

Bobcats in Your Backyard!

Outreach Plan



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Workshop Topic Summary

Short, descriptive paragraph (advertising)

Did you know that a bobcat can take down prey that is up to eight times its own weight? Or that the bobcat is one of North America's most successful predators because it is extremely adaptable? This workshop focuses on the unique characteristics of bobcats, their essential role in the Sonoran Desert ecosystem, their increasing presence in urban areas as well as what to do in case of an encounter. Join us to learn more about these astonishing cats through hands-on activities and engaging discussions that are suitable for all ages.

15 second elevator speech (workshop hook)

Good morning/afternoon! Have you ever seen a bobcat in the wild before? If not, you may sometime in the near future since bobcats are becoming more common in urban areas because of human encroachment on their habitat. Bobcats can live where ever there is a good population of prey species... maybe even in your own backyard! Join us for an exciting workshop that will teach you all about these awesome cats with hands-on activities and a captivating discussion!

2-3 minute elevator speech (workshop intro)

Hello everybody! Has anyone here ever seen a bobcat? (pause for response). Now, has anyone seen a bobcat outside of a zoo? (pause for response). Well, because humans are encroaching upon the habitat of bobcats, bobcats are becoming more common in urban areas. They are a highly adaptable species and can thrive any place where food is available, even in your own backyard!

Bobcats can prey on a wide variety of animals. Bobcats can eat small animals, such as rodents and birds, as well as larger prey items such as deer. While bobcats are fierce predators, do not worry about becoming their prey. Bobcats are generally solitary creatures and do not like humans. While bobcats are well adapted to present conditions, several other species of cats that once lived here have since left, making the bobcat one of the top predators in the Sonoran Desert.

Today we're going to learn about some unique characteristics of bobcats which allow them to be so highly adaptable as well as their role in the ecosystem. We will also talk about their increasing presence in urban areas and how you can safely interact with wild bobcats if you should ever encounter them.

Introduction and Background

Introduction and Facts

The bobcat (*Felis rufus*) belongs to the Felidae family and order Carnivora. Bobcats are one of two remaining feline species in the Sonoran Desert known to have permanent populations (the other being mountain lions). It is thought that the jaguar, jaguarundi, and ocelot may have once been permanent residents of the Sonoran Desert in the United States, but they have now dwindled down to rare visitors. Bobcats however continue to thrive despite increasing human activity and habitat fragmentation. Bobcats have several defining characteristics including ruffs of fur on the cheeks, long legs, and a short black-tipped tail. The bobcat's coat is a sandy color with dark spots in a random pattern that provides excellent camouflage in desert terrain.



[\(http://tucsoncitizen.com/morque/category/local/page/466/\)](http://tucsoncitizen.com/morque/category/local/page/466/)

Bobcats are much smaller than their mountain lion relatives, weighing in at about 20 pounds on average for an adult. In spite of their relatively small size, bobcats are deadly hunters and play an important role in population control of their prey. Using stealth and surprise attacks, bobcats ambush their prey with pounces powered by their powerful hind legs (Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum 2000). Their sharp retractable claws and large canine teeth aid in the capture of prey and defense from predators.

Bobcats are generalists in terms of habitat, being found throughout the majority of the United States, most of Mexico, and along the Canadian border from coast to coast ("Bobcat").



http://www.wildcatconservation.org/Canadian_Cats.html

In the Sonoran Desert, bobcats prey upon a wide variety of organisms and they can live pretty much anywhere there is a steady supply of resources. Being solitary ambush predators, the majority of their diet consists of rodents and lagomorphs (rabbits), but they also frequently eat birds, reptiles, carnivores, and ungulates (hoofed animals) (Hass 2009). A study of bobcat scat found 65% of their diet to be rodents and lagomorphs while the other 35% contained everything else mentioned above. Bobcats were also found to be spread somewhat evenly throughout grassland, scrub, woodland, and riparian areas (Hass 2009). The main causes of mortality include “starvation, predation, diseases, parasites” and human related deaths (Chiamulera et al 2011). Bobcat predators include coyotes, birds of prey, wolves, and mountain lions (Hass 2009). Being solitary, bobcats usually avoid each other except to mate in spring. The typical gestation period is about two months and the average litter is 2 to 3 kittens. Young bobcats stay with their mother for approximately a year or until they are capable of hunting on their own (Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum 2000).

Role in the Environment

Bobcats have an extremely important role in controlling rodent and other small mammal populations in the Sonoran Desert. With 65% of their diet consisting of rodents and rabbits and mountain lions’ diets consisting of mostly bigger animals (Hass 2009), bobcats are one of the main predators of small mammals in the Sonoran Desert. Many of these small mammal species reproduce at very high rates and their populations could easily grow out of control without healthy populations of predators like the bobcat. If rodent populations exponentially increased, many other species would be out competed for resources and habitat causing biodiversity to

decline. Because bobcats mostly prey on smaller animals, they normally have to eat daily (Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum 2000). If every healthy bobcat ate once to several times a day, this would have a noticeable impact on rodent and rabbit populations. In urban areas, many of the rodent's other natural predators are not present allowing bobcat's generalist skills to come in to play. Bobcats are very important in maintaining a healthy and well functioning ecosystem.

