

# TOP 9 GOAT PREDATORS IN THE UNITED STATES

## 9. Wolves

**HUNTING HABITS:** Mainly nocturnal but will hunt both day and night during winter. Often kill with bites to the neck or throat but will also bite head, back, flanks, and hindquarters. May kill multiple goats in one night.

**IT MIGHT BE A WOLF IF:** Damage is deep in the underlying tissues. May drag a carcass away or consume it at the kill site.

**TRACKS:** Resemble those of large domestic dogs, usually measuring 4¾"x4", and their stride usually measures about 40". Look for blackish scat at least 1" in diameter, usually containing hair.

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## 8. Bears

**HUNTING HABITS:** Black and Grizzly bears live primarily in sparsely forested areas. Bears usually kill by biting the neck or by slapping the victim.

**IT MIGHT BE A BEAR IF:** Torn, mauled, and mutilated carcasses. Goat carcasses may be moved to a secluded area and almost entirely consumed with only the rumen, skin, and large bones left.

**TRACKS:** Look like human footprints with large claws but the little toe may not leave a mark. Look for nervous or panicked goats before and after an attack.

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## 7. Feral Pigs

**HUNTING HABITS:** Opportunistic omnivores that eat vegetation, fruits, grain, fish, reptiles, birds, small mammals, and carrion. Pigs prey on kids at dawn, dusk, and night.

**IT MIGHT BE A PIG IF:** Very little carcass remains. In adult goats, the carcass will be skinned out and the rumen or stomach contents eaten.

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**TRACKS:** Cloven hooves similar to deer or cattle. In mud or soft soil, dewclaws may be visible. Look for signs of rooting, digging, or wallows in the area.

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## 6. Foxes

**HUNTING HABITS:** Primarily rabbits, rodents, birds, insects, and fruit. Sometimes kill young goat kids but if food is scarce, may attack adult goats.

**IT MIGHT BE A FOX IF:** Multiple bites to the throat, neck, and back. Foxes generally feed on the viscera through an entry behind on the ribs. Often carry prey from the kill site and bury uneaten parts.

**TRACKS:** Measure 1¼"-2½" long by 1"-2" wide. Stride measures about 25" between prints. Scat appears long, ropey, and segmented at 1¼"-1¾" in diameter and 3"-6" long.

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## 5. Mountain Lions

**HUNTING HABITS:** Can kill a large number in one night although one or two is common.

**IT MIGHT BE A MOUNTAIN LION IF:**

Carcasses show claw marks on the neck, back, and shoulders, as well as bite marks on the neck, head, and throat. Clean edges in tissue and bone. Scratches on the ground around the carcass measure approximately 35". Often drag their kill to a bushy area to feed, then cover the remains with litter. When surplus killing, they make no effort to drag or cover more than one or two carcasses.

**TRACKS:** Measure 3"-4" long. Scat is often segmented and 1" or larger in diameter, often containing hair and bits of bone.

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#### 4. Bobcat/Lynx

**HUNTING HABITS:** Both bobcat and lynx are carnivores that mainly hunt at night.

**IT MIGHT BE A BOBCAT/LYNX IF:** Similar to that of a mountain lion but with deeper tissue damage from canine teeth spaced at  $\frac{1}{2}$ "-1" apart for bobcats vs  $\frac{1}{2}$ "-2 $\frac{1}{4}$ " for mountain lions. Bobcats scratch 12"-14" in the dirt around the carcass to cover.

**TRACKS:** Similar to mountain lion tracks but measuring just  $1\frac{5}{8}$ "-2  $\frac{1}{2}$ " long by  $1\frac{3}{8}$ "-2 $\frac{5}{8}$ " wide. Scat measures  $\frac{1}{2}$ "-1" in diameter and 3"-9" long, with a smooth outer surface and may be segmented.

#### 3. Predatory Birds

**HUNTING HABITS:** Usually target smaller or weakened livestock, killing seven times as many kids as adult goats.

**IT MIGHT BE A PREDATORY BIRD IF:** Eagles easily kill goats over 25 pounds with multiple talon punctures in the back and upper ribs, leaving a skinned carcass with the skin inside out with head and hooves still attached. The rumen is usually not eaten. Deep punctures are oblong or triangular with three talons, one to three inches apart, and a fourth opposing talon four to six inches from the middle. Vultures and ravens attack goats as a group, pecking at the animal's eyes, nose, or tongue. Carcasses often

entered through the navel or rectum. Presence/absence of blood tells whether the animal was alive or dead when the birds started feeding.

#### 2. Domestic Dogs

**HUNTING HABITS:** Attack at any time of day or night, for the thrill rather than food, often with multiple kills in one night. Dogs account for 22% of confirmed goat kills and are undeterred by large breeds and large horns.

**IT MIGHT BE A DOG IF:** Mutilation to legs, hindquarters, tails, and ears. Attacks last longer and leave more injured survivors.

#### 1. Coyotes

**HUNTING HABITS:** Hunt at night or early dawn. They attack the throat in adult goats, collapsing the trachea, and bite the skull and spinal area of young kids.

**IT MIGHT BE A COYOTE IF:** Abdominal cavity is eaten first and hide and bones are usually left behind. Look for splintered bones, chewed ribs, and scattered pieces of skin, fur, and tendons. Young kids may be missing entirely. Since coyotes are quick, efficient hunters, the rest of the herd is usually calm after the attack and there are rarely injured survivors.

**TRACKS:** Look like domestic dogs', but denser and more oval, that run in a fairly straight line.

