



Canada lynx

(Lynx canadensis)

Description: The lynx is a secretive forest-dwelling cat of northern latitudes and high mountains. It is medium-sized, similar in size to the bobcat, but appears larger because of its long legs. It has unique, long (over one inch), black tufts of fur on the ears and a short, black-tipped tail. The winter coat is light gray and faintly spotted, and the summer coat is much shorter and has a reddish-brown cast. Lynx have unusually large, densely haired feet to help travel over snow. Adult males average about 33 1/2 inches long and weigh 26 pounds. Females are about 32 inches long and average 19 pounds.



Photo credit: Kyle Lima

Mating occurs during March, and 1 to 7 young are born 60-65 days later in May. Maine litters produce one to four kittens. Lynx dens in Maine consist of a bed under thick regenerating fir or elevated downed logs. The female raises the kittens. Young leave the den area in late June or early July and stay with the female for a full year before leaving their mother in late winter.

Lynx are highly specialized to hunt snowshoe hare, which comprise over 75 percent of their diet. When hares are abundant, lynx may consume one or two a day. In the summer, the diet is more varied and may include grouse, small mammals, and squirrels. In winter, carrion (dead animals) may supplement the diet.



Habitat: Critical habitat is designated in northern Maine ([link](#)). Lynx habitat is widespread through northern Maine. Foraging habitat consists of large patches of young, dense stands of spruce and fir approximately 12 to 40 years-old. Lynx habitat is created after a major forest disturbance (clearcutting, fire, insect damage). These stands have dense understory vegetation that support high densities of snowshoe hares, the primary food of snowshoe hares. Lynx also use areas of hardwood and mature softwood to travel between foraging areas.

Occurrence in Maine: Lynx occur in the boreal forest in northern Maine and sometimes in eastern Maine ([link to species range map?](#)). Lynx occur in areas of deep, fluffy snow where they have a competitive advantage over bobcats and other predators.

Survey: Lynx can be detected using snow track or camera trap surveys over large township-sized areas.