



## BRITISH COLUMBIA MOUNTAIN GOAT SOCIETY

SMITHERS BC CANADA

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Newsletter #34

May 7, 2024

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Greetings

### **Mountain Goats and Avalanches**

Kevin White, from Alaska, has published a paper concerning fatalities of mountain goats from avalanches. The data comes from goat herds near the coastal city of Haines, Alaska. There are some excellent photos in the following overview:

[Mountain wildlife and the costs of living dangerously | Research Communities by Springer Nature](#)

There is a link to Kevin's paper at the top of the same page.

Kevin's research shows that we have to keep up with changes induced by global warming as well as all random natural events that reduce the mountain goat population, without our immediate knowledge.

That ties into the next topic.

### **Smithers Method**

Population counts for mountain goats in BC have relied on observers in a helicopter counting goats and writing data on paper forms. There must be a better way. Introducing the Smithers Method. Replacing visual records with still photos and supplementing photos with audio from the helicopter sound system.

See the attached paper for full details. Hopefully, the Smithers Method will make it possible to keep accurate population counts that reveal random losses from avalanches or any other factor hidden from our view.

## Happy Mountain Goat Week!

Don't forget. The first week of June is Mountain Goat Week. So give a thought to all the new kids born at the end of May, and all the harried nannies trying to keep up with their bouncing kids.

Our family has a tradition of travelling to see a local herd of canyon mountain goats in the first week of June in hopes of photographing kids less than a week old. We will send photos if we are lucky.

## Drought

The lack of snow over the last winter has changed the behaviour of mountain goats on McKendrick Mountain. See a new video at:

[cana1 \(youtube.com\)](#)

More recently, we have seen many 2-meter high subalpine fir trees dying in local forests. We suspect that the lack of snow last winter led to the ground freezing, killing the tree roots. Never seen that before. Makes us wonder about the effect of frozen ground in the alpine and the impact on mountain goats. Our trail cameras show no snow in December of 2023 where one meter would be the normal snow depth.

Until the next time

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*Juvenile canyon goat watching a friend  
April 22, 2024*