

**NEWS**

**SIERRA NEVADA, WILDLIFE**

# **THIS GUY WANTS TO EAT YOUR SOCKS**



The Pacific fisher is now so rare, researchers have to hang socks filled with meat in trees just to study them. (USFS)

*By Jesse Garnier*

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# We can't tell you where your missing sock went, but we can tell you what to do with the one that's left behind.

UC Berkeley researchers need about 250 socks each month to use as weasel bait in the Sierra Nevada. A team, led by wildlife biologist Rick Swietzer, is studying the effects of forest thinning on wildlife, including the [Pacific fisher](#), a large weasel. Socks prove an ideal medium for hanging weasel bait. In trees, of course. Where weasels live.

Or unfortunately, sometimes where they used to live. Once prevalent throughout the Sierra Nevada, the habitat of the Pacific fisher has shriveled to just two distinct pockets in the northern and southern Sierras.

Since they're so rare, the team fills old socks with meat to lure the Fishers into the open, where motion-activated cameras snap away, collecting valuable information.

Sweitzer tells KQED he goes through 2,000 socks a year, and prefers this method of sock-raising to the old-fashioned way:

*“My real motivation for this sock drive is so that I don't have to stand in line at Walmart with two or three cartloads full of all the socks I can find. I get a lot of stares and a lot of interesting questions.”*

Source: **KQED NEWS**

More at SFBay: <http://sfbay.ca/2011/12/19/this-guy-wants-to-eat-your-socks/>