

Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*)



The Canada Lynx appears mainly in the boreal forest of North America which is also occupied by the snowshoe hare.

Biology:

The Canada Lynx is -besides the Bobcat and the Cougar- one of the three Canadian members of the cat family.

The Canada Lynx has a short, black-tipped tail, long legs and large feet with retractable claws which it can primarily for seizing prey and fighting and toes which it can spread in soft snow. Its winter fur is light grey and slightly mottled with long hairs and its underfur is brownish. Its summer coat however is much shorter and has a definite reddish brown cast. The Lynx has large eyes and ears - the ear tufts are black- which makes acute seeing and hearing during hunting possible.

Behaviour:

Generally, the Lynx inhabits forested wilderness. Its favourite areas are old growth boreal forests with a dense undercover of thickets and windfalls. However it would also populate other types of habitat as long as they contain a minimal forest cover and an adequate numbers of prey. The Lynx almost preys exclusively on the snowshoe hare- especially in winter. Since snowshoe hare populations follow a 10-year cycle, Lynx number also fluctuate dramatically and build a peak when hare population increasesv and then crash.

In summer the Lynx's diet is more varied. But even in summer, hares remain the main prey additional to grouse, voles, mice, squirrels and foxes.

The Canada Lynx normally hunt at night. Because they can't run fast for long distances, they stalk or ambush their prey at close range. The very common strategy is to lie in wait besides one by the snowshoe hare well-used trail. Lynx usually watch and listen for their prey, but they do not track it by smell. Male Lynxes hunt alone, except briefly during the mating season.

The size of the home range varies with the numbers of lynxes and snowshoe hares, available cover and season. When there are fewer hares, each Lynx needs a larger area on which it can hunt. Daily travelling distances for Canada Lynxes can range from less than one kilometre to 19 km.

In summer, home ranges are typically larger than in winter. Home ranges may overlap, especially when the Lynx neighbours have different ages and sexes. Generally, home ranges of adults don't overlap with adults of same sex.

Thanks to its large feet which are covered by a dense growth of coarse hair and its big paws, the Lynx is able to travel over snow. It is also able to spread its toes in soft snow, like the snowshoe hare does, so its “snowshoes” are expanded still farther.

Mating season is each year during February and March. 60 to 65 days later, the kittens- usually four are born in April/ May. Lynxes seldom uses an underground den, the young may be born under brush piles, uprooted trees or in hollow logs which provide shelter from rain and cold. The kittens are reared solely by the female.

Management

In forests which are growing back after disruption by wildfires, the hare populations increases which makes it a favoured ecosystem for lynx populations.

In general, human activities don't seem to be a threat for lynx populations. Although the Lynx is a wilderness animal, human settlement haven't reduce its range so far.

