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# Wolverine

Scientific Name: *Gulo gulo*

Taxonomy: Mammals

Range: Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador

Last COSEWIC Assessment: May 2014, Special Concern Status

SARA Status: No schedule, no status

Government of Alberta Status: May be at risk - Data deficient, July 2014

## Fact Sheet

### Information adapted from:

Species at Risk Public Registry ([www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/species/speciesDetails\\_e.cfm?sid=137](http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/species/speciesDetails_e.cfm?sid=137))  
Government of Alberta, Status of Alberta Wildlife Report ([esrd.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wild-species/mammals/weasels-related/wolverine.aspx](http://esrd.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wild-species/mammals/weasels-related/wolverine.aspx))

### Appearance

The wolverine is a solitary, medium sized carnivore. The largest land-dwelling member of the weasel family, the wolverine reaches 125 centimeters in length and may weigh up to 16 kilograms.

The wolverine can defend its food aggressively against wolves and bears by using its muscular body, razor sharp teeth and strong jaws, and by covering food with foul-smelling secretions from its anal gland. The wolverine's dense, chocolate brown coat usually has two buff stripes that run along the flanks joining at the base of a large bushy tail.

### Distribution

The wolverine inhabits the Boreal and Rocky Mountain natural regions.

Historically found across Alberta, the wolverine is now restricted to the northern, boreal half of the province and along the mountains and foothills. It is widely ranging but at low densities. The species reliance on carrion (decaying flesh) limits the number of individuals supported by an area.

### Threats

Human encroachment and the resulting habitat alteration have reduced the wolverine's range. Human settlement, logging, oil and gas development, mining and recreational development all render the habitat less suitable for wolverines and increase mortality.

The Wolverine is most abundant where large ungulates are common. Therefore threats can be increased by activities that reduce the amount of ungulate carrion available during winter such as rabies control programs, hunting and trapping.

The Wolverine needs vast undisturbed areas to maintain viable populations because it has a low reproductive rate, low population density, and large home range. Removal of a few individuals can negatively impact the reproductive success of the population.

Recent research in the Alberta Rocky Mountains indicates that wolverines avoid areas with lots of human disturbance.

### Habitat



[www.hww.ca/en/species/mammals/wolverine.html](http://www.hww.ca/en/species/mammals/wolverine.html)

It is found in a variety of ecozones, including the boreal forest, tundra and subalpine regions. It is more influenced by food availability (especially ungulate carrion during the winter) than by specific habitat characteristics.

It inhabits a variety of treed and treeless areas at all elevations including the northern forested wilderness, the alpine tundra of the western mountains, and the arctic tundra.