

Wolverine Harvest Monitoring

Annual Harvest Data

Fur Sealing Records
Carcass submissions

Locations

Throughout Yukon

Survey Years

Annual monitoring from 2015-2021

Wolverine Harvest Monitoring (2015 – 2021)

Project objectives

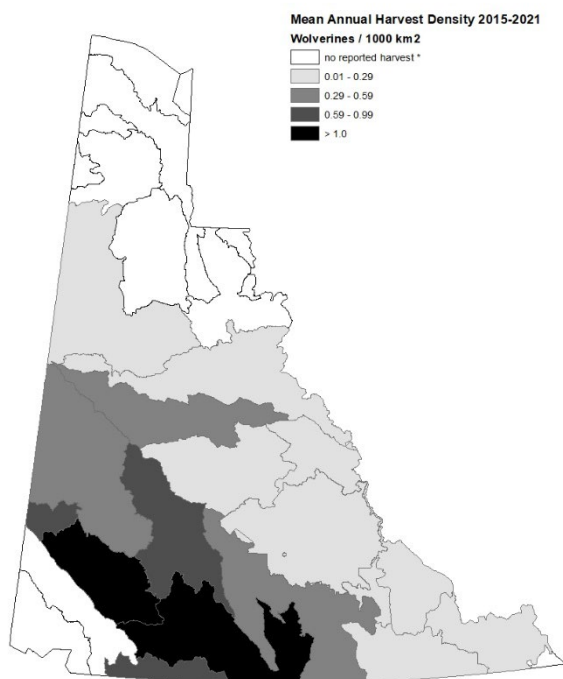
In the absence of population data for wolverine in Yukon, harvest management is informed by harvest data collected by Yukon Environment. Regular harvest monitoring is important for identifying temporal and regional trends, particularly in the absence of quotas. While an assessment of harvest sustainability without reliable population data may be problematic, descriptive examination using harvest data can identify areas of concern, direct limited resources to areas that may warrant further investigation and inform the need for potential management interventions.

We used fur sealing records and trapper-submitted carcasses to obtain data on annual harvest and sex-age structure of wolverine. Here, we provide a summary of harvest trends for the years 2015–2021.

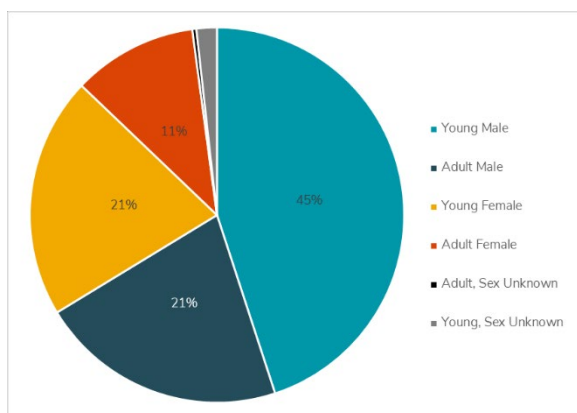
Project overview

Wolverine harvest management in the Yukon is informed by harvest data. Through examination of annual harvest trends in recent years, we found temporal variation in harvest, which is likely related to trapping effort. The spatial pattern of harvest was similar among years, and harvest was concentrated in southwestern Yukon. Wolverine harvest in southwestern Yukon may be locally unsustainable, and dependent on adjacent harvest refugia. The demographic structure of harvested wolverine was biased toward males and young animals, which is desirable from the management perspective.





*Wolverine harvest likely occurs in northern Yukon, but reporting is not reliable.



The percent sex and age structure of harvested wolverines during 2015-2021 in the Yukon.

Project background

Wolverine are a species of special management interest because they are both a valued furbearer and listed as a species of Special Concern in the federal Species at Risk Act. Management of harvested wolverine populations is important because they may be susceptible to over-harvest due to their naturally low density and low reproductive output. Thus, management of harvested wolverine populations must balance harvest with conservation. However, wolverine populations and their trends in Yukon are largely unknown. The management of wolverine harvest in Yukon is informed by data from harvested individuals or through analyses of spatiotemporal patterns of harvest.

Key findings

The annual wolverine harvest fluctuated from 102 to 221 wolverines per season in 2015-2021. The annual harvest increased from an average of 132 wolverines during 1988–2014, to 155 during 2015–2021. The highest annual wolverine harvest ever recorded in the Yukon was 221 animals in 2020.

Wolverine harvest in Yukon is biased toward young males, which is desirable because population growth rates are sensitive to changes in adult female survival. The proportion of adult females in the harvest ranged between 7% and 13%.

The sustainable harvest rate for wolverine has been estimated at $\leq 8\%$. Based on this threshold, the wolverine harvest is likely sustainable in much of the Yukon, but we estimated harvest rates in southwestern Yukon that greatly exceeded 8%.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Thomas Jung, Senior Wildlife Biologist, 867-667-5766

Piia Kukka, Project Biologist, 867-332-0635

Hannah Miller, Project Technician, 867-471-3686

