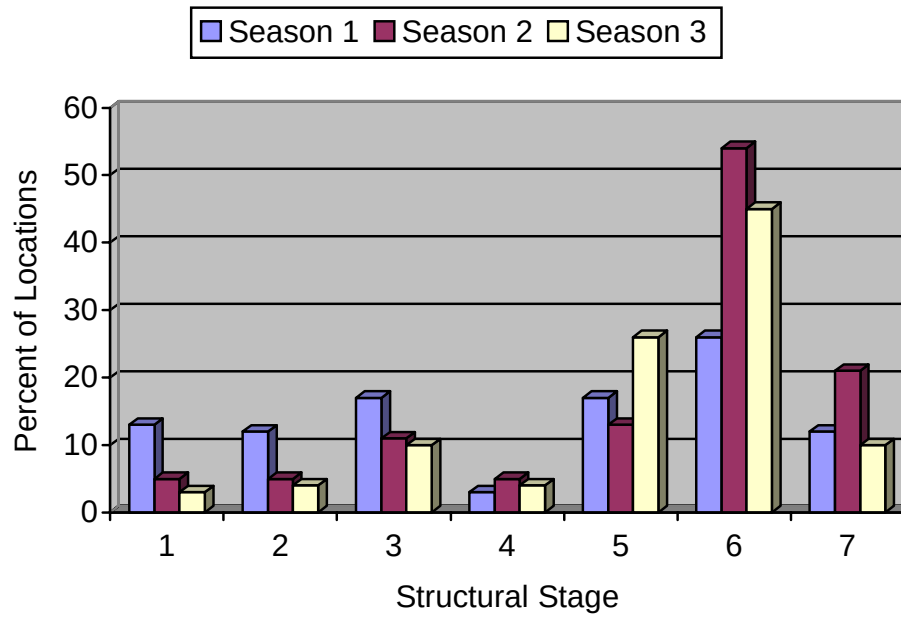
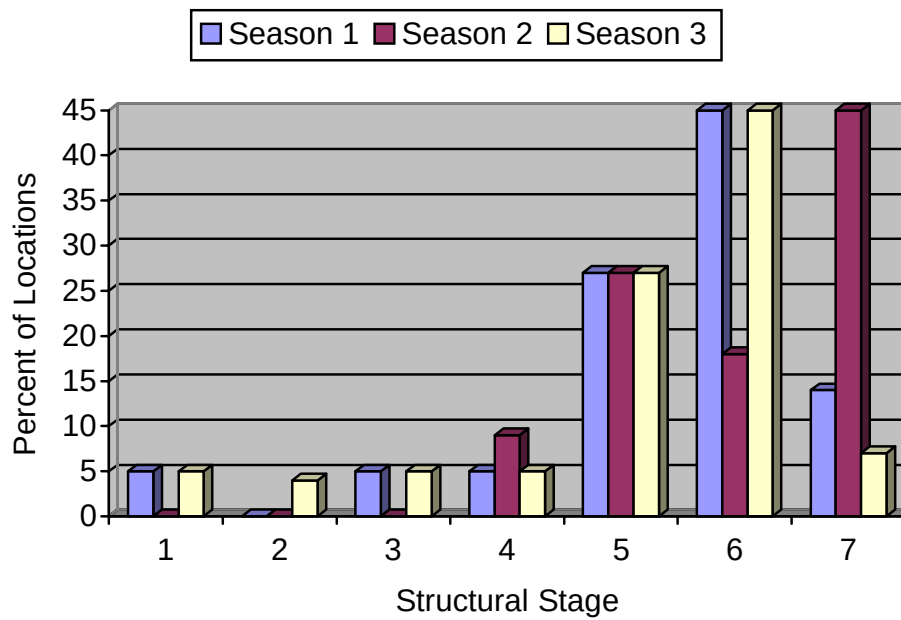


Figure 30. Structural stage use by subadult male wolverine.



A total of 151 site investigations were conducted between April 1996 and March 2001 (Tables 34).

Table 34. Biogeoclimatic zone and season for site investigations conducted on radio-collared wolverine in the Northern Wolverine Project study area, 1996-2001.

Biogeoclimatic Zone	Season			Total
	1	2	3	
SBSmk2	3	2	20	25
SBSwk2	3	0	11	14
SBSdk	1	0	0	1
BWBSdk1	7	13	54	74
ESSFmv3	7	7	8	22
AT	10	3	2	15
Total	31	25	95	151

The activity of wolverine was identified at most site investigations. More than one activity was identified at some site investigations (i.e. scavenging and bedding) (Table 35). The activity at many site investigations was unknown ($n=31$). Most of the site investigations at which the activity was unknown were conducted during Season 1 or Season 2. These seasons are largely snow free. In general, researchers had much greater difficulty finding and interpreting sign of wolverine activity during snow free periods. Frequently there was little or no sign found at the site. During snow free periods wolverine are more difficult to track than larger heavier animals that are more likely to leave tracks or other sign such as broken vegetation or hair on branches. The ability to snow track greatly increased the likelihood that evidence to indicate the wolverine's activity and scats would be found. Furthermore, site investigations were easier to conduct when there was snow on the ground because evidence such as hide or blood generally stand out in snow. Whereas, in summer evidence was frequently covered by vegetation or camouflaged by the ground.

Scavenging was documented at 61 site investigations. Predation was documented at 48 site investigations. Moose was the major scavenged item documented at site investigations. Caribou was the prey item documented at six investigations.

Table 35. Activity and season of activity of site investigations conducted for wolverine in the Northern Wolverine Project study area, 1996-2001.

Activity ¹	Season			Total
	1	2	3	
Unknown	16	10	5	31
Scavenge	3	9	49	61
Predation	2	7	39	48
Den (maternal)	0	0	6	6
Den (other)	7	0	0	7
Bed	2	7	47	56
Travel	8	10	50	68
Marking	1	7	34	42
Mortality	6	2	1	9

¹ More than one activity was recorded for some site investigations.

