

HOME RANGE AND HABITAT SELECTION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN PORCUPINE IN THE BITTERROOT VALLEY

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In the past several decades it has been noted by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks biologists that the occurrence of porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*) sightings in western Montana has been reduced. This observation sparked interest in current population demographics within this area. During the summer of 2006 surveys requesting information on sightings of porcupines or their sign was distributed throughout western Montana. The results from this survey allowed for further narrowing of the study area to the Bitterroot valley. In the spring of 2007 trapping and radio-collaring of individuals began in the Bitterroots in hopes of targeting home range and habitat selection at the third and fourth order, with notes made on mortality and reproduction. The spring trapping session resulted in the successful capture of seven individuals on both private and public lands. Individual home ranges will be calculated using a minimum convex polygon due to small sample size. Habitat selection will be quantified by building resource selection functions using both land cover data from satellite imagery as well as data collected on the ground. Trapping and data collection will continue into the summer of 2008.