

Outdoor Recreation

is

Outdoor Education

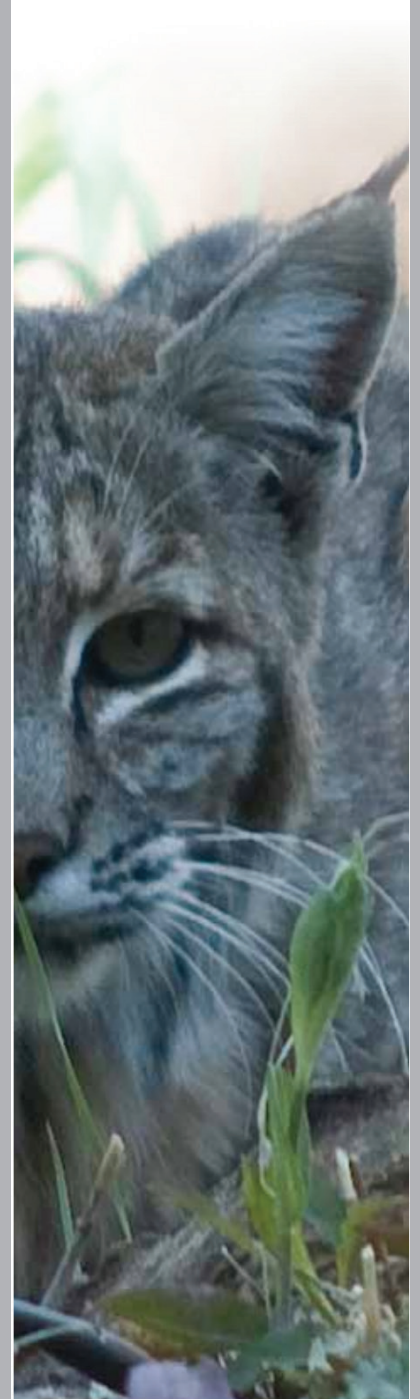
Learning About New Mexico's Wildlife Bobcat

Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)

Bobcats survive in a variety of geographic areas and life zones. Found in every county in New Mexico, this highly adaptable member of the cat family can range from sandy deserts in the *lower Sonoran zone* (southern sections of the Rio Grande and Pecos valleys and in the state's southwestern corner, usually occurring at elevations below 4,500 feet) to high mountains in the alpine. Although elusive and difficult to observe, the bobcat's habitat can even include densely populated urban areas.

Sometimes confused with the lynx, bobcats are much smaller, weighing 12–40 pounds. Their ears are more erect, sharply pointed and have prominent tufts. Other distinguishing differences can be recognized on the body. The bobcat has spotted flanks which are mottled with black, gray and reddish colors, compared with the lynx which has a larger solid gray body. Other differences include the bobcat's striped face and legs and its short tail with alternating rings of dark and light hair and a spotted end. The lynx has a longer, solid-gray tail with a black tip.

Bobcats depend on evasiveness and seclusion to avoid predators, including coyotes, mountain lions and especially humans. Bobcats fortunately survived predator control programs conducted in the early 1900s, when bounties were offered and poisons used to control livestock predation. Thankfully, bobcats have survived and today are protected by New Mexico state law. Bobcats may be hunted or trapped with a license during the designated season in winter months.



New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

www.wildlife.state.nm.us

888-248-6866