Frequently, researchers were unable to find evidence to indicate whether scavenging sites were also cache sites that had been made by the wolverine at an earlier date. Site investigations identified as scavenge sites may also be cache sites that were used previously by the wolverine. Telemetry locations of wolverine using the same general area on subsequent dates indicate that wolverine likely use cache sites more frequently than documented by our site investigations. Site investigations in which predation was identified may also be under represented because the cause of death for many animals could not be determined. Therefore, some site investigations in which the activity was identified as scavenging may have actually been predation. Additional scavenging and predation observations have been observed but are not documented in the detailed site investigation process. These are included in the food habits summary.

Six site investigations were conducted at maternal dens (Table 36). One maternal den was documented for W02 in 1996. Two maternal dens were documented in 1997 (W10 and W16) and two maternal dens were documented in 1998 (W02 and W13). No maternal dens were located in 1999. A maternal den was located for W39 at mid-elevation ESSF forest in a patch of beetle-killed blowdown in 2000. W31 had a kit in 2000; however, her den was not located. Wolverine W02 was radio-tracked to a suspected maternal den site on April 18, 1996. This wolverine had been located in the same subalpine bowl on 2 other occasions. When this location was visited this female was in the den. A total of four den sites were found within a 50m radius at this same location. Three had been previously occupied and were all under the snow associated with coarse woody debris such as logs or dead trees. The fourth den site was occupied and it was estimated to have been used for at least 3 days. W02 was in a cavity approximately 6-7 m from the den entrance and under approximately 3 m of snow. No attempt was made to disturb her. Wolverine W10 was tracked to a maternal den site in March of 1997. This site was located on the edge of a subalpine meadow. W10 had been located consistently in this locale in March 1996; however, no den was found at that time. The 1997 den was subnivean, located under a fallen tree. Wolverine W16 was

located at a den in a subalpine bowl in April 1997. This den site was in forested habitat and was subnivean. Structure of the den was formed by a mass of blowdown formed by an old avalanche. W02 was located in a den site in 1998 in close proximity to her 1996 den. The den was under coarse woody debris. W13 was tracked to a den site in 1998 associated with large talus material. All maternal dens were in the ESSFmv3 biogeoclimatic subzone/variant. Three maternal dens were in the Engelmann Spruce – Subalpine Fir Dry (EF) Broad Ecosystem Unit. Two maternal dens were in the Engelmann Spruce – Subalpine Fir Parkland (FP) Broad Ecosystem Unit. Three dens were associated with logs or piles of coarse woody debris (CWD). One den was associated with a large rock and one den was in unknown structure. All dens were between 1550 meters and 1775 meters elevation. Dens were located in a variety of seral stages including pole/sapling, mature and old. Dens were also located on variable slopes 5% to 49%. There was also a wide variation in aspects among dens. However, the den with the coldest aspect (10 degrees) was on a relatively gentle slope (5%).

Table 36. Summary of maternal den sites of radio-collared wolverine in the Northern Wolverine Project study area, 1996-1999.

Wolverine	Year	BEC¹	BEU	Elev. (m)	Den Type	Seral Stage	Slope (%)	Aspect
W02	1996	ESSFmv3	FP	1550	Unk	3	5	10
W10	1997	ESSFmv3	EF	1560	Log	7	11	270
W16	1997	ESSFmv3	EF	1775	CWD	6	21	90
W13	1998	ESSFmv3	FP	1740	Rock	4	49	144
W02	1998	ESSFmv3	EF	1555	CWD	6	19	206
W39	2000	ESSFmv3	EF	1420	CWD	7	30	254

¹ ESSFmv3 = Engelmann Spruce Subalpine Fir moist very cold.

4.3.4 Snow Tracking

Wolverines were tracked 57 times for a total of 79073 metres for an average of 1387 metres per tracking session. Travel was the dominant behaviour for most of the snow tracking (Table 37). Activity (as measured by an activity index of the ratio of the distance tracked to linear distance traveled) was greatest during foraging, scavenging, and predation behaviours and in seral stages 5 and 7 (Tables 37 and 38). Activity indices for broad ecosystem units are reported in Table 39. Most wolverine tracking and activity was in seral stages 3 through 7. There was a considerable amount of activity in regenerating clearcuts. This was not evident in other analyses. Wolverine may have a tendency to move into cover when being located from the air, thus, skewing the aerial location data somewhat. In addition snow tracking was restricted to low elevation (mostly SBS) habitats with extensive forest harvesting relative to the overall study area. As such the likelihood of sampling tracks in clearcut habitats is greater.

Table 37. Distance of wolverine travel and activity index by dominant behaviour recorded during travel.

Dominant Segment Behaviour	Total Distance Traveled (m)	Activity Index
Travel	58821	1.12
Foraging	14374	1.60
Scavenging	3350	9.40
Predation	165	2.36
Bedding	138	1.91

Table 38. Distance of wolverine travel and activity index by seral stage.

Seral Stage	Total Distance Traveled (m)	Activity Index
0	2603	1.01
1	3767	1.20
2	83	1.22
3	10488	1.16
4	8996	1.26
5	21975	1.91
6	26402	1.17
7	4257	1.38

Analyses of activity indices for habitat classes shows most activity in low upland forests followed by clearcuts and riparian types (Table 40). Much of the snow-trailing was conducted in years of a peak in the snowshoe hare cycle, and much of the activity in clearcuts is wolverine hunting hares there.

Table 39. Distance of wolverine travel and activity index by broad ecosystem unit.

