



(Stock Photo)

2.1 North American Badger (*Taxidea taxus*)

Appearance and Size

Badgers are shaggy, stout, short-legged animals, with characteristic black and white facial markings and a short tail. They have long curved claws upwards of 5 cm long well-suited for burrowing on their front legs, and teeth designed for tearing and shearing flesh. Their upper torso fur ranges in colour from silver grey to yellow-brown, interspersed with black and buff. The feet and lower legs of badgers are black. The markings of both sexes are similar. They have a squat, flattened appearance because they have short fur on their backs and longer fur on their sides. They are amongst the largest species in the weasel family. Mature badgers range in length from 65 to 90 centimetres, and in weight from 6 to 14 kilograms. Adult males are slightly larger and heavier than females.



(Photo: Tom Hall)

Life History

Except when females are raising young, and for brief encounters between mating pairs, badgers are relatively solitary and nocturnal animals. Mating occurs between July and August; only yearling or older males breed. Upwards of 40 percent of juvenile females, as well as yearling and older females will breed. Females can reach sexual maturity as young as four to five months. After delayed implantation, but rapid gestation, young



(Photo: Roger Packham, BC Ministry of Environment)



(Photo: Glen Lam)

are born in March or April of the following year. Litters are limited to one each year, ranging in size from one to four kits. Newborn badgers are nursed for five to six weeks, after which their mothers begin to bring prey to them. After being raised by their mothers for up to twelve weeks, juvenile badgers begin leaving to search for their own home ranges.

Abundance and Distribution

It is estimated that there are less than 200 breeding adults in British Columbia. This small population is distributed very thinly. While the home ranges for female adults average 50 square miles, the home ranges for adult males can extend to upwards of 500 square kilometres. Although badgers occur primarily in the dry southern interior valleys of the Okanagan-Similkameen and Kootenays, they have been sighted as far west as Manning Park and as far north as Williams Lake and Clearwater. (*Map 2.1*) Badgers are very vulnerable to human development and have recently been placed on the Provincial Red List for threatened and endangered species.

Text and map adapted from: British Columbia Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, 2002.



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Front track
about 5 cm (1 3/4") long



Walking trail

Adapted from: McDougall (1997); and Sheldon and Hartson (1999).



(Photo: Trevor McKinley)

Characteristic Features



(Photo: Leonard Sielecki, BCMoT)



(Photo: Leonard Sielecki, BCMoT)

Map 2.1

