



# WOLVERINE

*Gulo gulo*



## Appearance

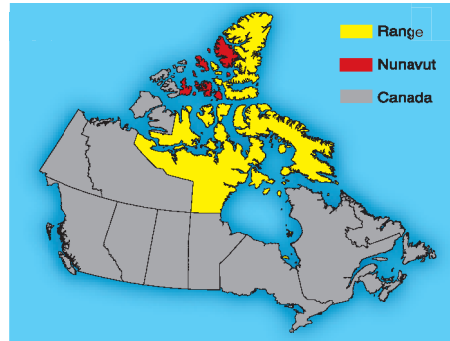
The wolverine is one of the larger species in the weasel family. It has a wide broad head, short rounded ears, small black beady eyes and a black muzzle. It has a solid muscular body, a short bushy tail and strong legs. The wolverine has long, coarse fur, including a dense layer of under-fur. Generally, it is a rich, glossy, dark brown and may have some speckled gray on the forehead and tips of ears. The soles of the feet are furred. Females usually weigh about 10.5kg while males generally weigh 15kg.

## Food And Feeding

The wolverine is popularly thought to be able to stand up to grizzly bears and outsmart humans by evading their traps and raiding their caches of food. Perhaps some of the stories are exaggerated, but it is truly a remarkable mammal. A wolverine will defend its food from animals much larger than itself. It has well developed scent glands and marks its territory as well as its food to discourage others from taking it. The wolverine is a solitary animal and does not generally allow a wolverine of the same sex to enter its territory. It has a keen sense of smell but appears to have poor eyesight. The wolverine is active both day and night and can travel great distances in search of food without tiring. It follows migrating caribou herds and cleans up the carcasses left by wolves and bears. If cornered, a wolverine will growl, bark and hiss.

## Behaviour

The wolverine is omnivorous and primarily a scavenger. Although it has the strength to kill large game animals such as deer, caribou and moose, it only does this occasionally. In addition to feeding on carrion and big game animals in the winter, it eats eggs from ground-nesting birds, edible roots and berries during the summer months.



## Range

In Nunavut, the wolverine can be found in all regions except on parts of the highest arctic islands.

## Habitat

Formerly, wolverine inhabited the boreal

forests of North America. Today, they are more likely found on the tundra between the tree line and the arctic coasts. They can also be found among rocky outcrops and on steep canyon sides or open plains.

## Reproduction

The breeding season is between late April and early September. After a gestation period of 6 to 8 months between 2 and 5 young are born. Newborn wolverines stay in the den in the early summer and the mother brings them food. As they get older, they follow her and she teaches them to hunt. The cubs stay with the mother during their first winter and leave in the spring. Females have one litter every two or three years.

## Status Survival and Management

According to the Nunavut Wild Species 2000 report, the current status of wolverine is sensitive. Wolverine can live several years in the wild and up to 17 years in captivity. In Nunavut, their predators include humans, and occasionally wolf packs or bears. A long term monitoring program of the harvested wolverine population has been going on in the west Kitikmeot region since 1985-86 and is now extended to the east of the Kitikmeot and the Kivalliq region.

## Did You Know?

Wolverine do not have many predators, however, porcupines have indirectly killed some! This may happen when a wolverine eats a porcupine and some quills are not digested properly. The quills may pierce its stomach and lead to internal bleeding and death.

