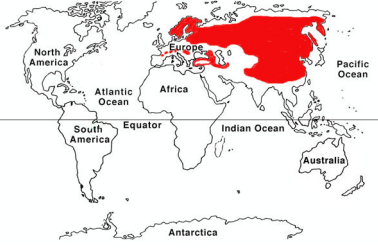


Native Range Map



Eurasian Lynx

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Subphylum: Vertebrata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Carnivora
Family: Felidae
Genus: *Lynx*
Species: *lynx*



Photo courtesy of Tony Wisneski

Habitat

- **In the Wild:** Eurasian lynx are found in areas of Asia, Europe and the former USSR. They inhabit old growth deciduous forests and mixed woodlands. They are also found in mountainous areas above the tree line in central Asia and the entire Tibetan plateau.
- **Exhibit Location:** Wildlife Trails

Characteristics

- The Eurasian lynx is a medium-sized cat, but the largest of the lynx species. They are stout, heavy-bodied animals with males weighing between 20 and 83 pounds and females being somewhat smaller. They are 3-6 feet in length.
- They have thick, soft fur with color variations from buff to tawny with upper areas having a frosted appearance with under parts more buff colored. There is often a pattern of dark spots (usually in summer). The short 4-12 inch tail may have several dark rings and is completely tipped with black. Lynx have a distinct flared facial ruff, and long, prominent black ear tufts (usually about 2 inches long). The rear legs are longer than the front legs and paws are up to 4 inches in diameter, covered in fur so they act as snowshoes in the winter. They have powerful jaws and long, pointed canine teeth and sharp, retractable claws.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild** 17 years; **In Captivity** 24 years

Behaviors

- Lynx are solitary in the wild except for females with offspring or siblings who have just separated from their mothers. They may travel and hunt together for several months before separating. Adults tend to avoid one another except during the breeding season.
- They usually keep to one area, but may migrate under adverse conditions. Lynx mark their boundaries by urinating on rocks, trees, and stumps. When the time comes to mate, these odors help the male to locate potential females.
- Lynx are mainly nocturnal, opportunistic hunters, agile climbers, and good swimmers.
- Although not fast runners, they can leap up to 10 feet in the air and usually kill their prey with one powerful deep bite to the throat. They usually stalk their prey to within a few bounds, but may wait in ambush for hours. Hunting methods are learned by observation and practice. Rather than smelling their prey, lynx depend on their extraordinary sense of hearing along with sight. They must surprise their prey, since they can run fast for only short distances.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** cardboard boxes, spices, boomer balls, large paper bags, hanging toys, quail, large puzzle feeders

Reproduction

- Females reach sexual maturity at about 24 months, males at about 30 months.
- Females bear a single litter per year. Mating occurs during February and March. Courtship lasts about 2 days, during which the male and female chase each other, they hunt together, they sniff and lick each other, and they lie side by side. When the female is ready to mate, she crouches down and raises her tail to alert the male. He then restrains the female from the back to prevent her from attacking him. When mating is finished, they separate quickly while hissing and snarling. They usually mate many times

before the male leaves to find another mate. Although the female only has one mate each season, males usually have many.

- Dens are in hollow logs, beneath roots and other sheltered places. After a gestation period of about 70 days, females produce a litter of 1-4 kittens. They weigh 8-12 ounces at birth and will open their eyes at around 10-17 days and begin to walk between 24-30 days. Kittens are weaned between 3-5 months of age and are independent at the age of 10 months.

Diet

- **In the Wild:** roe deer, chamois, musk deer, reindeer, hares, foxes, rodents, birds and their eggs
- **At the Zoo:** Dallas Crown 10 diet, rabbits, mice

Conservation Status

- **IUCN status:** Red List 2002 Near Threatened; **CITES:** Appendix II
- The increasing urbanization of habitat areas has resulted in diminished prey base and therefore a significant reduction of the Eurasian lynx population. Populations are thought to be doing well in Russia. Increasing deforestation and illegal poaching remain major threats to their future. Lynx are heavily trapped for the fur trade across their range. Studies have shown that Eurasian lynx respond well if hunting pressures are reduced and protected areas of prey base are set aside.
- When prey is scarce, lynx may take domestic livestock, bringing them in conflict with local farmers and ranchers.
- A reintroduction program in Switzerland in the past two decades has met with some success, but the habitat area can support only so many cats.
- Currently in Finland, special hunting licenses are now issued since in the last thirty years the lynx population has grown from almost zero to over 500 individuals.
- Predators: humans

Did You Know?/Fun Facts

- The name Lynx comes from the Greek word “to shine,” and may be in reference to the reflective ability of the cat’s eyes.

Sources:

- Hernandez, S. 2002. “Lynx lynx” (on-line), Animal Diversity Web. Accessed November 30, 2005 at http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Lynx_lynx.html.
- International Society for Endangered Cats Canada. 2001. Lynx (eurasian). Retrieved April 19, 2005, from Eurasian Lynx lynx Carnivora Felidae Web site: <http://www.wildcatconservation.org/cats/factsheets/europe/eurlynx/index/shtml>.