

## Canada Lynx - *Lynx canadensis*

Abundance: Rare

Status: NSS1 (Aa)

NatureServe: G5 S1

Population Status: population size and distribution are restricted and extirpation is possible; no recent breeding records; In the contiguous US, it is listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act and critical habitat is being designated for conservation management

Limiting Factor: Habitat (and Human Activity and Climate Change): limiting factors are severe and continue to increase in severity; habitat was fragmented historically and continues to be removed

Comment:

### Introduction

The Canada lynx occurs throughout the boreal forests of Alaska and Canada and extends south into portions of the Continental United States. In Wyoming, it occurs in the western mountains on the Bridger-Teton, Shoshone, and Targhee national forests, and Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks. It has also been documented in the Uinta, Bighorn, and Laramie mountain ranges as well. The Canada lynx is considered rare in Wyoming.

### Habitat

The Canada lynx inhabits mountain regions, primarily at elevations between 2356 and 2869 m (7730 to 9413 ft) and on slopes of 8 to 12%. It usually occurs in extensive tracts of dense coniferous forest, primarily Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir. It feeds primarily on snowshoe hares, especially during winter, and the prime consideration for lynx is habitat for snowshoe hares. Older forests with a substantial understory of conifers or small patches of shrubs and young trees provide good quality lynx foraging habitat. The most important component of denning habitat is large woody debris, especially dense tangles of fallen trees and root wads. Such preferred habitat is relatively limited in Wyoming and occurs primarily in multiple use areas of the Shoshone and Bridger-Teton National Forests. The National Parks and designated wilderness areas in Wyoming tend to be marginal lynx habitat as they are either dominated by dry even aged lodgepole pine forests, or too steep and high elevation.

### Problems

- h Surveys have documented a continued population decline.
- h Extirpation very likely.
- h Although suitable habitat in Wyoming is widely distributed, it is naturally fragmented and very limited. Geographical isolation of existing populations may leave them vulnerable to demographic and genetic stochasticity.
- h Habitat specialist that occurs in a disjunct pattern within a limited portion of the state.
- h No ongoing efforts to delineate important habitats in Wyoming.
- h Existing disagreement about status and distribution of historic populations in Wyoming.

### Conservation Actions

- h Delineate important habitats and work cooperatively with land management agencies to maintain these within the designated areas
- h Designate important habitats, habitat corridors, and identify where habitat conservation and management efforts should focus to protect, enhance, or improve suitable habitat.
- h Monitor population densities and trends. If monitoring data show that populations are declining, provide information to the WGFD Commission to allow them to evaluate and consider an appropriate response.
- h Design vegetation treatments, fire management plans, and grazing regimes in habitat that mimic and restore natural landscape patterns and disturbance processes, retain and recruit old growth and woody debris, maintain habitat connectivity, and maintain the native composition of herbaceous plant and shrub communities.
- h Work cooperatively with the US Forest Service to conduct surveys for species in all potential habitat.
- h Integrate management actions with those that benefit other boreal forest carnivore species (e.g., American marten, Canada lynx, Wolverine, etc).
- h Determine the effects of recreational and commercial activities on populations.

#### Monitoring/Research

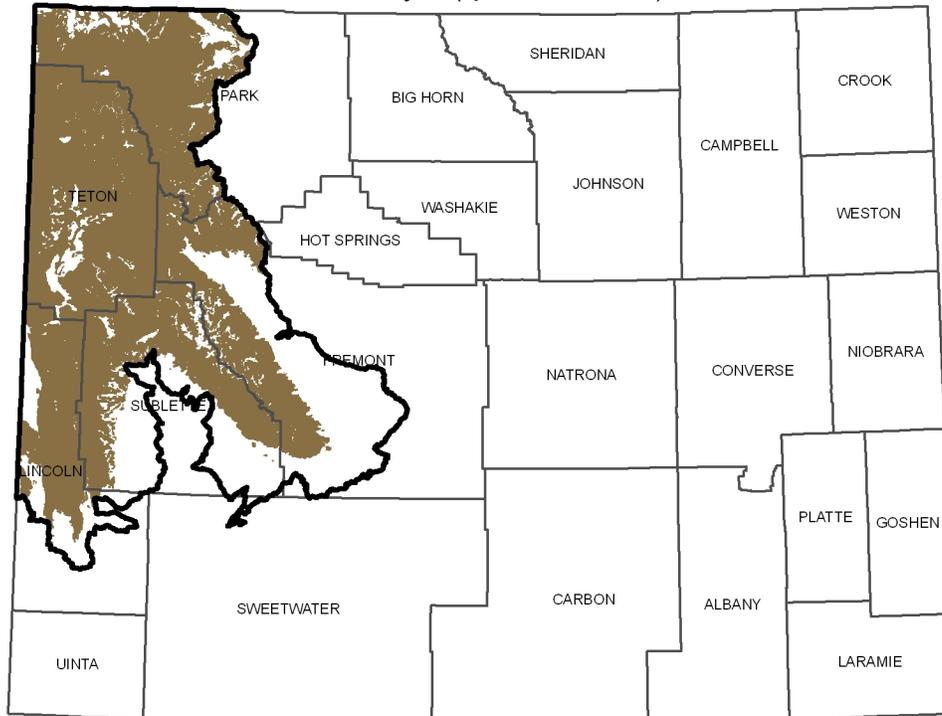
No on-going monitoring.

#### Recent Developments

Surveys since 2005 have continued to document lynx that have migrated from CO and no native lynx. These individuals from CO appear to be the only lynx in Wyoming. Native populations are believed to be nearly extirpated. Individuals have not remained long in WY after detection.

#### References

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SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges and predicted distributions for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: April 2010. Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. Note that brown indicates the predicted distribution of the species; heavy black lines indicate outermost boundaries of possible occurrence.