



BRITISH COLUMBIA MOUNTAIN GOAT SOCIETY

SMITHERS BC CANADA

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Newsletter

October 19, 2017

Dear members – lots has happened since last November.

Cameras

This winter we have five remote trail cameras set up to take photos of mountain goats. We are trying to convert all cameras to larger batteries and solar panels. Our old battery system often failed in cold weather. Solar is new technology for us and we have to do lots of troubleshooting to get things right. I leave the cameras on the mountain for months at a time so it takes time to learn that a camera has failed and more time to try fixes.

New videos

We have enough video and still photos to make a couple new videos this winter. One video will talk about mountain goat summer habitat. The other video will show how a hiker can avoid disturbing mountain goats while on the mountain. I'll let you know when the videos are ready.

Blunt Seaton project

Our local mountain goat biologist plans to start her new project this month. The population of one mountain (Blunt – Seaton) is dwindling while the population of the neighbouring mountain (Netazul) is increasing. She will attempt to put GPS collars on as many as 20 goats. The collars will transmit the exact location of each goat 24 hours a day. Our biologist will be able to see if goats are moving from the one mountain to the other. DNA analysis of tissue samples will also tell if the two goat herds are related. One possible cause for the movement of goats may be snowmobile traffic on Blunt-Seaton. This is a great opportunity to participate in basic research – a first for our local goats. The project is scheduled to last for five years and we may get a chance to help with field work in the second year.

Tissue sample kits

For the second year, Leesa and I provided all the mountain goat tissue sample kits to the Province – 400 kits this year. Each harvested goat must be inspected within 30 days of the hunt. The inspectors remove a small tissue sample and place it in a vial with salt that we supply and fill out a questionnaire. The samples will be available for DNA analysis in the future. No analysis has been done yet. The tissues are frozen and will stay in good condition for years. The important thing is to gather samples every year – they will be invaluable in the future.

Almost on TV

We had inquiries from the Wild Canadian Year series narrated by David Suzuki. The winter episode is being aired now on CBC. The producers saw the videos I created on YouTube and wanted to film mountain goats in winter. One researcher came to Smithers and I showed him a couple of good goat locations but he figured the weather and terrain was too difficult for their camera crew. They use cameras that weigh 40 pounds! This is the second media inquiry I have received – the first was from BBC – they also wanted to film goats but nothing came of it.

Ganokwa Canyon

The trail up the Ganokwa Canyon is now closed from November 1 to July 15 each year. BC Parks decided that the Ganokwa canyon goats need isolation from the hikers who go up that trail year round. The closure will lower the stress levels for the goats in winter and will protect the nannies and new kids in May, June and July. It's good to see that BC Parks is concerned about mountain goats in the Babine Mountain Park.

Here are a few photos from summer.

Cheers

Jim Easterday