Broad Ecosystem Unit	Total Distance Traveled (m)	Activity Index
TC	4862	1.2
TR	288	1.1
GB	591	1.0
IN	41	1.0
SP	20	1.0
FS	60	1.2
LS	63	1.0
CC	4946	1.3
CC/BL Ecotone	286	1.0
ME	10	1.0
SW	127	1.0
BB	1613	1.3
CR	80	1.1
PR	495	1.1
ER	2790	1.2
WR	4927	1.23
BA	50	1.0
BP	649	1.06
LP	20351	2.0
LP/Creek Ecotone	100	1.0
EF	752	1.0
SA	3205	1.01
SB	1433	1.09
SF	3444	1.2
SL	8389	1.17
SP	20	1.0
BL	4478	1.2

Table 40. Distance of wolverine travel and activity index by habitat classes.

<i>Habitat Class</i>	<i>Total Distance Traveled</i>	<i>Activity Index</i>
Wetland	261	1.0
Riparian	9925	1.22
Low Upland Forest	42119	1.58
High Upland Forest	752	1.0
Parkland		
Alpine		
Avalanche Chute		
Clearcut	5232	1.28
Opening	5741	1.17

4.4 Food Habits

Stomachs from 39 wolverine and 169 wolverine scats were analyzed (Table 41). Most samples were from season 3. Seasons 1 and 2 have fewest samples as there is no trapping during these periods, and these seasons are relatively snow free making tracking wolverine and finding scats more difficult. The commercial trapping season for wolverine occurs in the latter part of season 2 and early part of season 3.

Stomachs were empty 7.6% of the time, and 2.4% of scats had no identifiable remains after re-hydrating, washing, and screening (Table 41). Thirty-eight percent of stomachs had one item while 62.18% of scats had only one food item. Table 42 summarizes the percent occurrence of food items in samples for each season.

Table 41. Frequency of number of food items found in wolverine stomach and scats (percent).

Number of Items	Stomach (n = 39)	Scats (n = 1692)
Empty	7.6	2.4*
1	38.5	62.1
2	30.8	29.6
3	12.8	4.7
4	5.1	0.6
Vegetation only	2.6	0.6
Fluid only	2.6	n/a

* - no identifiable remains after washing and sieving process

Scats from maternal den sites were separated from the rest of the scats in Table 42 due to the marked difference in composition. Moose occur in a large percentage of seasonal samples except in den site scats. Scats from den sites are notable for the high frequency in which caribou occurs in them. Caribou occur in samples primarily in season 1 with 1 occurrence in season 3. Wolverine hair appears in an average of just less than 10% of all samples. Most other food items occur in low frequencies in some or all seasons. Hoary marmots (*Marmota caligata*) are an exception to this; they only occur in scat and stomach samples in season 1, but at a frequency of 37.5% of all samples (Table 42).

Foraging events recorded throughout the study from aerial observations, site investigations, and incidental observations (Table 43) indicate that moose were fed upon in all seasons; however, they are particularly prevalent as a foraging item in season 3. Incidents of wolverine foraging on caribou were recorded during season 3 with 1 event each in seasons 1 and 2. Foraging on marmots was only recorded in season 1. All records of marmot foraging were of female wolverine.

Table 42. Food items found in stomach contents and scats of all wolverine by season (numbers are percent occurrence in total seasonal samples).

Food Item	Season			
	1	2	3	3
	N=8	N=14	Denning Females N=92	Other N=30
<i>Alces alces</i>	37.5	50	5.4	73
<i>Rangifer tarandus</i>	12.5		52.1	6.7
<i>Unknown Cervidae</i>	12.5		7.6	6.7
<i>Gulo gulo</i>	12.5		9.8	10
<i>Unknown Mustelidae</i>	12.5			
<i>Lepus americanus</i>		28.6	1.1	20
<i>Clethrionomys gapperi</i>			1.1	
<i>Unknown Arvicolidae</i>	25		5.4	
<i>Castor canadensis</i>		42.9		30
<i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>		7.1		6.7
<i>Erithizon dorsatum</i>		7.1		3.3
<i>Marmota caligata</i>	37.5			
<i>Glaucomys sabrina</i>			1.1	
<i>Tamasciurius hudsonicus</i>		14.2		6.7
<i>Unknown Sciuridae</i>	25		6.5	23.3
<i>Unknown Zapodidae</i>			1.1	6.7
<i>Unknown Rodentia</i>				
<i>Sorex monticolus</i>				
<i>Unknown Soricidae</i>			4.3	10
<i>Unknown Insectivora</i>			1.1	
<i>Unknown Hair</i>	12.5	50		23.3
<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>		7.1		
<i>Lagopus spp.</i>		7.1		
<i>Unknown Fish</i>				3.3
<i>Vegetation</i>				50
<i>Trap Debris</i>				20
<i>Garbage</i>		7.1		
<i>Total Food Items*</i>	6	9	8	10

* - wolverine hair, vegetation and trap debris are not included as potential food items. Hairs identified to family or order are only included if there are no other items in those groups.

Large ungulates play a very important role in wolverine foraging ecology (Banci 1987, Copeland 1996, Gardner 1985, Magoun 1987). Moose are particularly prevalent in both scat and stomach samples and observed foraging events. Caribou, however, appear to be differentially important to adult females with kits than other sex and age classes. Scats found in maternal den sites are dominated by caribou remains, with a small component of

moose remains. Scats from maternal den sites also have a lower diversity of food items. This may increase the importance of caribou to denning females at this time. All other scats in season 3 were dominated by moose. This is consistent with habitat use patterns in this season. Adult females are found on average at higher elevations. Den sites are located at elevations where caribou are also found. Adult females, therefore, may be more likely to encounter caribou hunting and scavenging opportunities during this time than other sex and age classes. Wolverine are capable of killing caribou (Hatler 1989). In this study wolverine have been recorded killing caribou on 6 occasions resulting in the death of 7 caribou. Female wolverine were responsible for 4 of these predations. All predated caribou for which long bones remained appeared to be in very poor condition. Bone marrow fat content ranged from 5-8%. Marmots also appear to be disproportionately important in the diet of female wolverine during season 1. During this time females are provisioning kits that are undergoing their greatest period of growth. This is consistent with habitat use of adult females during this period. Adult females are found on average at highest elevations during this season. Magoun (1987) also reported that ground dwelling sciurids were a seasonally important part of wolverine diets.

