



The Wolverine Foundation

Promoting Science-Based Management of Wolverines
Across Their Global Range



The Wolverine Foundation Newsletter

December 2025 Edition

Introducing Our New Executive Director

The Wolverine Foundation Board is delighted to welcome **Dr. Kimberly Heinemeyer** as our new Executive Director. Kim brings a uniquely powerful blend of scientific expertise and leadership experience.

For nearly two decades, she has been a leading figure in wolverine research, pioneering the first studies on how winter recreation affects wolverine behavior and population sustainability. Her work has illuminated the complexities of wolverine movement, social interactions, and habitat selection, showing how human activities shape the lives of these elusive carnivores. Alongside her scientific contributions, Kim has extensive experience in nonprofit leadership, strategic planning, and building diverse collaborations. With her commitment to rigorous science and inclusive partnerships, she is poised to guide TWF into a new era of growth and impact — ensuring the Foundation remains a trusted source of science-based information and effective conservation strategies.

On the Horizon for TWF in 2026

Building on decades of pioneering work by TWF's founders and partners, the Foundation is entering a period of renewal and revitalization. Under Dr. Heinemeyer's leadership, we are expanding our reach while staying true to our roots: advancing rigorous science, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that wolverine conservation remains grounded in evidence and integrity. These ongoing and upcoming initiatives, along with the information shared throughout this newsletter, reflect both continuity with our past and bold steps toward the future.

We are continuing to monitor the proposal to reintroduce wolverines to Colorado. While this represents an ambitious conservation effort, TWF has raised important concerns about source-sink dynamics, mortality risks associated with trapping and translocation, and the likelihood that native U.S. wolverines may naturally immigrate into Colorado over time. By voicing these cautions, we aim to ensure that reintroduction strategies are guided by science and do not inadvertently undermine existing populations.

At the same time, TWF is expanding its role in public education and outreach. Zoo Boise has recently welcomed a female wolverine and is partnering with the Foundation to develop programming that highlights the species' ecological importance and the challenges it faces. This collaboration underscores our commitment to engaging diverse audiences and building awareness beyond the scientific community.

Looking ahead, TWF is also preparing to host the second International Wolverine Symposium, building on the success of the first held in Sweden in 2004. This gathering will bring together researchers, conservationists, managers, and stakeholders from around the world to share knowledge, strengthen collaborations, and chart the future of wolverine science and conservation.

Help us bring these initiatives to life — [Donate Now](#).

Policy Watch: North America and Scandinavia

United States: The Trump administration has proposed major revisions to the Endangered Species Act (ESA), including repeal of the “blanket rule” that allows threatened species like wolverines to receive the same protections as endangered ones. The changes would also make it harder to designate critical habitat and allow economic considerations to influence decisions. For wolverines, this could mean weaker safeguards for snow-covered denning areas and greater risk from development.

[Boise State Public Radio article on ESA changes](#)

Canada: Environment and Climate Change Canada released a draft national management plan for wolverines in 2025, engaging Indigenous communities in consultation. Meanwhile, Alberta removed all trapping limits for wolverines and several other species, arguing it would improve data collection. Conservationists warn this could accelerate declines, as Alberta’s population may number fewer than 1,000 individuals.

[Nature Alberta commentary](#)
[Fiera Consulting summary](#)
[MMF consultation report](#)

Scandinavia: Wolverines are listed as *vulnerable* in Sweden and *endangered* in Norway and Finland. Management policies balance conservation with conflicts in reindeer and sheep husbandry. Sweden relies primarily on compensation systems and limited lethal control, while Norway uses licensed hunting as well as state hunters (SNO) more extensively to reduce depredation losses. In 2022, Finland, Norway, and Sweden signed a new **Framework for Transboundary Cooperation on Wolverines**, valid through 2028, to strengthen monitoring, research, and conflict management across borders.

Recent efforts to better understand the relationship between the wolverine and foxes, both arctic and red, have led researchers to conclude that Recent research reveals that both wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) and golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) have impact on the relationship between the endangered and red-listed Arctic fox and the invasive red fox, favoring the Arctic fox. The Arctic fox has co-evolved with wolverines and golden eagles, which is probably why it is less prone to be victim of apex predation than the red fox. Intense management control of wolverines that inhabit the arctic tundra, as well as other anthropogenic factors such as climate warming and resource subsidies has allowed red fox numbers to increase potentially exacerbating conservation efforts on the endangered Arctic fox. The superior red fox excludes the Arctic-fox by interference competition as well as predation, hence natural populations of wolverines likely would hamper invasion of red-fox.

In addition, chronic wasting disease (spongiform encephalopathy) as well as outbreak of foot rot (digital necrobacillosis) has been discovered in Norwegian wild reindeer herds which has resulted in significant herd reductions as well as reduced survival rates of juveniles in the affected populations. Recent initiatives advocate for allowance for wolverines, and natural processes to re-establish within the arctic tundra housing wild reindeer herds as a possible tool to avoid the spread of diseases. The main prey of wolverines in Fennoscandia is reindeer and their predation on sick and substandard individuals would allow natural selection to eradicate infectious diseases.

A Few Notable Recent Wolverine Papers

Human Disturbance: A Global Synthesis (2024)

A sweeping review of more than 100 studies confirmed that wolverines are especially vulnerable to human activity — from roads and industrial development to motorized recreation and harvest. The authors, including TWF founding board member Jeff Copeland, recommend establishing large refuges where disturbance is minimized, restricting access during sensitive denning seasons, and expanding research and monitoring to fill critical knowledge gaps.

[Scrafford et al., *Environmental Reviews* \(2024\)](#)

Genetic Connectivity Across Western North America (2024)

By analyzing nearly 900 genetic samples across 2.2 million square kilometers, researchers revealed how landscape features shape wolverine connectivity. Wolverines were genetically similar across distances of up to 550 km, but diversity declined from north to south. The study confirmed that connectivity is disrupted by human disturbance at broad scales, while forest cover and persistent snow help maintain genetic exchange.

[Day et al., *Scientific Reports* \(2024\) — USDA Forest Service PDF](#)

Return to Finland’s Forests (2025)

After centuries of absence, wolverines are quietly reclaiming southern Finland. Using satellite imagery and snow-track surveys, researchers documented recolonization in mixed and broadleaf forests once thought unsuitable. The study recommends continued monitoring of these expanding populations and highlights the importance of protecting forest mosaics that provide both cover and prey.

[Ecology & Evolution \(2025\) article](#)
[Aalto University research summary](#)

Support Wolverine Science and Conservation

The Wolverine Foundation is entering an exciting new chapter under Dr. Heinemeyer’s leadership — but we can’t do it alone. Every study we highlight, every conservation strategy we advance, and every outreach effort we share depends on the generosity of people who care about wolverines and the wild places they call home.

Your gift helps us fund cutting-edge research, support collaborative conservation strategies, and share science-based information with the public and policymakers. Together, we can ensure that wolverines remain a thriving part of our northern landscapes.

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