Questions asked to distinguish reliability of a Wolverine sighting – Chris Stermer, CDFW:

1.Typically I begin with questions trying to get at the level of familiarity the person has observing wildlife, such as whether they have observed the following species in the field: Bears (especially bear cubs), Porcupine, Marmot, Fisher, Raccoon, and Badger.

2. I ask what the animal was doing when observed, and whether it was running, walking, or standing still. If it was running or walking, I ask to describe the behavior. Wolverines tend to have a bounding type of trot, which is very different than a porcupine or raccoon.

3. I ask how tall and long (head to tail) the animal was. Wolverines are roughly 2 to 3.5 ft long, and 20 -

4. I ask if they can describe the tail. Wolverines have a prominent thick short tail, while a bear cub does not.

5. I ask to describe the coloration, and whether there were any sharply contrasting colors. If they provide a description that sounds similar to “It had a light-silvery facial mask and a pale buff stripe running laterally from the shoulders along the side to the rump”, I become skeptical since it’s a similar description given in Wikipedia.

6. Typically toward the end of the questioning I ask how far they were from the animal, and whether they were above, below, or at the same elevation of the animal when the observation took place? This tends to put in perspective the reliability of the previous questions.

7. Below are a few references to observe video and images of wolverine and similar looking species:

Wolverine

<ftp://ftp.dfg.ca.gov/WildlifeBranch/PredatorMonitoring/Wolverine%20Images%20and%20Video/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vpse2CkQboY>

Bear cub

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tDyhmJ6N8Q>

Gray fox, badger red fox, porcupine, and others

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vciCpium6Xw>