



BRITISH COLUMBIA MOUNTAIN GOAT SOCIETY

SMITHERS BC CANADA

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Newsletter # 23

December 27, 2021

Greetings Members

New videos

We are busy observing the mountain goat herd on McKendrick Mountain located 28 km east of Smithers BC. Local Fish and Wildlife staff have closed the mountain to both motorized and non-motorized recreation for two years at our suggestion. We convinced them that the goat herd needed time and space to recover without constant traffic by snowmobiles and skiers.

We conducted 31 observation sessions last winter before we were confident that we knew the true population of the goat herd. Now once again, it's our turn to observe the goat herd and document the population. We are making regular video reports to Fish and Wildlife staff so that they can see our data. We mix video and photos that reveal the number of goats, where the goats are spending time and what they are doing.

The first two reports can be viewed at:

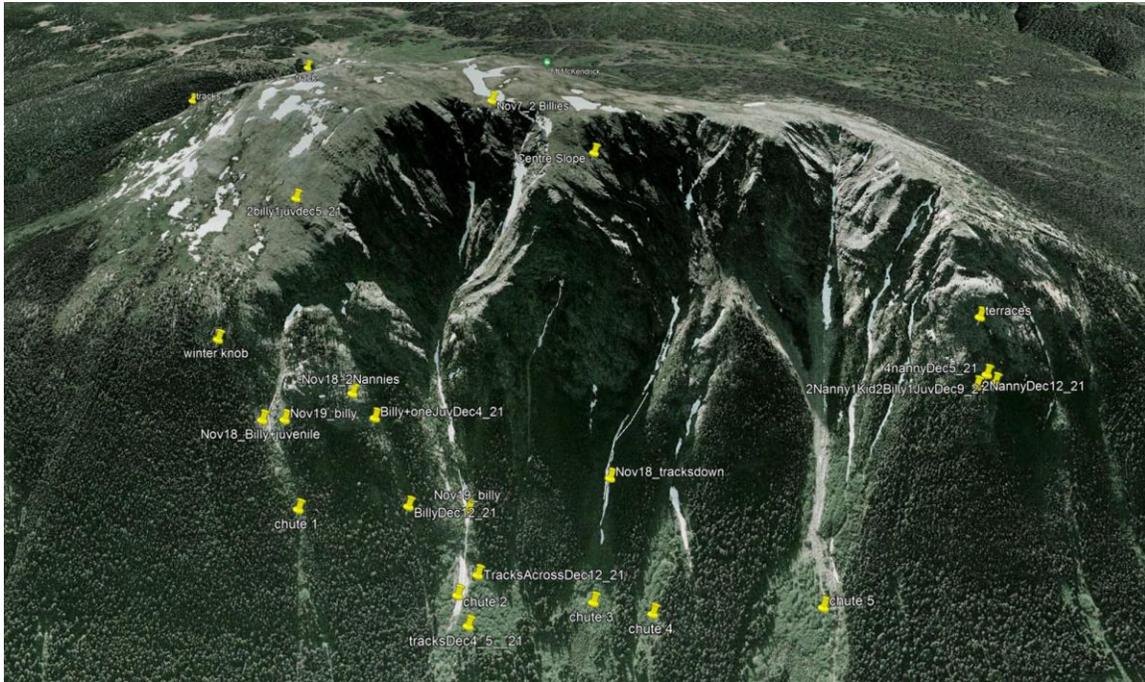
[McKendrick Report 1 Nov 2021 - YouTube](#)

[McKendrick Mountain Report #2 Dec 24 2021 - YouTube](#)

The videos lack music and are raw data rather than entertainment. The two videos are not publicly listed on our YouTube channel and can only be seen by using the above links. You may distribute the links.

This monitoring project is an excellent way to study a goat herd intensively. We spend many summer days filming goats but have never taken the time to regularly record goats in the early winter months. We have become very proficient at spotting goats at a distance of over two kilometers when all you can see is a head or a shoulder behind a grove of snow-covered trees.

We set up two tripods. One for a Vertex 20-60x spotting scope and the other tripod for a Nikon P950 camera. We find the goats using the spotting scope, then jump over to aim the camera. Below is our Google Earth image.



We name all the avalanche chutes in Google Earth as references. Then we record the location of the goats in Google Earth as waypoints. Here is what the mountain actually looks like.



We wait for sunny days for best visibility. Temperatures must be above -20 C, otherwise bare fingers are vulnerable. We know the goats' favourite sites but we do a complete

scan of the mountain each time. The goats have surprised us in the past and moved to “impossible” spots. We move the spotting scope in vertical lines that overlap to make sure we scan the entire mountain. It usually takes an hour to scan the mountain and film any goats we can see. Out of seven sessions this winter, we saw goats on six occasions.

Just like with our trail camera video footage, we let the goats tell their own story. If we can keep up the pace this winter, we should have an understanding of what the goats value during winter. The best locations, the best feed, the best terrain. We are always prepared for surprises and mountain goats never disappoint.

Until the next time and Happy New Year

Jim

Jim Easterday

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