

Canada Lynx Documented in Northern New Hampshire

By Lindsay Webb, NH Fish and Game

Canada lynx are commonly found throughout northern Maine and Canada, and in the past decade, roaming individuals have made their way over to NH. This fall however, 4 Canada lynx kittens were video-taped in Pittsburg, NH. Documentation of kittens means we may have a resident population, not just transients, and this breeding population confirms that NH has the habitat and prey available to support lynx. The Fish & Game Department is now actively engaged in formal surveys for this elusive cat. Canada lynx are a state endangered and a federally threatened species in New Hampshire.



At about 3 feet long and 15-30 pounds, Canada lynx are at least twice the size of the average house cat. They have long, strong legs; short tails; prominent ear tufts; and long sideburn-style hair on the sides of their face. Lynx are often recognized by their huge, furry paws, which help them travel over deep snow. Because of lynx's reliance on snowshoe hare, their preferred habitat is young, regenerating forests that offer excellent hare habitat. New Hampshire is at the southern end of the Canada lynx's natural range.

The weather this winter hasn't been very cooperative for getting out on a snowmobile to cover the ground NHFG biologists need to survey for Canada lynx. Luckily, we did our homework and keyed in on the best habitat areas in Northern NH and in late January, Canada lynx tracks were again confirmed. Survey efforts will continue through the winter and plans are being made for additional monitoring through the spring and summer.

So what does this mean for conservation efforts in Northern NH? Lynx are a wide-ranging mammal and conservation efforts that include protection of large unfragmented blocks of land that include management to promote young forests (that support dense populations of snowshoe hare) will benefit the Canada lynx. More information can be found in NH's Wildlife Action Plan, Appendix A: Mammals, http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/wildlife_plan.htm

Work of NH Fish and Game's Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program is made possible by the generous donations of individuals and businesses, which help N.H. Fish and Game qualify for critical Federal and State matching funds. Tax-deductible contributions to help fund the New Hampshire Canada lynx effort and other critical Nongame Program projects may be sent to the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301. (Make checks payable to NH Fish and Game/Nongame Program.) For a print-and-mail contribution form, visit www.wildnh.com/Wildlife/Nongame/support_nongame.htm.