



BRITISH COLUMBIA MOUNTAIN GOAT SOCIETY

SMITHERS BC CANADA

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Newsletter #26

January 21, 2023

Greetings Members

We have posted two new videos on our YouTube channel at [oreamos2012 - YouTube](#)

The first video is good news. For over a decade, hikers, skiers and snowmobilers have forced the resident mountain goat herd on McKendrick Mountain to abandon the summit ridge. Instead the herd stayed in the trees where feed is low quality and travel is dangerous. After one year of a voluntary closure for all recreation, [McKendrickReport6Dec19 22 - YouTube](#) shows that the mountain goat herd has re-occupied the summit ridge.

The second video shows the effects of displacement by recreation. [McKendrick Report 7 Jan15 2023 - YouTube](#) tracks the escape of the McKendrick Mountain herd from a group of backcountry skiers. We were fortunate to film the entire chain of events. The goats struggle in deep snow on extreme slopes to flee the skiers.

Babine Mountains Park Letter

As reported in the last newsletter, a recent census reported that the mountain goat population in our local Babine Mountains Provincial Park has decreased from 326 in 1995 to 164 in 2021. The harvest of mountain goats from sport hunting in the same time period totalled 171, roughly the same number as the loss of population. The obvious question is if hunting accounted for the collapse of the goat population. Attached is our response to that census report. Local members know the area in question. Members from away may be interested in the effects on a mountain goat population from combined hunting and recreation.

Recreation

The situation in the Babine Park is not unique. Recreation is affecting goat populations on many local mountains. New logging roads are providing more access to alpine. That

results in recreation pressure on mountain goat populations. The goats' habitat shrinks as does the goat population. Of course, recreation technology improves from year to year. Snowmobiles can now go anywhere in the alpine. Meanwhile hunt managers are not factoring in intensive recreation in their harvest calculations.

Chin whiskers

Watch the goats in our latest videos. When the snow is soft and deep, the goat's last resort to staying on top is to push their chin down onto the snow. Without whiskers, the chin and throat would get cold quickly. Voila, we have chin whiskers.

Brown phase

In the latest videos, you will notice one kid with a difference. Its coat is white touched with brown tips and the dark brown stripe on its back is darker than normal. Kids often have a dark tail and brown stripe on the back but this kid is much darker than any kid we have seen in the last 50 years. The brown stripe usually changes to white in the second year of a goat's life. It will be interesting to see if this kid is the start of a new brown phase. Ancestors to our mountain goats in Eastern Asia are brown. Mountain goats today live in a world of brown, unlike most of the last 40,000 years in western North America dominated by massive white glaciers and snowfields.



Brown phase?

Until the next time

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