

# WOLVERINE

## GULO GULO

### DISTINGUISHING MARKS:

The largest of the marten animals. Strong jaw. Length of the body 70-100 cm, shoulder height 35-45 cm, tail 16-25 cm. Long-haired, weight 10-26 kg, male larger than female. Fur colour dark brown, ecru vertical streaks on the flanks. Sense of smell important (carcasses).

### PREVALENCE:

In the wildernesses of Eastern and Northern Finland, mainly near the eastern frontier of Lapland.

### HABITAT:

In the forested mountain terrains of Lapland. Avoids closely inhabited regions. Lives in the territories of the reindeers, thus lichen areas. Calmness of the territory is important, wildernesses.

### LIFE STYLES:

Moves mostly long journeys in the dawn or the dusk. Restless vagabond. After mating season, each searches itself own territory, where it can find enough food. Climbs in the trees and swims well. Male is polygamous. Day trips are generally 30-40 kilometres.

### NOURISHMENT:

Reindeer is the biggest of the prey animals. Carcasses are the main nourishment, especially in the winter time. Collects food reserves for the winter and spring. Efficient predator in the deep sinking snow (carries wolverine, but no reindeer) when it can kill several reindeers to the store. Eats also little mammals, frogs, the eggs, even plants and berries.

### BREEDING:

Mating time from March to August. Delayed embryonic development. Kits are born at the end of January or February, usually to the snow nest. Cubs become independent at the age of 6-7 months. Breeds usually 1-4 kits which are as small as a Norway lemming at birth, 90 grams. Mature already in the age of 13-14 months.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE POPULATION:

The wolverine population is reduced catastrophically. Snowmobile assisted hunting has been the final strike to the population growth. At the 1980s the whole population consisted of a few individual wanderers (40 -50 animals), which roamed both in Finland, Norway and Russia.

### PRESERVATION:

Can be hunted in the reindeers' grazing areas only with special licence. Extremely endangered. Protected by law in the whole country at 1982. Reindeer owners are paid the damage caused by wolverine as compensation. The first experimental transfer plantations are made to large forests of the southern Finland. Wolverine has a bad reputation as a brutal predator, but it is not true. Often it just finds a carcass killed by a lynx and gets the blame.

