

Bobcat

Lynx rufus

Kingdom	Animalia
Phylum	Chordata
Class	Mammalia
Order	Carnivora
Family	Felidae



Native to: North America, Southern Canada down to Mexico.

Status: Least Concern

In Mexico, bobcats are persecuted as sheep predators and are frequently killed by farmers. They are still hunted and trapped for their fur throughout most of their range. Habitat destruction and the ever-expanding human population limit their ranges. Habitat loss is viewed as the primary threat to bobcats in all three range countries.

Appearance & Lifespan

The bobcat has a gray to brown coat, whiskered face, and black-tufted ears. It has distinctive black bars on its forelegs and a black-tipped, stubby tail, from which it derives its name. Its coat is spotted from birth to help camouflage it from predators and prey. This cat has sharp hearing and vision, and a good sense of smell.

The bobcat is about twice the size of an average house cat. It can be 17-23 inches in height and 25-41 inches in length. Male bobcats usually weigh 16-28 lbs. and females 10-18 lbs. The lifespan of a bobcat is about 12-15 years but in the right conditions they can live up to 25 years.



Behavior & Reproduction

Bobcats are usually solitary and territorial animals, females never share a territory with each other. Male territories can sometimes overlap. Territory sizes are extremely varied – generally 25-30 square miles for males and about five square miles for females. Bobcats use several methods to mark their territorial boundaries, including claw marks and deposits of urine or feces.

Bobcats like to live in dens, they may have one main den and several other small dens in their territory. The main den is usually a cave or rock shelter but could also be under a fallen tree as long as it is a protected place, the other dens are used for shelter while hunting in areas farther away from the main den.

Mating season for the bobcat is usually late winter but anytime during the year is possible. In the spring females usually give birth to 1-6 kittens after a gestation period of 50-70 days. The kittens begin eating solid food at around two months of age and begin learning to hunt with their mother when they are 5 months old. When they are between 8 and 11 months, the kittens are evicted from their mother's territory and must find their own.

Ecology & Habitat

Bobcats are found in wooded areas, brush land, semi-deserts, mountainous areas, forest edges and swampland environments. A habitat dense with vegetation and lots of prey is ideal. Bobcats are excellent hunters, stalking prey with stealth and patience, then capturing their meals with one great leap.

Favorite foods for the bobcat are rabbit and hares but they will also eat rodents, birds, bats, and even deer.

At the zoo our bobcat eats horse meat mixed with beef organs, beef bones and pork hocks.

Did You Know?

1. Bobcat eyes are yellow with black pupils.
2. Bobcats are excellent climbers, and will swim when they need to, but will normally avoid water.
3. It is common for a bobcat to walk 4 miles in a day.