Table 43. Number of foraging occurrences recorded by season (includes aerial telemetry observations, site investigations, snow trailing events, and incidental observations).

	Season		
	1	2	3
Food Item			
<i>Alces alces</i>	1	2	35
<i>Rangifer tarundus</i>	1	1	9
<i>Marmota caligata</i>	7	0	0
<i>Castor canadensis</i>	0	0	1
<i>Ursus americanus</i>	0	1	0
<i>Martes pennanti</i>	0	0	1
<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>	0	0	2
<i>Unknown ungulate</i>	0	0	1
<i>Garbage/soap</i>	0	0	1

The diversity of prey found in samples and at foraging sites indicates that wolverine spend considerable time hunting as well as scavenging. Smaller prey occur in lower frequencies in samples than do cervids. However, as scats have on average less items found in them than do stomachs, and cervid hair is more robust and will likely remain intact throughout the digestive process better than small mammal hair, small mammal frequencies may be under-represented in scats. Banci (1987) noted that frequency, however, over-estimates the importance of small prey.

The high frequency of beaver in samples in seasons 2 and 3 may be an artifact of wolverine feeding upon trapper bait, particularly during season 3 when beavers are safely ensconced within lodges for the winter. The inclusion of trapper bait as a “natural food”

in a scavenger's lifestyle is debatable. The presence of wolverine hair in samples is likely from grooming. Although we have evidence of interspecific conflicts resulting in mortalities, there is no evidence of wolverine cannibalizing other wolverine.

4.5 Marmot Abundance and Habitat Suitability

Results are summarized for the 1998 and 1999 field seasons. A total of 46.2 kilometers of transects were surveyed in 1998 and 1999 (1998 = 16.882 kilometers and 1999 = 30.390 kilometers; Tables 44-46). Along these transects 160 marmot burrows were recorded (1998 = 70 and 1999 = 90). Burrows were recorded in six of seven vegetation types. No marmot burrows were documented in the unvegetated habitat type. More burrows were documented per 100 meters of habitat in 1998 (0.42/100 m) than in 1999 (0.31/100m). Burrows were documented on class one (0-20 degrees) slopes or class two slopes (21 to 40 degrees) (Tables 47-49). In 1998, burrows were split evenly between slope class one (0.41/100 m) and slope class two (0.42/100 m). In 1999, more burrows were documented in slope class one (0.37/100 m) than in slope class two (0.24/100m). No marmot burrows were documented on slope class three slopes (41-60 degrees). More marmot burrows were documented on cool aspects (292.5-67.5 degrees) in 1998 (0.84/100 m) and 1999 (0.44/100 m) (Tables 50-52). Neutral aspects (67.5 – 112.5 degrees & 247.5 – 292.5 degrees) had the second highest abundance of burrows in 1998 (0.40/100 m) and 1999 (0.34/ 100m). Warm aspects (292.5 – 67.5 degrees) had the lowest abundance of burrows in 1998 (0.22/100 m) and 1999 (0.19/100 m).

The overall results indicated that meadow is most heavily used followed by tundra and talus. The greatest difference among years appeared to be in shrubland and talus habitats. There were relatively fewer marmot burrows in shrubland habitat in 1998 (0.04/100 m) compared to 1999 (0.36/100 m). There were relatively more marmot burrows in talus habitat in 1998 (1.10/100 m) compared to 1999 (0.20/100 m). The 1998 results indicated that talus, meadow and tundra, respectively, appeared to be most heavily used, whereas, the 1999 results indicated that meadow, tundra and shrubland, respectively, appeared to be most heavily used. Our general observations indicate that marmot burrows were frequently in close proximity to alpine meadows regardless of habitat type. In addition, marmot burrows were often associated with large rocks. The proximity of meadows and large rocks likely had a major influence on marmot habitat selection for burrows. In 1999, fifty of ninety marmot burrows were located under rocks. These burrows were frequently excavated in earth under rocks. Of the burrows under rocks only seven were in ribbon talus, whereas 43 were in other vegetated habitat types. Identifying the presence of meadows and large rocks will also likely be important to assessing marmot habitat suitability.

The following recommendations were given for the habitat suitability fieldwork in 1999 (Reid 1999):

1. more sampling in slope class 3;
2. more sampling in talus on warm aspects and parkland and shrubland on cold aspects.

Only 385 meters of slope class 3 was sampled in 1999. The relatively low representation of slope class 3 was partially because of safety issues for field staff working alone, as in 1998, and partially because of efforts to increase representation of meadow, talus, and parkland habitats, which are less common in slope class 3. Greater effort was put into sampling talus on warm aspects in 1999 (2065 m) compared to 1998 (56 m). Greater effort was also put into sampling parkland and shrubland on cold aspects in 1999. However, parkland representation is still relatively low for cold aspects. This may reflect a relatively low occurrence of parkland on cold aspects.

Further studies should investigate the effect of the proximity of meadows to marmot burrows on the ability to predict habitat suitability. Further recommendations for sampling may be identified following further data analysis using a transect data analysis program (Burnham, Anderson and Laake 1980).

Table 44. The vegetation type, distance traversed, and number of burrows observed in 1998 in the Wolverine Mountains.

Vegetation Type	1998 Distance Traversed (m)	1998 # of Burrows Observed	1998 # of Burrows per 100m of Habitat
Parkland	5390	7	0.13
Ribbon Talus ¹	-	-	-
Extensive Talus ¹	-	-	-
Talus ¹	1365	15	1.10
Alpine Tundra	4798	26	0.54
Alpine Meadow	2848	21	0.74
Alpine Shrubland	2481	1	0.04
Unvegetated ¹	-	-	-
Total	16,882	70	0.42

¹ribbon talus, extensive talus and unvegetated habitats were identified collectively as talus in 1998, and differentiated in 1999.

