



Assignment 1

Module 2: Who We Survey

Creating a Species Profile

Having an in-depth understanding of the features and behaviours of a wildlife species is necessary to be able to reliably locate it or even simply to know when to look for it. To help develop a deeper understanding, select a single species in your area that you are interested in and compile information on this species. Use the resources that you are most comfortable with – scientific papers, popular hunting books, internet resources, colleagues, consultation with elders and hunters... The intent is to develop a deeper understanding of one species you're interested in.

Some topics to consider for understanding your species:

- Ranges (historic and present)
- Associated species (predators, conspecifics, competitors, disease vectors, etc.)
- Identification – separation from similar species, hybrids, age classes, sexes, variations through year
- Evolutionary history – taxonomy, subspecies
- Longevity, habitat ecology, phenology, migration vs resident, seasonal movements, daily movements, home range, time of activity (nocturnal vs diurnal vs crepuscular), breeding behaviour, rearing behaviour, feeding behaviour...
- Sign: tracks, scat signs of feeding, wallows, marks on trees etc.
- Management concerns
- Historical perspective: cultural relevance/importance
- Previous local and regional work on species

Due date: This assignment is due by the beginning of Week 4 of the course.

Submission: This assignment is to be submitted to NRTG by email to sean@nrtraininggroup.com

An example is provided here, but you do not have to follow this rigid format. Be creative and compile the information in the most useful form to you.

Example of a species profile: Bighorn sheep

Species: Mountain (bighorn) sheep	Scientific name: Ovis canadensis
Status in British Columbia: blue listed	Sub-species in British Columbia: No recognized sub-species in BC
Identification: Stocky and muscular; ivory white rump-patch; large curved horns in males, short horns on females	
Discrimination of sexes: Males: horns of males are robust, curved, large; marked by prominent transverse ridges and furrows. Females: horns of females are short, erect, backward curving; resembling those of a domestic goat; presence of young	
Determining approximate ages: Annulus on horns: the more prominent grooves indicate annual growth. Age can be estimated by counting these growth rings. Requires dead or immobilized animal. Attain adult dentition at 4 years of age	
Habitat: Alpine meadows, grassy mountain slopes, foothill country; all near rugged rocky cliffs and bluffs; availability of escape terrain in the form of rocky cliffs is important to survival.	
Summer food: Grasses, sedges, and forbs. Bluegrass, June grass and wheatgrass particularly relished. Dwarf willow. Winter browse: primarily a grazer feeding on grasses and forbs. Browses only when preferred grazing plants absent. Browse plants include sage, bearberry, Douglas fir, junipers, willows, roses. May feed on conifers when suitable food is scarce.	
Seasonal movements: Short migrations between alpine summer ranges and lower elevation winter ranges. Some bands, where alpine range not available, remain on winter range year-round. On winter range may share area with deer, domestic sheep, and elk. Winter range usually between 750 – 1,500 m elevation. Summer range usually between 1850 – 2,400 m elevation	

<p>Causes of mortality: Main cause of death winter exposure and parasites (stomach and intestinal worms). Predators: cougar, coyotes (on young and ewes); very occasionally bobcat, bear, golden eagle. Most vulnerable to predation when crossing valleys between mountain ranges.</p>	
<p>Tracks: Similar to deer tracks, but less heart-shaped, with more rounded tips, and straighter more rectangular sides. 4.5-5.5 cm in length; distance between tracks (stride length) 40 – 60 cm. trail width 15-30 cm. Trail pattern is alternating with double or slightly off-register pattern.</p>	
<p>Scat: Very similar to deer. Often a grey color (rather than black or dark like deer) with a smooth polished appearance.</p>	
<p>Other sign: Carcass</p>	