

Update from the Swedish Wolverine Project 8 June 2009

The Swedish Wolverine Project has continued the overall study of what is limiting the growth of wolverine populations. Specifically, during the winter and spring 2009, we have continued studying the interaction between wolverine and lynx, and both species' predation on reindeer. In this particular study, we equip wolverines and lynx with GPS-transmitters that provide a high frequency of positioning.



We download data from the transmitters in the field. Thereafter we analyze the positions to identify clusters of positions, which indicate a certain activity by the animal. Then, we visit these locations in the field to document whether it shows the sign of a day bed, a reindeer killed recently or an older carcass. With this data we can learn more about how many reindeer are killed by lynx and wolverine, respectively and to what extent wolverines utilize reindeer killed by lynx and other causes. This study provides information on the effect of lynx and carnivore on indigenous reindeer husbandry and the importance of lynx predation for the food availability for wolverines.

During the spring, we have also monitored wolverine females intensively, in order to estimate their reproductive success. We do this to know how reproductive success varies among years and individuals, which in turn is important for understanding what is limiting the growth of threatened wolverine populations. We have also, during this spring, studied some reproductive females in detail to learn more about their behaviour and activity pattern during the denning period. This is information needed to improve methods for monitoring (which is based on counting number of dens) wolverine populations and to see how sensitive the females are to disturbance during this period.