



BRITISH COLUMBIA MOUNTAIN GOAT SOCIETY

SMITHERS BC CANADA

MTGOATS@BCNORTH.CA

Newsletter # 22

November 20, 2021

Greetings Members

New videos

We have launched two new videos on our YouTube channel at

[Mountain Goats and the Bears - YouTube](#)

[Two Billies - YouTube](#)

In the first video, an unusual number of black bears share the same hillside as a herd of goats. We have been filming at this site for years but we have never seen so many bears. When we set up the cameras, we noticed that a bear tore up a patch of ground to the left of one camera. We thought that a bear was simply digging roots. The camera footage shows that most of the bears stopped by that same patch to dig (and urinate). Our thinking now is that the patch was a community sign post for the bears.

The second video is a result from monitoring the mountain goat herd on McKendrick Mountain this year. The image quality is poor due to the extremely long distance from our camera to the goats but the goat behaviour is priceless.

Research Fund

We now have a fund of \$10,000 for science-based mountain goat research in British Columbia. This is a gift from a donor with the promise that the same amount will be added to the fund in 2022. The research needs to produce a paper or report that is publicly available. Proposals can be sent at any time of year.



Looking for mountain goats on the west end of the Microwave alpine, west of Smithers BC. No goats seen that day but we know they are there.

Our influence

Once again our society has an impact. McKendrick Mountain, located 28 km east of Smithers BC, is now closed to all motorized and non-motorized recreation for two years. The closure is a direct result of our work monitoring the mountain goat herd. We observed the decline in population from 22 goats in 2012 to 8 in 2021.

The closure is voluntary but has wide support in the local community. Local Fish and Wildlife staff had no easy way to verify our findings, so they took our word for it. They

promise to monitor compliance and verify our observations over the next year. Meanwhile we have already started observing the herd for a second winter season with spotting scope and camera from the Babine Lake Road. Once again we will try to count the number of goats in the herd by repeated observations – it took 31 sessions last year before we were confident that our population count was accurate,

We view this closure as a good first step for the community to understand the impact of recreation on wildlife in general and mountain goats in particular. Hopefully a meeting of local stakeholders can be formed to keep up with the impact of recreation on other mountains.



Why our concern about mountain goats?

What do you say when someone asks why residents should sacrifice their recreation in order to conserve mountain goats? What makes goats so valuable?

Here are some possible answers, in no particular order:

1. Mountain goats are beautiful, talented, and unique.
2. Mountain goats are our wild neighbours and deserve our respect.

3. You may not thank me but your grandchildren will, when goats are still on the mountain.
4. Central British Columbia is the epicentre of the world's population of mountain goats.
5. Once the mountain goats are gone, it will be impossible to get them back.
6. Since British Columbia is the home of most of the world's mountain goat population, BC has a responsibility to conserve the species.
7. Science has shown that biodiversity is necessary to maintain a resilient ecosystem.
8. We do not want mountain goats to follow the plight of caribou in central British Columbia.
9. We never want to hear the phrase "I can remember when..."
10. Who wants to hike a mountain that is not the home of a herd of mountain goats?
11. We have no right to end a species.
12. Someone has to speak for mountain goats since they are unable to speak for themselves.
13. Mountain goats can disappear without anyone being aware.
14. We go home at the end of the day but mountain goats stay on the mountain.

Take your pick when someone asks you why mountain goats deserve protection. Can you add more reasons? Let us know.

Until the next time,

Jim

Jim Easterday
Co-founder and director
British Columbia Mountain Goat Society
Smithers BC
250-847-4802

mtgoats@bcnorth.ca www.mtgoats.ca

www.bcmountaingoatsociety.ca