



GREATER YELLOWSTONE WOLVERINE PROGRAM

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Winter on top of the Gravelly Range, Montana.

WINTER TRAPPING EFFORT 2006-2007

This winter we focused on the Montana region of our study area. Our goal was to replace aging transmitters and instrument all females with GPS collars. The winter trapping effort began December 28 and ended March 15. One field crew operated 11 traps in the Madison, Gravelly, Henrys Lake, and Centennial Ranges for a total of 371 trap-nights. We recaptured 5 female wolverines a total of 9 times. Implants were replaced and each was fitted with a GPS collar. We did not capture any new individuals.



Rob Spence carrying F124 for GPS collar fitting.



Thanks to our veterinarians this winter: Deborah McCauley (pictured with F106), Eric Klaphake, Kathy Quigley, and Mark Atkinson.

GPS COLLAR RESULTS TO DATE

Out of the 5 GPS collars deployed we have retrieved 2 thus far. The remaining three appear to be functioning properly, and we are awaiting the pre-programmed drop-offs. All collars were programmed to attempt 24 fixes per day. Both collars we have retrieved were pulled off by the wolverine prematurely. Both F132 and F106 kept their collars on for 40 days. Even considering the early pull off, F132's collar has been one of our most successful collars to date. The GPS fix success rate for F132 was 43%, with 409 fixes. The GPS fix success rate for F106 was 37%, with 361 fixes.

RECREATION MONITORING

Our recreation effort this winter could not have been accomplished without financial assistance from Montana FWP for recreation flights and GPS collars. We conducted aerial recreation surveys over the Gravelly and Henrys Lake Ranges on two occasions each this winter. These surveys supplement information from 14 previous surveys in the Madison, Teton, Gravelly, Henrys Lake, and Centennial Ranges.

After recovering the 3 remaining collars we will be examining the activity data and location data collected by the collars and comparing that information to the recreation spatial use information gathered with the recreation flights.



The photo above shows an important aspect of the wolverine/winter recreation interaction that we would like to learn more about. F121's natal densite is marked with the arrow on the right. The snowmobiling shown in the picture occurred while the den was active. She has remained at this densite to date.

REPRODUCTION

We have started our spring effort to collect reproduction data. Only one of our seven radioed adult females has given an indication of denning this spring. We will continue to monitor all of the females throughout the spring and early summer to verify their reproductive status. On 2/28/07 we verified the location of F121's den in the Gravelly Range. We will attempt to capture the kits in May.

We are also searching the north end of the Teton Range for a densite from the female we believe is occupying this area. Other areas scheduled to be searched for possible densites are the Snowcrest, Gallatin, and Snake River Ranges.



Bob Inman and Tony McCue determined the location of F121's natal den in the Gravelly Range. Bob Inman is near the den in the center of the photo.



Rob Spence uncovers F405.

