



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The Canada Lynx

Lynx canadensis

What is a Canada lynx?

The Canada lynx is a secretive, forest-dwelling cat of northern latitudes and high mountains.

The Canada lynx is a medium-sized cat, similar to the bobcat. It has longer legs and very large well-furred paws, impressive adaptations for maneuvering through deep winter snow. It also has long tufts on the ears and a short, black-tipped tail.

What is the range of the lynx?

The historical and present North American range of the Canada lynx includes Alaska, Canada, and many of the other northern 48 States. Therefore, it is difficult to determine either the historic or current location of resident lynx populations. The range of the lynx includes the following 14 States: Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine ([see accompanying range map](#)).

What do Canada lynx eat?

Lynx are highly specialized to hunt their primary prey, the snowshoe hare (*Lepus americanus*). The lynx's long legs and large feet act like snowshoes so they can effectively track and catch hares. In fact, in most places, lynx are so tied to snowshoe hares that lynx populations rise and fall in cycle with snowshoe hare numbers. Lynx also will eat mice, voles, and birds.

What kind of habitat do lynx require?

Older, mature forests with downed trees and windfalls provide cover for denning sites, escape, and protection from severe weather. Lynx feed primarily on snowshoe hare, which live in dense thickets of younger trees and shrubs.



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In the Great Lakes area and the northeastern United States, lynx habitat is forest that is a mix of evergreens and hardwoods, such as maple and birch. In the Rocky Mountains and Cascade Mountains, lynx live in the spruce/fir forests of the high mountains.

What is threatening the lynx?

Canada lynx likely have never been as abundant in the lower 48 States as they were in northern Canada and Alaska because there is less lynx and snowshoe hare habitat at the southern part of the range.

The lynx occurs predominantly on Federal lands, especially in the West. The Service concluded that the threat to the lynx in the contiguous United States is the lack of guidance to conserve the species in current Federal

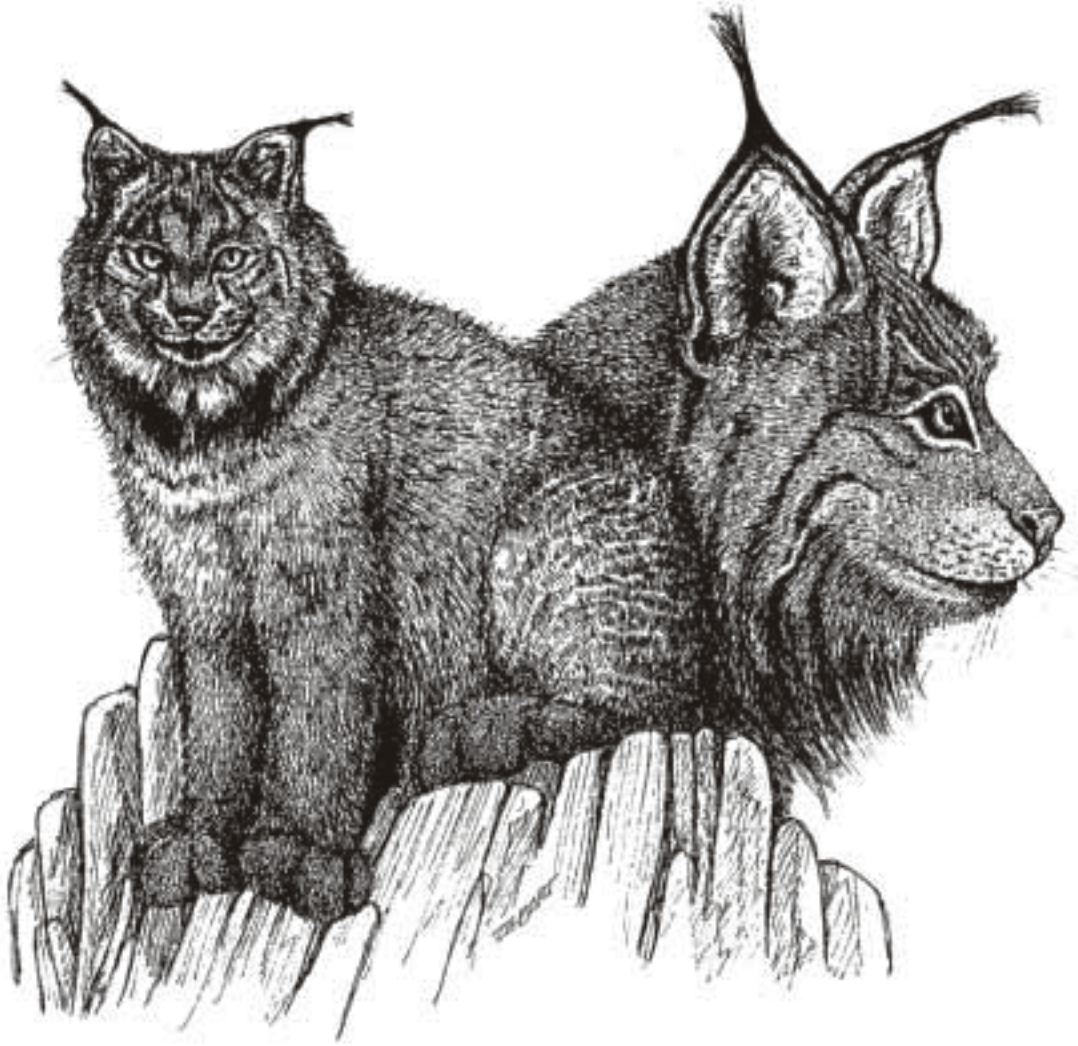
land management plans. The agency is working with other Federal Agencies to conserve lynx habitat.

What is being done to protect the lynx?

Because forests are constantly changing, the lynx habitat of today may not be lynx habitat in the future without careful planning. It is important that current forest management is undertaken in a way that will provide for and sustain lynx habitat in the future.

Agencies are reviewing lynx habitat needs across the landscape and cooperating with each other to ensure that lynx habitat is maintained or created.

The Forest Service has signed a Lynx Conservation Agreement to promote the conservation of lynx and lynx



*USDA Forest
Service artwork
by Cherie Ziebart*

habitat on Forest Service lands. Additionally, the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service also are developing lynx conservation agreements.

The Forest Service also is undertaking several analyses to amend their forest plans to incorporate direction designed to conserve the lynx. These actions will provide immediate benefits for lynx.

What can you do to help lynx?

■ Educate yourself about planned activities in lynx habitat. Your support of efforts that will benefit lynx is needed.

■ Report lynx sightings.

■ Report cases of lynx poaching or other illegal activity in lynx habitat.

The cooperation and coordination of private citizens, industry, State, Federal, and tribal groups will be necessary to recover Canada lynx and ensure the lynx remains a special and unique part of our wildlife heritage.

For more information, contact:

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or visit our lynx web site at:
www.r6.fws.gov/endspp/lynx