Table 45. The vegetation type, distance traversed, and number of burrows observed in 1999 in the Wolverine Mountains.

Vegetation Type	1999 Distance Traversed (m)	1999 # of Burrows Observed	1999 # of Burrows per 100m of Habitat
Parkland	4510	3	0.0665
Ribbon Talus ¹	4362	10	0.2292
Extensive Talus ¹	538	0	0
Total Talus ¹	4900	10	0.2041
Alpine Tundra	9561	37	0.3870
Alpine Meadow	3211	15	0.4671
Alpine Shrubland	6963	25	0.3590
Unvegetated	245	0	0
Total	29390	90	0.3062

¹ribbon talus, extensive talus and unvegetated habitats were identified collectively as talus in 1998, and differentiated in 1999.

Table 46. The vegetation type, total distance traversed, and total number of burrows observed in 1998 and 1999 in the Wolverine Mountains.

Vegetation Type	1998/99 Distance Traversed (m)	1998/99 # of Burrows Observed	1998/99 # of Burrows per 100m of Habitat
Parkland	9900	10	0.1010
Total Talus ¹	6265	25	0.3990
Alpine Tundra	14359	63	0.4387
Alpine Meadow	6059	36	0.5942
Alpine Shrubland	9444	26	0.2753
Unvegetated	245	0	0
Total	46272	160	0.3458

¹ribbon talus, extensive talus and unvegetated habitats were identified collectively as talus in 1998, and differentiated in 1999.

Table 47. The vegetation type, distance traversed by slope class, and number of burrows observed by slope class in 1998 in the Wolverine Mountains.

Vegetation Type	1998 Distance Traversed by Slope Class			1998 # of Burrows by Slope Class			1998 # of Burrows Per 100 m Slope Class		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Parkland	2933	2451	0	2	5	0	0.07	0.20	0
Talus ¹	250	1115		4	11		1.60	0.99	
Alpine Tundra	2574	2224	0	15	11	0	0.82	0.52	0
Alpine Meadow	2079	769	0	17	4	0	0.06	0.00	0
Alpine Shrubland	1661	820	0	1	0	0	0.68	0.50	0
Unvegetated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	9497	7385	0	39	31	0	0.41	0.42	0

¹ribbon talus, extensive talus and unvegetated habitats were identified collectively as talus in 1998, and differentiated in 1999.

Table 48. The vegetation type, distance traversed by slope class, and number of burrows observed by slope class in 1999 in the Wolverine Mountains.

Vegetation Type	1999 Distance Traversed			1999 # of Burrows by Slope Class			1999 # of Burrows Per 100 m Slope Class		
	by Slope Class			Slope Class			100 m Slope Class		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Parkland	2095	2334	81	2	1	0	0.0955	0.0448	0
Ribbon Talus ¹	1837	2498	27	5	5	0	0.2722	0.2002	0
Extensive Talus ¹	245	293	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Talus ¹	2082	2791	27	5	5	0	0.2402	0.1791	0
Alpine Tundra	4706	4792	63	16	21	0	0.3400	0.4382	0
Alpine Meadow	2397	814	0	13	2	0	0.5423	0.2457	0
Alpine Shrubland	3008	3741	214	18	7	0	0.5984	0.1871	0
Unvegetated	100	145	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	14388	14617	385	54	36	0	0.3753	0.2463	0

¹ribbon talus, extensive talus and unvegetated habitats were identified collectively as talus in 1998, and differentiated in 1999.

Table 49. The vegetation type, distance traversed by slope class, and number of burrows observed by slope class in 1998 and 1999 in the Wolverine Mountains.

Vegetation Type	1998/99 Distance Traversed			1998/99 # of Burrows by Slope Class			1998/99 # of Burrows Per 100 m Slope Class		
	by Slope Class			Slope Class			100 m Slope Class		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Parkland	5028	4785	81	4	6	0	0.0796	0.1253	0
Talus ¹	2332	3906	27	9	16	0	0.3859	0.0410	0
Alpine Tundra	7280	7016	63	31	32	0	0.4258	0.4561	0
Alpine Meadow	4476	1583	0	30	6	0	0.6702	0.3790	0
Alpine Shrubland	4669	4561	214	19	7	0	0.4069	0.1535	0
Unvegetated	100	145	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	23885	21996	385	93	67	0	0.3894	0.3046	0

¹ribbon talus, extensive talus and unvegetated habitats were identified collectively as talus in 1998, and differentiated in 1999.

Table 50. The vegetation type, distance traversed by aspect class, and number of burrows observed by aspect class in 1998 in the Wolverine Mountains.

Vegetation Type	1998			1998			1998		
	Distance Traversed by			# of Burrows by			# of Burrows Per		
	Aspect Class			Aspect Class			100 m Aspect Class		
	W	N	C	W	N	C	W	N	C
Parkland	3031	1979	380	0	6	1	0	.30	.26
Talus ¹	56	646	663	2	2	11	3.57	0.31	1.66
Alpine Tundra	1961	982	1855	8	3	15	.41	.31	.81
Alpine Meadow	1447	392	1009	7	7	7	.48	1.79	.70
Alpine Shrubland	1815	546	120	1	0	0	.06	0	0
Unvegetated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8310	4545	4027	18	18	34	0.22	.40	.84

¹ribbon talus, extensive talus and unvegetated habitats were identified as talus collectively in 1998, and differentiated in 1999.

Table 51. The vegetation type, distance traversed by aspect class, and number of burrows observed by aspect class in 1999 in the Wolverine Mountains.

