



BRITISH COLUMBIA MOUNTAIN GOAT SOCIETY

SMITHERS BC CANADA

MTGOATS@BCNORTH.CA

Newsletter #25

November 30, 2022

Greetings Members

New Videos

Since the last newsletter, we have added two new videos to our YouTube channel.

[\(1\) Mountain Goats - Weather on the Mountain - YouTube](#) shows the blowing snow, rain and cold temperatures that mountain goats have to endure.

[\(1\) Mountain Goat High Society - YouTube](#) looks at aggression by nannies in a mountain goat herd. Our commentary comes from watching thousands of 10-second videos from our trail cameras that record every passing goat all year long. The opening scene shows nine goats on a ledge 3 meters by 4 meters. That must be a record and shows that mountain goats adapt to a restricted space by throwing normal aggressive behaviour out the window.

McKendrick Mountain

We are monitoring McKendrick Mountain for the second winter. The voluntary closure expires in the fall of 2023. Hopefully by then we can tell whether the closure is having the desired effect. Otherwise we will advocate for a permanent closure. McKendrick may be simply too small to allow both mountain goats and recreation.

Small Mineral Licks

We have discussed large mineral licks on our YouTube channel. But you also have a good chance of seeing a small mineral lick if you are hiking in goat country.

Mountain goats paw the ground to get to mineral salts. They also paw the ground to make a bed. A bed will be bowl shaped to fit the goat's body and it will have smooth edges. In contrast, a small mineral lick will have sharp edges. The small mineral licks in the photos below are about 30 to 40 cm deep and about 3 meters in diameter.

Other clues that you are looking at a mineral lick and not a goat bed:

- A lick has a flat bottom.
- There will be a hard-packed goat trail into the lick area
- The soil and rock will often be volcanic – tuffs, volcanic ash or basalt are common.
- The lick extends under tree roots.





Wallows are similar to mineral licks. Mineral licks are dug down to mineral soil but wallows are pools of wet organic material. Think a “mud bath” for wildlife.

Mountain goats also frequent wet clay mineral licks. On the prairie at Hudson Bay Mountain, there are small shallow ponds less than 3 meters in diameter. We have seen goat tracks and hoof marks where goats were eating the clay.

Mineral salts are a life requisite for mountain goats. The salts buffer the high nitrogen levels of fresh vegetative growth in spring and early summer. Without mineral salts, goats can suffer diarrhea and a loss of nutrients at a time when they should be gaining body weight.

Babine Park Mountain Goat Census

Attached is the report on the number of mountain goats in the Babine Mountain Provincial Park near Smithers BC. Local members may be shocked by the loss of half the goat population since 1985. For our members from away, this report establishes new parameters for a helicopter census of mountain goats that may be relevant to other areas. Another interesting part of the report is the analysis of the sport hunting over the years.

Until the next time,

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