
Canada Lynx

Lynx canadensis

Mammalia — Carnivora — Felidae

CONSERVATION STATUS / CLASSIFICATION

Rangewide: Secure (G5)
Statewide: Critically imperiled (S1)
ESA: Threatened
USFS: Region 1: No status; Region 4: Sensitive
BLM: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, and Candidate (Type 1)
IDFG: Furbearing animal; Threatened

BASIS FOR INCLUSION

Threatened under the U.S. Endangered Species Act; habitat threats and lack of trend data for Idaho

TAXONOMY

Two subspecies recognized. The subspecies, *L. c. canadensis*, is found in Idaho.

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

The Canada lynx occurs throughout Canada and Alaska, in the extreme northeastern and north-central U.S., and in the northern and central Rocky Mountains. Within Idaho populations occur north of the Salmon River in the west and north of the Caribou Range in the east (McKelvey et al. 2000). The total population size in Idaho is unknown, but it is thought to be less than 100 individuals (C. Harris, IDFG, pers. comm.). Periodically, populations may be augmented by dispersers from Canadian populations (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1998).

POPULATION TREND

Population trends within Idaho are unknown. In the contiguous U.S., overall numbers and range have been substantially reduced from historical levels.

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

In Idaho the Canada lynx inhabits montane and subalpine coniferous forests typically above 1200 m (4000 ft) (McKelvey et al. 2000). Habitat used during foraging is usually early successional forest. Dens are usually in mature forests (Groves et al. 1997a). Individuals are wide-ranging and require large tracts of forest. The Canada lynx preys on the snowshoe hare, particularly during the winter, as well as a variety of birds and other small mammals.

ISSUES

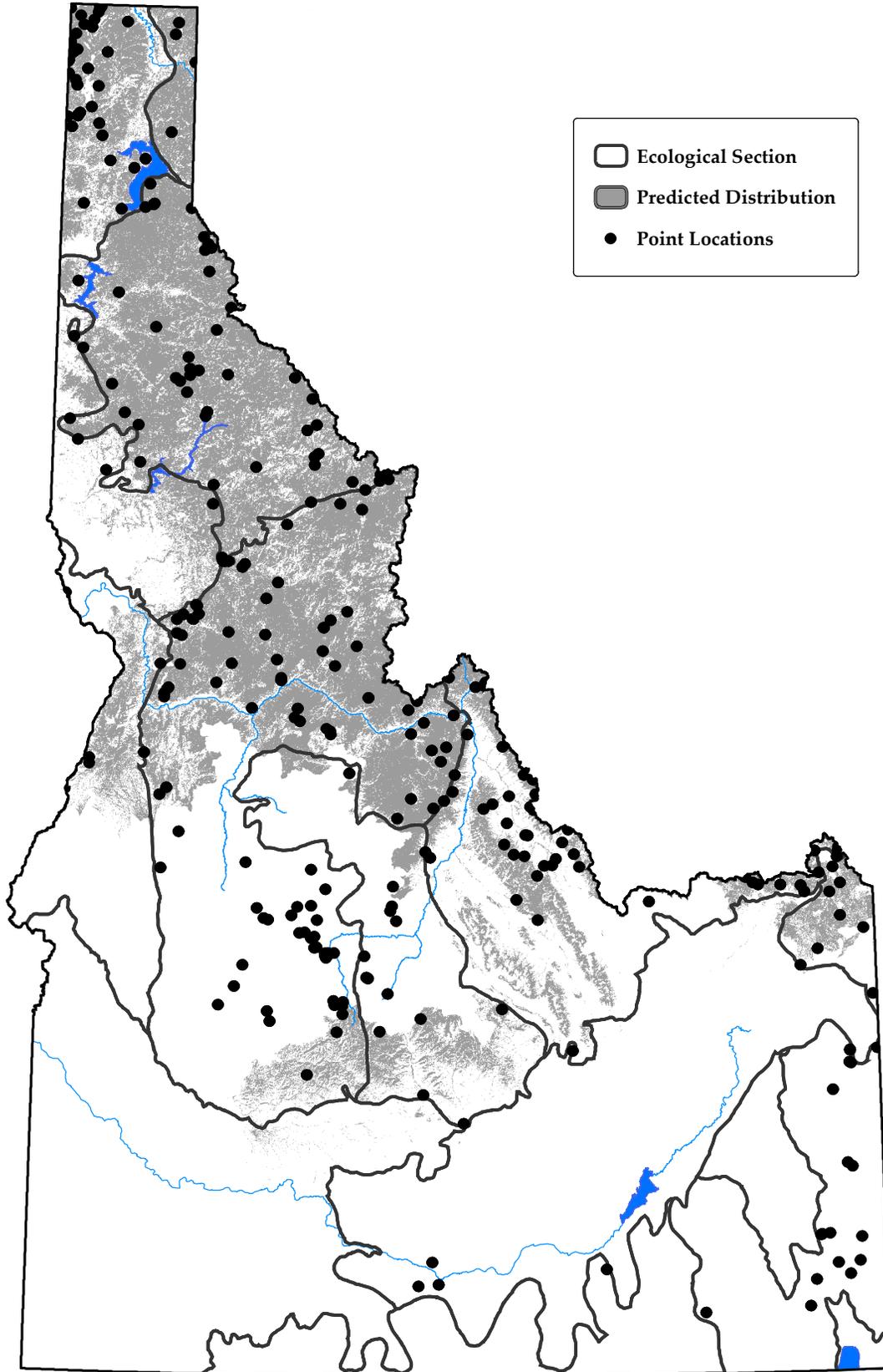
Habitat degradation, fragmentation, and loss are the primary threats to lynx populations. Fire suppression and timber management practices have affected landscape-scale characteristics of vegetation composition and structure. Increasing road densities causes habitat fragmentation and also leads to increased human disturbance. Habitat

alterations and increased access have also been associated with increased competition with coyotes and bobcats; snow compaction from snowmobiles allows coyotes, bobcats, and other predators to access lynx habitat. Although, there is no legal harvest of lynx in Idaho, mortality may result from illegal or incidental harvest by hunters and trappers. The Canada lynx may be especially susceptible to trapping, which has been a significant source of mortality (Ruggiero et al. 2000). Increased winter recreation (snowmobiles, ski area development) may cause disturbance that results in displacement from habitat.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Information is needed regarding the current status of Idaho populations. Timber management practices designed to maintain or enhance habitat for the snowshoe hare and other prey may help sustain lynx populations. Management practices, such as prescribed burns, that increase habitat complexity at landscape scales by creating a variety of seral stages, may also improve habitat. Management road densities and human disturbance is needed in occupied habitat. Trapper education that addresses incidental take is currently addressed by many state and federal wildlife agencies.

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Map created on September 22, 2005
and prepared by Idaho Conservation Data Center.
Sources: Point data are from Idaho Conservation Data Center,
Idaho Department of Fish and Game (2005). Predicted distribution
is from the Wildlife Habitat Relationships Models (WHR),
A Gap Analysis of Idaho: Final Report. Idaho Cooperative Fish
and Wildlife Research Unit, Moscow, ID (Scott et al. 2002).
Predicted distribution is approximate (for more information, go to
http://www.wildlife.uidaho.edu/idgap/idgap_report.asp).