Vegetation Type	1999			1999			1999		
	Distance Traversed			# of Burrows by			# of Burrows Per		
	by Aspect Class			Aspect Class			100 m Aspect Class		
	W	N	C	W	N	C	W	N	C
Parkland	3178	391	941	1	2	0	.0315	.5115	0
Ribbon Talus ¹	1916	908	1538	2	3	5	.1044	.3304	.3251
Extensive Talus ¹	149	157	232	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Talus ¹	2065	1065	1770	2	3	5	.0969	.2817	.2825
Alpine Tundra	3351	1968	4242	6	8	23	.1791	.4065	.5422
Alpine Meadow	1569	878	764	4	2	9	.2550	.2278	1.178
Alpine Shrubland	2849	1710	2404	11	6	8	.3861	.3509	.3328
Unvegetated	51	168	26	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	13063	6180	10147	24	21	45	.1837	.3398	.4435

¹ribbon talus, extensive talus and unvegetated habitats were identified collectively as talus in 1998, and differentiated in 1999.

Table 52. The vegetation type, total distance traversed by aspect class, and total number of burrows observed by aspect class in 1998 and 1999 in the Wolverine Mountains.

Vegetation Type	1998/99 Distance Traversed			1998/99 # of Burrows by			1998/99 # of Burrows Per		
	By Aspect Class			Aspect Class			100 m Aspect Class		
	W	N	C	W	N	C	W	N	C
Parkland	6209	2370	1321	1	8	1	.0161	.3376	.0757
Talus ¹	2121	1554	2433	4	5	16	.1885	.3218	.6576
Alpine Tundra	5312	2950	6097	14	11	38	.2636	.3729	.6232
Alpine Meadow	3016	1270	1773	11	9	16	.3647	.7087	.9024
Alpine Shrubland	1815	2256	2524	12	6	8	.6612	.2660	.3170
Unvegetated	51	168	26	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	18524	10568	14174	40	41	79	0.2160	.3880	0.5574

¹ribbon talus, extensive talus and unvegetated habitats were identified collectively as talus in 1998, and differentiated in 1999.

In 1998, a minimum of 21 marmots were observed in three observation polygons (Tables 48,49). In 1999, a minimum of 21 marmots were observed in ten observation polygons (Table 53). In 1998, polygons were selected for testing the feasibility of identifying individuals to estimate marmot abundance. In 1999, polygons were randomly selected. Marmots were identified in only four of ten polygons. Two polygons had less than nine hours of observation. Polygon # 24 had two- three hour morning observation sessions. Weather was not considered a limiting factor during these observations. Therefore, it is believed that most of the marmots were likely observed. More marmots were identified during morning observation sessions than afternoon observation sessions. Polygon # 68 had only one afternoon observation session before it was discontinued because time constraints created by the decision to ensure that each polygon would have a minimum of two morning observation sessions.

Table 53. Minimum number of marmots observed per observation polygon in 1999 in the Wolverine Mountains, Northern Wolverine Project.

Polygon #	Hours Observed	# of Young of Year	# of Yearlings	# of Adults	Total
14	10.75		3	6	9
24	6	3	0	1	4
55	9.75	2	0	3	5
60	10.85	0	1	2	3
68 ¹	5.50	0	0	0	0
77	11.20	0	0	1	0
104	9.00	0	0	0	0
106	11.00	0	0	0	0
113	9.20	0	0	0	0
123	9.00	0	0	0	0

¹Observation was one afternoon session. Observation was discontinued because of time constraints.

4.6 Populations Parameters

Survivorship rates were 79% overall for radio-transmitted wolverine (Table 54). Survivorship rates were highest for adult females and lowest for subadult males. Survivorship rates for females were greater than corresponding rates for males. Survivorship rates reported in Table 54 for wolverine in the study area are based on mortalities of known wolverine while they were being monitored (Table 55) and do not include additional known mortalities of unmarked wolverine within the study area (Table 56). There were thirteen mortalities of radio-collared study animals from 1996-2001 (Table 55). There were an additional two capture related mortalities. There were 13 additional mortalities recorded of unmarked wolverine (Table 56). All wolverine killed by another wolverine died in season 1, and all of these mortalities were male. The sources for all known mortalities were 13 trapper related, 1 logging truck, 2 capture-related mortalities, 3 killed by other wolverine, 1 killed by unknown animal, 2 unknown cause and 1 unknown natural cause (Tables 55,56).

Adult females occupied high elevation dens (and thus were strongly suspected to have litters, although we were unable to confirm this), or were known to have produced litters in 10 of the 20 periods when they were monitored (Table 57). Litter sizes based on embryos, or counts of corpora lutea in trapper submitted carcasses averaged 3, based on very limited data (Table 58).

Survivorship rates are very low for a species with a reportedly low reproduction rate. Reproductive data necessary to interpret population growth rates are very limited.

Table 54. Survivorship rates of radio-transmitted wolverine.

Age and Sex Class	Survivorship Rate (percent +/- 95% C.L.)
All Wolverine	0.7939 +/- 0.1706
Adult Females	0.9135 +/- 0.2202
Subadult Females	0.6776 +/- 0.2219
Adult Males	0.7091 +/- 0.2588
Subadult Males	0.2716 +/- 0.2267

Table 55. Mortalities of radio collared wolverine from 1996-1999.

Wolverine	Sex	Age Class	Mortality Source	Season
W01	Female	Subadult	Trapper kill out of season	1
W03	Male	Adult	Trapper kill	2
W08	Female	Adult	Trapper kill	3
W15	Male	Adult	Killed by another wolverine	1
W17	Male	Subadult	Killed by unknown animal	1
W20	Male	Adult	Unknown natural causes	1
W24	Female	Subadult	Unknown cause	3
W26	Male	Adult	Killed by another wolverine	1
W27	Male	Subadult	Trapper kill	2
W32	Male	Subadult	Killed by another wolverine	1
W33	Male	Subadult	Hit by logging truck	3
W34	Female	Adult	Unknown cause	1
W35	Male	Adult	Trapper kill	2

Table 56. Other known mortalities of wolverine within the Northern Wolverine Project study area.

