

Wolverine

Gulo gulo

Although the wolverine *Gulo gulo* belongs to the weasel family, Mustelidae, it is not long and lean like a weasel, but short and thick, like a small bear. Its head is broad and round, with small eyes and short rounded ears. Its legs are short and sturdy, with five toes on each foot. Its long, curved claws are semi-retractile, which means they can be partly drawn back in, and they are used for climbing and digging. Its teeth are strong, and its head, neck, and shoulder muscles are well developed. These adaptations allow the wolverine to feed on frozen flesh and bone, and they provide a clue as to how wolverines survive.

An adult wolverine is about the size of a medium-sized dog. Adult males weigh about 12 to 18 kg, adult females about 8 to 12 kg. Wolverines that live in the north of their range are usually larger than those living farther south.



The wolverine has one of the most striking pelts of all fur-bearing animals. Its fur is typically a rich, glossy, dark brown. Two pale yellow stripes originate at the nape of its neck and sweep along each flank to merge at the base of its long, bushy tail. White or orange patches are common on the chest or throat. The wolverine's toes, forepaws, or legs may occasionally be marked with white.



- Wolverine track sequences are usually in sets of three prints, about the size of a large dog. Look closely at the middle print - it's actually made by two paws.
- Tracks may also be in sets of 4 (like lynx or wolf) or 2 (like fisher and marten).
- All five toes and claws are usually visible. Only four toes register for lynx (no claws) and wolf (claws visible) tracks.



Front
Track



Back
Track