



FAST FACTS

Name: Fisher

Species name: *Martes pennanti*

Head and body length: 50 cm to 70 cm

Tail length: 30 cm to 42 cm

Weight: 1.5 kg to 8 kg

Life expectancy: approximately 10 years

PHYSIOLOGY

The fisher is a member of the weasel family and a close relative of the marten, but is nearly twice as large and four times as heavy as the marten. The coat on the fisher's slender body is dark brown with blackish brown fur on its rump and bushy tail. It also has a lighter, cream coloured bib on its chest. The name 'fisher' has no relation to fish, but is derived from 'fiche' an old English word for the European polecat and its pelt.

Fishers have short legs and strong, large feet with hairy soles. It has sharp, partially retractable claws on each of its five toes.

HABITAT/BEHAVIOUR

The fisher is a carnivore and an exceptional predator. It is one of the few animals that eats porcupine. When hunting other prey, such as mice, chipmunks, squirrels, snowshoe hares, and fawns, the fisher attacks its prey from behind.

One threat to the fisher is the bobcat, not because it is a prey, but they compete for the same food. This is referred to as sharing the same niche. The fisher has very few predators other than humans since few animals can take on the large weasel.

The fisher finds shelter in holes in the ground, hollow trees, logs and stumps. They only maintain a permanent den when raising their young. Female fishers produce an average of three offspring per litter after enduring a pregnancy that lasts approximately 51 weeks, or 350 days.

RANGE

The fisher is found in Canada along the Pacific Northwest coast of British Columbia, in northern Alberta and from Saskatchewan to Newfoundland. It is also distributed in the United States in northern California, Idaho and western Montana. The fisher is only found in North America.