

Follow-up on the Norway Wolverine Study;

WOLVERINES IN A CHANGING WORLD

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As a follow-up on the [wolverine study in Norway](#), our wolverine study team has now launched a new programme "Wolverines in a Changing World". The previous wolverine study started in the winter of 1996 and focussed on the development of reliable methods for population monitoring, but also measured spatial use and the reproductive success of wolverines in Norway. Within "Wolverines in a Changing World" the emphasis will be towards viable and manageable wolverine populations and will use a comparative and spatial approach.

"Wolverines in a Changing World" is a programme for five years, which started in February 2003. Its principal objective is to gain better insight in the ecological role wolverines have in ecosystem dynamics and their adaptation to ecosystem change. This is important to accomplish viable and inter-connected wolverine populations and its implications for sustainable management of the natural environment.

The objective will be achieved by focussing on two research aims. One research aim is the investigation of fine-scale interactions between wolverines and intra-guild species to evaluate competition and possible commensalism effects among large carnivores. The reason for choosing this topic is because wolverines rely on a varied prey base and depend on other large carnivores for carrion. However, the exact nature of

wolverine interactions with other large carnivores requires further study. It is important to illustrate the possibilities for co-existence of large carnivores to minimise depredation conflicts and enable an integrated management of the natural environment.

Wolverines are known to inhabit inaccessible areas away from human development. Our knowledge of wolverine habitat requirements and their adaptability to changing environments is however poorly documented and needs further investigation. It renders insight into changes in wolverine communities, human conflicts and its effect on use and management of this elusive and controversial carnivore. The second research aim is therefore, the investigation of habitat requirements of wolverines and the impact of landscape changes to predict availability of suitable habitat and the degree of inter-connectivity of wolverine populations.

Four different study areas throughout Norway, which differ from each other in habitat type and occurrence of the different intra-guild species, have been chosen to carry out both the comparative intra-guild study and the habitat requirements and suitability study. For the two studies, both existing data sets and newly gathered data will be used.

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