
WHAT WE DO

Some of the most pressing conservation issues need to distinguish between multiple, concurrent pressures facing wildlife over a large geographic range. The Conservation Canines program addresses this need by combining the precision and efficiency of detection dogs to readily locate wildlife scat samples with the ability to extract a wide variety of genetic and physiological indicators from scat. These indicators provide information about species abundance, distribution, resource use, and physiological health all in relation to the environmental pressure(s) the species is encountering.



Scat detection dogs are able to locate samples from multiple species simultaneously across large, remote areas and have a lower bias compared to traditional wildlife detection methods. No other method can acquire such a vast amount of reliable information in so short a time, making this approach incredibly valuable for conservation and management planners.

HISTORY

Use of dogs to locate wildlife scat over large areas was pioneered in 1997 by Sam Wasser, University of Washington Endowed Chair of Conservation Biology and Director of the Center for Conservation Biology. Since then the Center's Conservation Canines program has been non-invasively monitoring a diverse array of threatened and endangered species around the world, including, tigers, orcas, fishers, spotted owls, bears, wolves, caribou, giant armadillos, giant anteaters, pumas, jaguars, and even Pacific pocket mice.

THE CENTER FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY



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CONSERVATION CANINES



A COMPREHENSIVE AND
NON-INVASIVE WILDLIFE
DETECTION PROGRAM

OF THE
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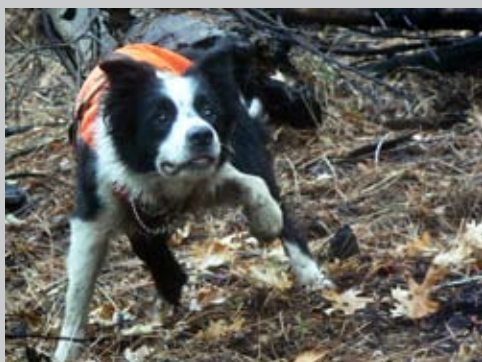


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CONSERVATION CANINES

RESCUE DOGS

The ideal scat detection dog is intensely focused and has an insatiable urge to play. Their obsessive, high-energy personalities make them difficult to maintain as a family pet, so they often end up at the shelter with euthanasia the most likely outcome.



The single-minded drive of these dogs makes them perfect Conservation Canines. They are happy to work all day traversing plains, climbing up mountains, clambering over rocks and fallen trees, and trekking through snow, all with the expectation of reward – playing with their ball – after successfully locating wildlife scat. We rescue these dogs and send them around the world to help save numerous other species.

TRAINING FACILITY

The Conservation Canines' state-of-the-art training facility is located at the University of Washington's Charles L. Pack Forest. Pack Forest comprises 4,300 acres of forested land perfect for training the dogs in a natural setting. Each dog has a spacious indoor-outdoor living area. A large, secure area adjacent to the kennel provides space for daily, supervised social playtime for the dogs.

Accommodations at the facility also provide living space for the dogs' handlers. A conference center with a 200-person capacity is located on site to easily accommodate dog handler trainees and workshops.



WHY SCAT?

Scat is the most abundant and accessible wildlife product in nature and it contains an enormous amount of genetic, physiological, and dietary information about an animal that can be temporally tied to environmental change. DNA from scat is used to determine species, sex, and even individual identities, which enables us to estimate population size and distribution of wildlife over a landscape. DNA and other products from ingested food can also be used to determine diet. Hormone measures provide estimates of stress, nutritional status, and reproductive health;



immunoglobulins in scat reveal immune system competence; and toxins reflect degree and types of exposure to different toxicants. All of this information can be obtained from the same sample – providing a comprehensive health profile over time – without ever seeing the study subject.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Your support for the Conservation Canines allows us to rescue and train more dogs, develop new applications and sustain the facility during breaks between field programs, optimize methods for unique threatened and endangered species, subsidize our work on critical conservation projects with limited funding, and educate other conservation workers around the world in utilizing scat detection dogs.



Donate online at www.conservationbiology.net or mail your tax-deductible contribution to:

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