

# 7a

## Cats: Bobcat & Lynx

*The cats of Yellowstone are seldom seen and little known. Of the three living in the park, cougars are better studied and are discussed in their own section. The little information available on bobcats and lynx is summarized below.*



### **Bobcat** *Lynx rufus*

#### *Number in Yellowstone*

Unknown, but generally widespread.

#### *Where to see*

- Rarely seen; most reports from rocky areas and near rivers.
- Typical habitat: rocky areas, conifer forests.

#### *Behavior and Size*

- Adult: 15–30 pounds; 31–34 inches long.

- Color ranges from red-brown fur with indistinct markings to light buff with dark spotting; short tail; ear tufts.
- Distinguish from lynx: has several black rings that do not fully circle the tail; no black tip on tail, shorter ear tufts, smaller track (2").
- Solitary, active between sunset and sunrise.
- Eats rabbits, hares, voles, mice, red squirrels, wrens, sparrows, grouse; may take deer and adult pronghorn.

### **Lynx**

*Lynx canadensis*

#### *Number in Yellowstone*

Few; 112 known observations.

#### *Where to see*

- Very rarely seen.
- Typical habitat: cold conifer forests.

#### *Behavior and Size*

- Adult: 16–35 pounds, 26–33 inches long.
- Gray brown fur with white, buff, brown on throat and ruff; tufted ears;

short tail; hind legs longer than front.

- Distinguish from bobcat: black rings on tail are complete; tail tip solid black; longer ear tufts; larger track.

- Wide paws with fur in and around pads; allows lynx to run across snow.
- Track: 4–5 inches.
- Solitary, diurnal and nocturnal.
- Eats primarily snowshoe hares, especially in winter; also rodents, rabbits, birds, red squirrels, and other small mammals, particularly in summer.

#### *Research*

After a four-year research project to document the number and distribution of lynx in the park, completed in 2004, researchers confirmed lynx existed and reproduced in the central and eastern portions of the park.

*In December 2007, Fred Paulsen, a Xanterra employee in Yellowstone, photographed this lynx along the Gibbon River. In 2010, visitors also saw a lynx, which was wearing a radio collar—indicating it may have come from Colorado.*