Year	Number of Mortalities
1996	0
1997	9
1998	2
1999	1
2000	1

Table 57. Radio-transmitted adult female wolverine inhabiting maternal dens or verified producing litters from 1996-1999 (shaded cells are time periods when wolverine was not equipped with a radio-transmitter).

Wolverine	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
W02	Yes		Yes		
W07	No	No	No	No	
W08	?				
W10	Yes	Yes	Yes		
W11	?				
W13		No	Yes		
W18		Yes			
W21		Yes			
W31					Yes
W34			No		
W39					Yes

Table 58. Reproductive tract conditions for necropsied wolverine.

Specimen No.	Reproductive Tract Condition	Placental Scars	Embryos	Corpora Lutea
W97-01	3 developing embryos		3	2 (1 ovary only)
W97-03	largest, likely has reproduced in past	none	0	4
W97-06	thin and flaccid	evident	0	0
W97-07	large but uncertain of past reproduction	none	0	0
W97-11	thin and flaccid	evident	0	0
W98-01	Small, immature – has not reproduced	none	0	0
W98-03	Small, non-parous		0	0
W98-05	Parous, scars evident		0	0
W98-05	Non-parous		0	0
W99-01	No scars evident		0	0
W99-09	Corporus albicans present, no placental scars evident		0	0

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6.0 Personal Communications

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7.0 Appendices

Appendix 1. Wolverine capture data form.

NORTHERN WOLVERINE - CAPTURE DATA FORM

WOLVERINE'S NAME: _____

WOLVERINE #: _____

DATE: (dd/mm/yy) _____

TRAP SITE: _____

PERSONNEL: _____

SEX: | male | female | AGE CLASS: | juvenile | yearling | adult |

DRUGGING PROCEDURE:

ESTIMATED WEIGHT: _____ kg

Note: Telazol concentration should be 100 mg/ml

DOSE	DRUG	VOL (ml)	CONC (mg/ml)	TOTAL (mg)	TIME	INJECTION LOC.	COMMENTS
1	TELAZOL						
2	TELAZOL						
3	TELAZOL						

BEHAVIOURAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL RECORD:

FIRST EFFECT TIME |__:__| INDUCTION TIME |__:__| FIRST ACTIVITY TIME |__:__|

TIME	BEHAVIOUR	RESP RATE (BPM)	HEART (BPM)	RECTAL TEMP	CRT
__:__:__	__-__-__-__-__-__	__-__-__-__-__-__	__-__-__-__-__-__	__-__-__-__-__-__	__-__-__-__-__-__
__:__:__	__-__-__-__-__-__	__-__-__-__-__-__	__-__-__-__-__-__	__-__-__-__-__-__	__-__-__-__-__-__
__:__:__	__-__-__-__-__-__	__-__-__-__-__-__	__-__-__-__-__-__	__-__-__-__-__-__	__-__-__-__-__-__

_____: _____:	_____: _____:
-----------------------------	-----------------------------

RADIO COLLAR:

FREQUENCY: _____ SERIAL NO: _____

COLLAR LENGTH:_____

VERIFY COLLAR INSERT USED _____

VERIFY COLLAR TRANSMITTING (REMOVE MAGNET)_____

EAR TAGS:

LEFT EAR TAG # _____ COLOUR _____

RIGHT EAR TAG # _____ COLOUR _____

TRAPPING:

TYPE OF CAPTURE: | barrel | cabin | havahart | leghold

BAIT USED: | fish | meat | other_____

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND CONDITION:

BODY WEIGHT _____kg NECK GIRTH _____cm

TOTAL LENGTH _____cm HEART GIRTH _____cm

TAIL LENGTH _____cm INCISOR TO GUM LINE: _____

SHOULDER HT _____cm TOP _____cm BOTTOM _____cm

HIND FOOT: L_____ W_____cm EVIDENCE OF YOUNG: | rubbed| normal |

FRONT FOOT: L_____ W_____cm EXTERNAL PARASITES: | yes | no |

TOOTH WEAR: | min | mod | heavy | PHOTOS: ROLL # _____ PHOTO # _____

BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES:

TOOTH EXTRACTED (ULPM1 preferred): _____

HAIR SAMPLE COLLECTION #: _____

EXTERNAL PARASITE SAMPLE COLLECTION #: _____

FAECES SAMPLE COLLECTION #: _____

BLOOD SAMPLES: # _____

COMMENTS (physical examination - colouration, pelage condition, scars, dentition etc.)

Appendix 2. Wolverine aerial location form.

NORTHERN WOLVERINE - AERIAL TELEMETRY FORM

Form AT _____

DATE (dd/mm/yy) _____

PILOT: _____

OBSERVER: _____

NAVIGATOR: _____

SPECIES: _____

COORDINATES (specify NAD 27 or 84)

FREQUENCY: _____

LAT: _____

ANIMAL NUMBER: _____

LONG: _____

TIME OF LOCATION: _____

EASTING: _____

NORTHING: _____

HABITAT : _____ CANOPY COVER (%): _____

{BEC ZONE / VAR: _____ FOREST COVER LABEL: _____}

{INFERRED BEU: _____ SS: _____ ELEV: _____ (specify ft/m)}

ASPECT: N NE E SE S SW W NW

MESO SLOPE: FLAT/SHALLOW/MODERATE/STEEP

MACRO POSITION: APEX/FACE/UPPER/MIDDLE/LOWER/VALLEY FLOOR/FLOOD PLAIN

PHOTOS: ROLL # _____ PHOTO # _____

COMMENTS: _____

DIAGRAM:

