



BRITISH COLUMBIA MOUNTAIN GOAT SOCIETY

SMITHERS BC CANADA

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Mountain Report 2020 – Microwave Mountain

June 24, 2020

History

Until now there has been a lack of information about mountain goats on Microwave Mountain. In the past, we recorded two sightings of mountain goats on the mountain. In 2006 a single billy was seen at the top of the McDonnell Lake Trail on Microwave Mountain. Several years earlier a single nanny with her kid was spotted at the top of the old snowmobile trail from 3 km on the McDonnell Forest Service Road. See attached Google Earth files.

On June 23, 2020, two BCMGS directors surveyed the west end of Microwave Mountain for sign of mountain goats. We now know that there is at least one herd of mountain goats resident on the western half of the mountain.

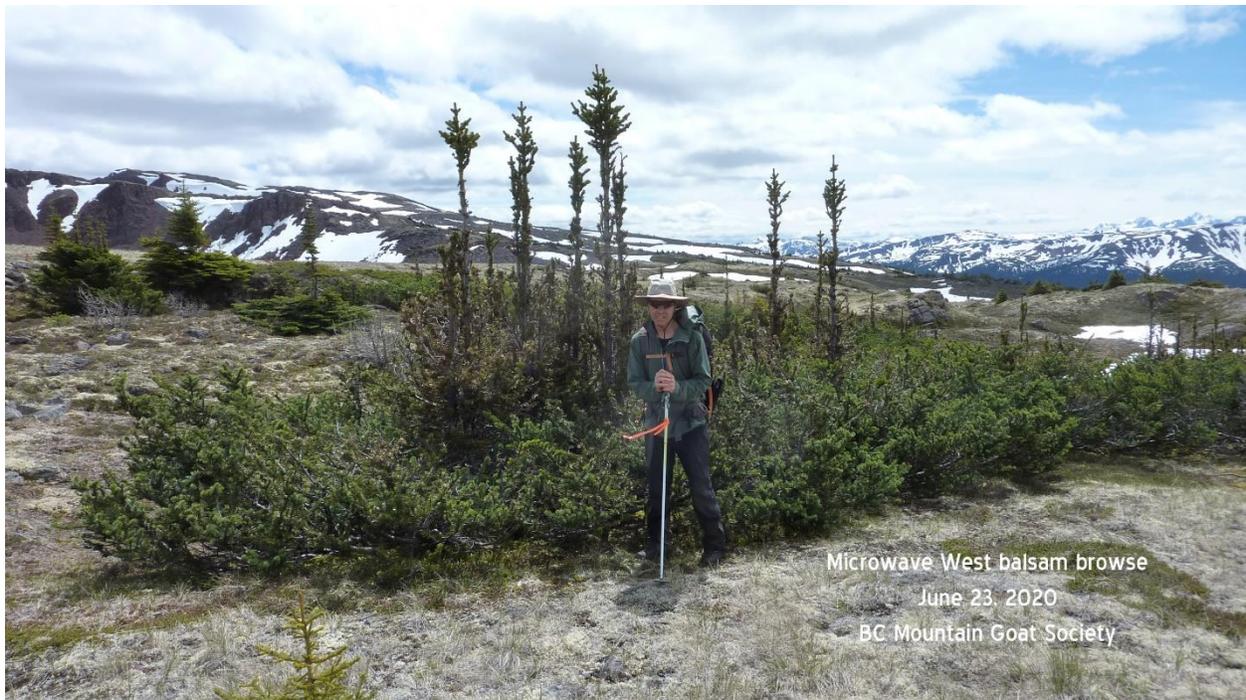
Motorized use

The eastern end of the Microwave is a designated snowmobile area in winter and a popular ATV recreation area in summer. An abrupt change in terrain at the middle of the mountain (ATV Access Barrier.kmz) makes it very difficult for ATVs to travel to the western half of the mountain. Experienced snowmobilers may be able to travel the entire length of the mountain but we are not aware of the actual frequency of use.

Evidence

During our recent survey, we observed large quantities of mountain goat fecal pellets along a 500 m stretch of ridge top (Microwave Mt Goat Winter Habitat.kmz). This is a classic sign of goat winter habitat. There are two large areas nearby where balsam fir trees have been browsed in winter by mountain goats. The trimmed shape of the trees indicate a snow depth of 120 cm (4 feet) when the goats were browsing.

We also found eight goat beds side-by-side in soft scree near the winter habitat and one clump of fresh molted goat hair in the trees near the winter habitat.



The fecal pellets were all from winter. No recent summer fecal pellets were found. The lack of molted goat hair and the lack of fresh mountain goat tracks in the area indicate that the herd spent the winter and then left as soon as possible in spring to feed in other areas. When snow melts, there is abundant feed available across the western half of Microwave Mountain along with excellent escape terrain on the north side.



We did not see any mountain goats during our survey trip. We cannot provide a population count at this time. Now that we know where goats are wintering, we may be able to observe the herd with a spotting scope from a nearby logging road in winter to get a population count.

Attached Google Earth files:

Microwave Mt Goat Winter Habitat.kmz

ATV access barrier.kmz

Microwave ATV Sled Area.kmz

Nanny and kid.kmz

Single Billy.kmz

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