



Species Factsheet No. 3: The Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*)

Description:

Medium sized cat with longish legs, short tail and tufted ears. Yellowish brown coat with spots on legs and sometimes body. Adults weigh between 12-35kg; females are smaller than males. Size around 80cm-1.3m in length and 60-75cm height at shoulder.

Range:

The lynx was once present throughout Europe, except the Iberian Peninsula, where it is replaced by the Iberian Lynx (*Lynx pardinus*), and is one of the widest ranging cat species. There are currently around 7,000 lynx in Europe, concentrated in Norway, Sweden and Finland, with scattered populations in the Baltic States, the Carpathian Mountains, the Balkans and France, Switzerland, Germany and Austria.

Habitat:

Lynx are now usually found in coniferous or mixed forest, but they are also at home in open woodland, above the tree line in mountainous regions, and on open tundra.

Food:

Lynx specialise in hunting small ungulates, such as roe deer, reindeer and chamois. Rabbits and hares are also important prey species. Birds and larger ungulates, including red deer and wild boar are also taken.

Lynx will also prey on livestock, including sheep, goats and poultry.

Behaviour:

Lynx are solitary animals, both males and females hold territories ranging from 25-2,000 km², female territories tend to be smaller. Males share their home ranges with one or two females, and may also overlap with other males. Lynx are mainly active at dusk and at night, resting during the day.

Reproduction and lifespan:

Lynx can live up to 17 years in the wild. Main causes of mortality are traffic accidents, hunting and poaching, with rabies and parvovirus also a factor.

Sexually mature at around two years, mating takes place February - April, litters of 1-5 kittens are born 67-74 days later. Young stay with their mother for the first year.

Conservation and legal status:

Classified as "Least Concerned" by the IUCN, Listed in Appendix II of CITES as not threatened but needs trade controls.

Eurasian Lynx are listed in Appendix III of the Bern Convention as a protected fauna species, but in Appendix IV of the EC Habitats Directive as a species in need of strict protection.

Hunting is still legal in a number of countries.

Threats and conflicts:

Loss of habitat and prey base due to forestry activities, development and expansion of agriculture are the main threat to lynx populations

Competition with hunters, who blame lynx for reductions in abundance of game species such as roe deer, is a main source of conflict. Damage to livestock is low, but does occur, mainly affecting sheep farmers and reindeer herders. There is considered to be no danger to humans, although instances of lynx attacking dogs have been reported.