

## How to Minimize ORV Impacts in the Alpine

Stay on existing hard-bottomed trails to avoid damaging habitat.

Be aware of wildlife, especially during sensitive times of the year. For example, caribou are most sensitive to disturbance in the alpine during the calving and rutting periods in May/June and October. Sheep are sensitive to disturbance during the lambing period in June and July.



### It's a crime!

Under the Yukon Wildlife Act, it is illegal to harass any wildlife or use a vehicle to chase, drive, flush, exhaust or fatigue wildlife for the purpose of hunting or to assist another person hunting.

Under the Yukon Environment Act, every adult resident who has reasonable grounds to believe that a person has impaired or is likely to impair the natural environment may commence an action in the Supreme Court.

The Yukon backcountry is shared by many outdoor enthusiasts. While it may not seem like one person makes much of an impact, the effects are cumulative and they add up. We all have a responsibility to our outdoor home.

### Let's work together

to ensure the Yukon wilderness stays healthy and accessible for future generations.

*Only You Can Keep the Yukon Wild.  
Ride Smart and Stay on Trails.*

If you see someone damaging the natural environment or harassing wildlife, contact your local Conservation Office or call

**Turn in Poachers & Polluters  
(TIPP Line): 1-800-661-0525**



*We are working together to reduce ORV impacts on the land and can provide you with more information. With your support, we can manage ORV use in a way that works for everyone.*

- Klondike Snowmobile Association
- Yukon Off-Road Riders Association
  - Trails Only Yukon Association
- Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon
  - Yukon Conservation Society
  - Yukon Fish & Game Association

# ORVs and the Alpine



Mountainous terrain and high snowfall make alpine areas in the Yukon attractive to skiers and snowmobilers. Camping, hiking, mountaineering, horse back riding, ATVing and hunting are popular summer and fall activities. The alpine is an environmentally sensitive area and is particularly susceptible to damage by ORVs.

## ORV Impacts on Soil & Vegetation

Soil in alpine areas is typically shallow and vegetation growth is especially slow because of the severe winters and short growing season. These factors mean that the alpine is especially sensitive to disturbance and the effects of ORVs can be drastic and long-lasting.

ATVs may dig ruts into the soil and uproot lichens, which can take decades to regrow. Lichens help control erosion in windy alpine areas and are also an important food source for caribou, Dall sheep and mountain goats.

Permafrost is ground (soil or rock) that remains at or below 0°C over at least two consecutive winters and an intervening summer. Permafrost thawing, increased erosion and long lasting damage can result if vegetation and soil is removed by ORVs.

ORVs may spread the seeds of invasive plant species into alpine areas which can result in loss of native species and food sources for wildlife.



## ORV Impacts on Wildlife

Freezing temperatures and deep snow may make winter the most difficult time of the year for wildlife. Disturbance from snowmobiles can result in additional stress and energy loss at this critical time of year.

The nests of birds in alpine regions are built on the ground and are susceptible to disturbance or destruction by ORVs.



ATV use in the alpine during the calving period may displace caribou out of their traditional calving areas. Since caribou use these high elevation areas to space themselves from predators at a vulnerable time, displacement into less preferred habitat could lead to increased predation.

Snowmobile trails provide hard packed travel corridors which allow wolves to move into the alpine and may make hunting moose and caribou easier for wolf packs.

## Alpine Plants

Alpine tundra occurs at high altitudes where trees are not able to grow due to lack of moisture, cold temperatures and short growing season. The dominant vegetation is often grasses, mosses, wildflowers, lichens and small shrubs like bearberry.

The sub-alpine area exists between the woodland and the alpine zone. Tree growth is stunted due to the harsh environment. Typical vegetation includes subalpine fir, shrub birch (“buck brush”) and willow.

## Alpine and Sub-alpine Wildlife

The alpine and sub-alpine zones are important habitats for wildlife including caribou, grizzly bear, black bear, Dall sheep, moose, wolf, hare, lynx, wolverine and mountain goat. The pika and hoary marmot are only found in mountainous regions of the Yukon.

Many Yukon birds use alpine and sub-alpine areas, including the golden eagle, the rock and willow ptarmigan, American robin, peregrine falcon, cliff swallow, dark eyed junco, golden crowned sparrow and the mountain bluebird.