

The Lone Wolverine: Tracking Michigan's Most Elusive Animal

Elizabeth Philips Shaw, Jeffrey J. Ford



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It began in late winter of 2004. Almost 100 years had passed since the last spotting of a wild wolverine in Michigan when coyote hunters caught a glimpse of one of the animals in a frozen farm field in the northern thumb region. For the next six years, Jeff Ford, a local science teacher and amateur naturalist, devoted himself to locating and filming the wolverine that had unexpectedly and inexplicably appeared in the Wolverine State. By the time hikers found the animal dead in early 2010, Ford had taken hundreds of rare live action photos and shot numerous hours of video, with the story of the "Wolverine Guy" attracting national attention through countless newspaper and magazine articles and appearances on Animal Planet and PBS *Nature*.

This is the tale of Ford's quest as he uncovered answers to mysteries surrounding the animal's territory and movement patterns, while sparking a flurry of controversy surrounding the elusive predator's origin, much of which remains unresolved today. It's an intimate look at research in the raw, from DNA samples stuck on barbed wire to a sophisticated, motion-sensing infrared camera unit strategically placed to observe nocturnal behavior.

The Lone Wolverine brings to vivid life this unforgettable piece of American wildlife lore, using candid interviews, public records, and Ford's own vast storehouse of notes, personal writings, correspondence, and images, offering an extraordinary chronicle of a wild wolverine in its natural habitat, at play and in fierce competition for food and survival. This is a wildlife detective story, recounting years of study and fierce debate as researchers pondered the riddles of Michigan's last wolverine---her origins, habits, and ultimately the cause of her untimely death.

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