MORTALITIES

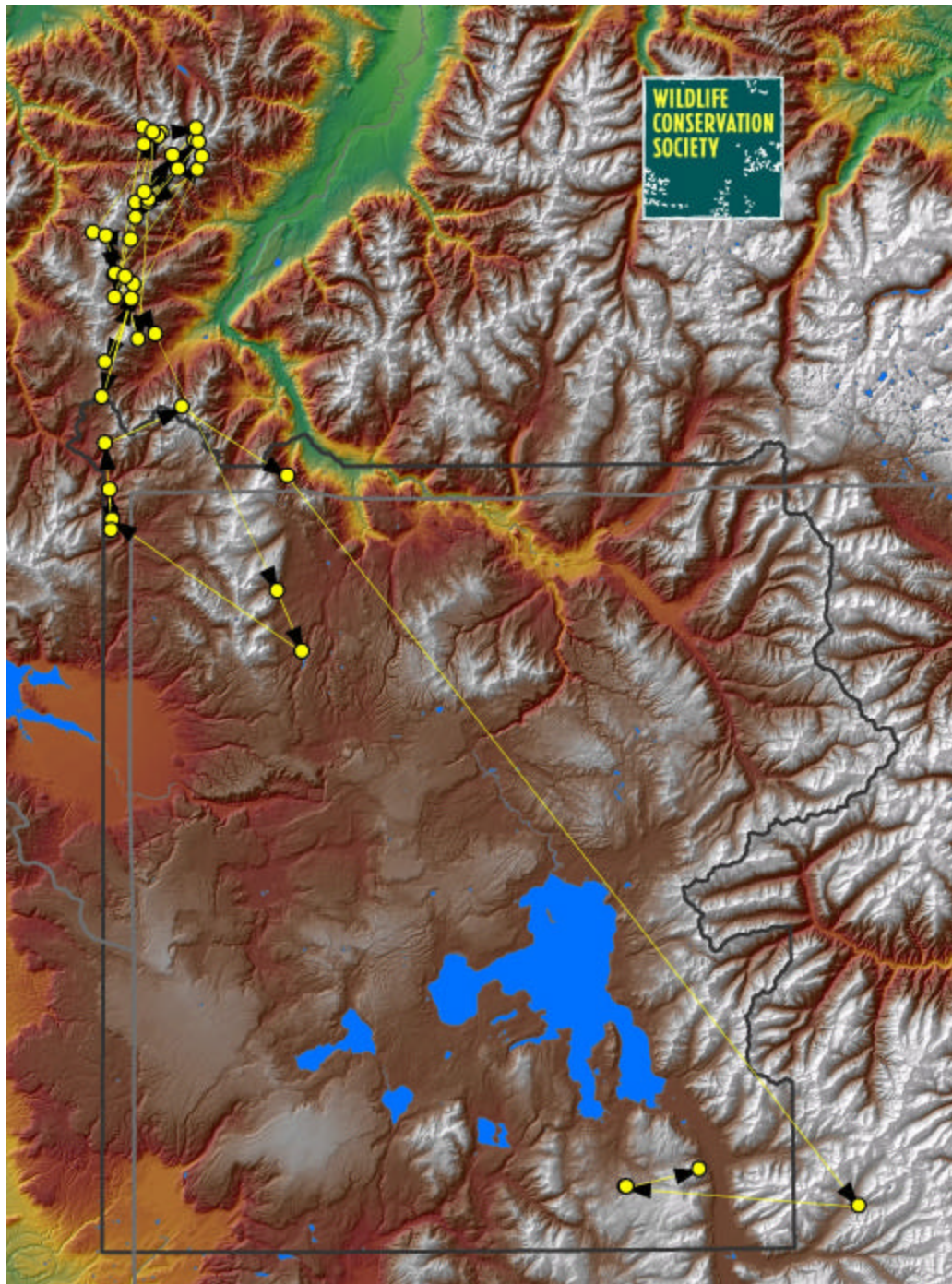
We documented one mortality during this update period. F405, a known age female captured as a kit in the Teton Range, was killed in an avalanche in Grand Teton National Park in mid-December.

DISPERSAL

The kit we captured last spring, F133, is currently dispersing. F133 spent the majority of last summer in the north end of the Gallatin Range. Beginning in the fall, she started spending more time in the southern portion of the Gallatin. In late February she began showing signs that she might disperse with a move to the southern tip of the Gallatin Range. Her first move outside the Gallatin was to the Madison Range across US Highway 191 in Yellowstone National Park (YNP). We were able to document the location where she crossed back into the Gallatin Range a few days later. After a short stay in the southern Gallatin, her next location was in the Thoro-fare Creek area southeast of YNP. We will attempt to monitor her throughout her dispersal.



F133's tracks crossing US191 near Snowslide Creek in YNP.



F133's dispersal movements to date.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Tim Bennett for his field assistance this winter. We would also like to thank the Sun Ranch and Elk Meadows Ranch for access to the southern Madison Range; the Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Bridger-Teton, Caribou-Targhee, and Gallatin National Forests; Grand Teton National Park; Idaho Fish and Game, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (snowmobile use data among other support mentioned), and Wyoming Game and Fish; and our private donors for their financial and logistical support.