

# Study attempts to count Pacific fishers

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By Mark Grossi / The Fresno Bee

Minklike Pacific fishers are dying in the Sierra National Forest from mountain lion attacks, disease and vehicles running them c of a years-long study.

The study is intended to eventually help calm a controversy over forest-thinning projects between Oakhurst and Fish Camp, so

Forest advocates and the U.S. Forest Service have clashed over the condition of the fisher population and the need to thin the But no one knows how many fishers live in the area or how they react to thinning projects.

Biologists from the University of California at Berkeley already have studied the secretive animal for 18 months -- capturing so and tracking them in the forest.

The study will continue for several years in an attempt to answer many questions, including whether the animal's numbers are i National Forest.

The discussion of the early results today will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the University of California Center, 550 E. Shaw Ave <https://breeze.ucdavis.edu/snampfisherit2>. The public also can participate by phone at (877) 221-1900, using the pass code 85

Craig Thomas, executive director of the Sacramento-based Sierra Forest Legacy, said his organization will attend the meeting decisions should be made based on the science.

"So many times in the past, there have been studies done, but they've been left on the shelf and ignored," Thomas said.

District Ranger Dave Martin at Bass Lake said the research will help officials understand what happens to the fisher when brus an area.

"The idea is to keep quality fisher habitat but still reduce the fire risk," he said. "That's why we need monitoring before, during a

The latest thinning project is around the community of Sugar Pine, between Oakhurst and Fish Camp. Fishers, which prefer livi in the forest, are in the area, Martin said.

UC Berkeley biologist Rick Sweitzer heads up a monitoring team that tracks the fishers by flying over about 300 square miles c Members of the team fly out of Mariposa six days a week, he said.

"Among other things, we check on the status of the fishers, whether they're alive or dead," Sweitzer said. "We're very confider about whether the population is going up or down."