OFFICE _____

MAP SHEET NOS: 1:50,000: _____ **1:20,000:** _____

AIRPHOTO NO: _____

FLIGHT LN: _____

PLOTTED COORDINATES: EASTING _____ **/NORTHING** _____

DATUM FOR PLOTTED COORDINATES: (specify NAD 2 7 or 84)

COMMENTS(i.e. accuracy of GPS loc. w.r.t. plotted loc., confidence, whether photos are needed for verification etc.):

Appendix 3. Snow tracking data form

NORTHERN WOLVERINE PROJECT- SNOW TRACKING DATA FORM

TRACK ID#: _____ DATE (dd/mm/yy): _____ SURVEYOR: _____ WOLVERINE I.D. _____
 DATE MADE (dd/mm/yy): _____ LAST SNOW: _____ # ANIMALS : _____ TOTAL DIST (m): _____ SCAT #s: _____
 1:20,000 MAP SHEET # _____ AIRPHOTO FL: _____ #s: _____ ASSOC. TRACK #s: _____ SITE INV #'s: _____
 Start GPS Coordinates: Easting _____ Northing _____ End GPS Coordinates: Easting _____ Northing _____

Position (m)	Item	BEU	Seral Stage	Canopy Cover	Macro/Meso Slope Position	Snow Depth (cm)	Sinking Depth (cm)	Linear Distance (m)	Tracked Distance (m)	Photo #'s	Other Species Sign Count	Detail (continue on back)	Forest Cover Label

ITEM: Must include any of: BEU, Seral Stage or Slope Position Change; Marking (Scat, Urination, Scenting); Foraging, Bedding; Animal Tracks Encountered; Plus others as necessary

BEUs / Seral Stages: See Crosswalk Table; **Slope Positions:** Crest / Upper slope / Mid slope / Lower slope / Toe / Depression / Level

Snow Depth / Sinking Depth: One measure per BEU

Appendix 4. Habitat description form.

NORTHERN WOLVERINE - HABITAT DESCRIPTION FORM

FORM H: _____

SURVEYORS: _____ **DATE OF INSPECTION(dd/mm/yy):** _____
ANIMAL I.D.: _____ **DATE OF USE(dd/mm/yy):** _____
MAP SHEET: _____
UTM: EASTING _____ **NORTHING** _____
AIR PHOTO NUMBER: _____ **SUBZONE/VARIANT:** _____
SITE SERIES: _____ **SERIAL STAGE:** _____
ELEVATION (m): _____ **ASPECT:** _____ **SLOPE:** _____

SNOW DEPTH _____ **SINKING DEPTH:** _____

SITE DESCRIPTION

SITE POSITION MACRO

1. APEX
2. FACE
3. UPPER SLOPE
4. MIDDLE SLOPE
5. LOWER SLOPE
6. VALLEY FLOOR
7. FLOODPLAIN

SITE POSITION MESO

1. CREST
2. UPPER SLOPE
3. MIDDLE SLOPE
4. LOWER SLOPE
5. TOE
6. DEPRESSION
7. LEVEL

MICROTOPOGRAPHY

1. SMOOTH
2. MICROMOUNDED
3. SLIGHTLY MOUNDED
4. MODERATELY MOUNDED
5. STRONGLY MOUNDED
6. SEVERELY MOUNDED
7. ULTRAMOUNDED

VEGETATION (% cover)

COVER CLASS	A0	A1	A2	A3	A	B1	B2	B	C	D
CONIFERS										
DECIDUOUS										
SHRUBS										
HERBS										
MOSS										

NON-VEGETATED ☐

VEGETATION STRATA DESCRIPTIONS

A0 - VETERANS

A1 - DOMINANT TREES

A2 - MAIN TREE CANOPY

A3 - TREES

A - TOTAL TREES

B1 - TALL SHRUB (2-10m)

B2 - LOW SHRUB (0-2m)

B - TOTAL SHRUBS

C - HERBS

D - MOSS

SCATS COLLECTED: _____ **PHOTOS: ROLL #** _____ **PICTURE #s** _____

VERIFICATION

- USE**

- ## FOOD SPECIES

-
- This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Appendix 5. Den site description form.

NORTHERN WOLVERINE - DEN SITE INSPECTION FORM

DEN FORM D _____

HABITAT FORM H _____

DATE (dd/mm/yy): _____ SURVEYORS: _____

DATE OF USE: _____ WOLVERINE I.D. _____ FREQUENCY: _____

TOTAL NUMBER OF ASSOCIATED DENS _____

ASSOCIATED DEN FORMS D _____ TO D _____

UTM: N: _____ E: _____

ELEVATION (m): _____ ASPECT: _____ SLOPE: _____

DEN TYPE	DEN OPENING ASPECT (Degrees)	MEASUREMENT (cm):	
		WIDTH	HEIGHT
1. STUMP	1. _____	_____	_____
2. LOG	2. _____	_____	_____
3. ROCK	3. _____	_____	_____
4. OTHER	4. _____	_____	_____

DIAMETER OF DEN TREE/STUMP: _____ cm SPECIES: _____

HEIGHT OF DEN TREE: _____ meters

DIAMETER OF DEN LOG _____ cm SPECIES: _____

LENGTH OF DEN LOG: _____ cm

SCAT COLLECTED?: _____ HAIR COLLECTED?: _____ KITS PRESENT?: _____

PHOTOS: ROLL# _____ PHOTO # _____

CIRCLE THOSE WHICH APPLY:

VERIFICATION

USE

1. TRACKS
2. SCAT
3. HAIR
4. AERIAL TELEMETRY
5. GROUND TELEMETRY
6. VISUAL

1. SCAVENGE
2. PREDATION
3. DEN
4. MATING
5. TRAVEL
6. MARKING
7. UNKNOWN
8. OTHER _____

DIAGRAM OF DEN (INDICATE NORTH):

COMMENTS: _____
