



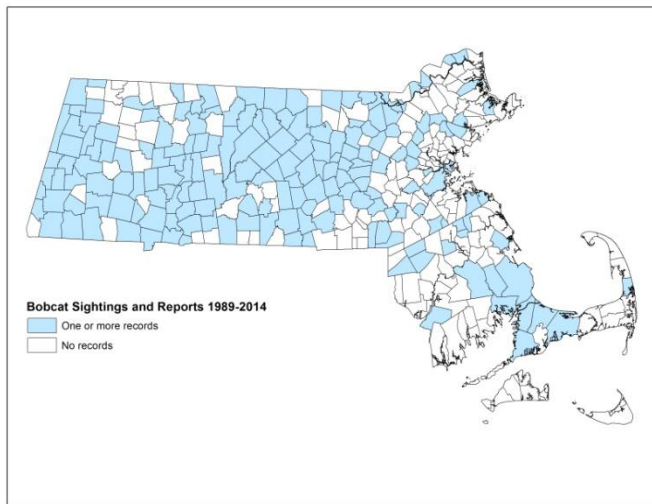
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Bobcat *Lynx rufus*

State Status: **None**
Federal Status: **None**

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: Bobcats are medium-sized feline carnivores with a short tail, tufted ears, a facial ruff, rather small head, and long legs relative to body length. They have short, dense fur occurring in a variety of color patterns, but typically yellowish or reddish on the upper parts and white with black spots underneath. The tail has stripes or bands only on the upper surface. The feet have functional toes with sharp, retractile claws. Adult males weigh 6 to 18 kg and adult females 4 to 15 kg.

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE: Bobcats are common in western, central and northeastern Massachusetts, and reports are increasing in numbers in the southeastern counties. Bobcats may be hunted and trapped in Wildlife Management Zones 1 – 8. The Division does not currently estimate the Bobcat population, but monitors trends in harvest and bobcat reports.



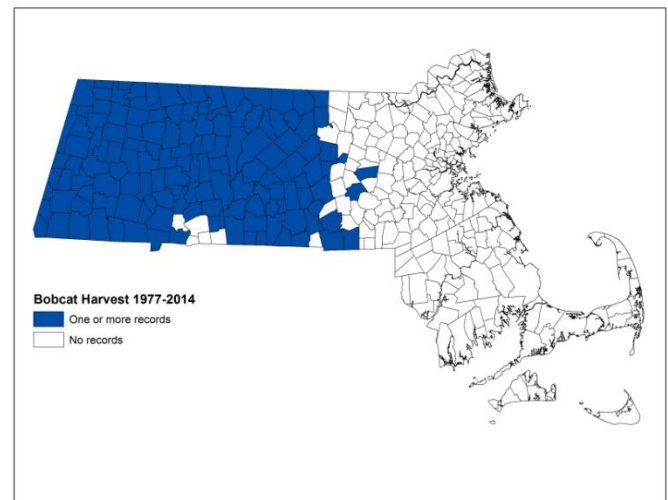
Massachusetts Towns with Bobcat sightings and reports (1989-2014)

HABITAT DESCRIPTION: In North America, bobcats occupy a wide range of habitats from boreal forests to deserts, and rocky mountains to humid bottomlands. However, they typically prefer rugged country interspersed with dense cover supporting an



Photo by Bill Byrne, MassWildlife

abundance of medium-sized prey and which allows hunting by ambush or stalking. Typical bobcat habitat in western Massachusetts includes regenerating forest, small hardwood stands, and other early successional habitats. In winter, bobcats often select cliffs and dense stands of spruce or hemlock-hardwoods. These choices undoubtedly reflect availability of and access to prey. Dense understory vegetation and rocky ledges are important structural components of bobcat habitat.



Massachusetts Towns with Bobcat harvest records (1970-2014)

A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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THREATS: Bobcats may be threatened by: (1) changes in habitat quantity and quality; (2) human-induced mortality; (3) interspecific competition; and (4) the impact of parasites and diseases. The key management needs for bobcat include: (1) development and implementation of accurate survey or census techniques; (2) protection or improvements of habitat for bobcat and prey species; (3) refinements in harvest management to better match variations in abundance in space and time; (4) improving public knowledge and support for management options; (5) evaluating the effectiveness and need for federal oversight; and (6) understanding and monitoring the impact of diseases and parasites. Long-term studies are essential to most of these needs.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, E.M., and M.J. Lovallo. 2003. Bobcat and lynx. Pages 758-786 in G.A. Feldhamer, B.C. Thompson, and J.A. Chapman (eds.) *Wild Mammals of North America: Biology, Management, and Conservation*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland.
- Berendzen, S.L. 1985. Ecology and status of the bobcat in western Massachusetts. M.S. thesis, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, 95pp.
- Wolf, A., and G.F. Hubert, Jr. 1998. Status and management of bobcats in the United States over three decades: 1970's – 1990's. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 26: 287-294.

For more information on Bobcat from MassWildlife, see: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/fish-wildlife-plants/mammals/bobcat-in-mass-generic.html>