Increasing Densities of Bobcats in Urban Areas

As human populations continue to grow and expand rapidly, the world is becoming increasingly urbanized. An urban area is an area that has a large number of people and buildings making up at least one town or city (Gehrt 2010). As more and more places become developed, certain animals are becoming attracted to urban areas because they can provide resources for wildlife such as water, food, and shelter among other things. Cities tend to have warmer climates because of the heat island effect, which results from a combination of factors such as surfaces like asphalt and concrete absorbing heat, particulates in the air that help to trap and absorb heat, as well as energy produced from fuels. Temperature differences between the city and rural areas can be quite large, up to 6-12°C for large cities (Kaye et al 2006). The excess heat that cities provide can lengthen the growing season of vegetation surrounding the city and could in effect increase the abundance of animals that bobcats may eat (Gehrt 2010). Urban environments could also help protect animals from harsh winters, which is another attraction (Kanda et al 2005). By living in cities, bobcats will not have to combat as extreme temperatures as they would in their natural habitat.

Water is also a big factor influencing the movement of wild animals into urban areas. Animals that live in arid environments, like the Sonoran Desert in Tucson, are able to notice an increased amount of surface water in cities from humans watering landscapes. There is also typically a body of water such as a lake or a river in association with a city and even possibly small ponds in some neighborhoods. Natural waterways are also typically altered to serve the needs of humans, so the areas in which animals could once find water are no longer the same. Animals need water to survive and since cities contain large amounts of water, animals will tend to be attracted to cities for this reason (Gehrt 2010).

Cities tend to fragment natural habitats in which predators such as bobcats live (Gehrt 2010). As cities and populations grow larger, humans are continually encroaching on animals' habitats. These animals may only have small patches of land left to hunt on after habitat

fragmentation (breaking up their natural habitat into several smaller areas) has occurred so they may need to move through urban areas in order to reach other hunting areas. Roads may serve as corridors into urban environments thus increasing bobcat presence in urban areas. Biotic diversity is normally relatively high in cities since humans tend to settle in areas of natural diversity and also introduce nonnative species (Ricklefs & Imhoff 2003). The diversity may be highest at the outskirts of the city where there is a mixture of species that can do well in the city as well as those that do less well in the city (Alberti & Marzluff 2004). Urban areas often have exotic animals, for example the house mouse or the Norway rat, which can be prey for bobcats. These exotic species may also have relatively high numbers when in cities which can be an ample source of food for bobcats. Both rodents and birds tend to do well in urban areas because of the increased resources humans provide (Ricklefs & Imhoff 2003). This serves to attract bobcats into cities. Pets such as cats and dogs can also be considered prey for bobcats and present an opportunity for predators. Overall cities can provide increased amounts of food, water and other resources which can attract wild animals such as bobcats.

Most carnivores that do well in urban areas are small to medium sized animals with relatively high reproductive potential (number of young an animal can have); this enables them to have and raise large numbers of young (Fuller et al 2010). Animals that tend to do well in urban areas are also normally diet generalists which can eat a wide variety of foods. For example bobcats have a wide ranging diet that varies from small mammals to deer (Dibello et al 1990). Humans can increase the number of urban bobcats by intentionally feeding them, unintentionally feeding them by not properly securing garbage containers, leaving pet food out and even mistakenly feeding them by leaving bird feeders up year round, which attracts bobcat prey such as rodents (DeStefano & DeGraat 2003). People can also provide for bobcats by providing food and shelter to prey species such as rabbits and deer which will increase the presence of the species and in effect lead to higher densities of bobcats in cities (McKinney 2002). The increased food supply found in cities is one of the main reasons that bobcats have moved into urbanized areas.

Since bobcats are smaller predators and usually solitary, humans tolerate them better and do not tend to be as scared of them as they do with larger predators such as wolves or mountain lions, so cities could also provide refuge for bobcats from these predators (Faeth et al 2005). While humans and urbanization have both had their impacts on bobcats, bobcats are very

adaptable and can live and potentially thrive in urban environments. Survival rates of bobcats tend to be fairly high in urban environments because hunting, trapping and poaching are very rare here. There are also much milder climates that lack harsh winters and a fairly stable population of prey exists in urban areas that help bobcats to survive and thrive in cities. While bobcats can do well in urban area, they do face increased risks of being exposed to diseases common in domestic animals such as mange (which is a disease of the skin causing itching and hair loss), as well as increased exposure to chemicals and toxins such as rodenticides in prey (Riley et al 2010). Whether or not bobcats should be in urban areas, they are becoming increasingly common in these areas and we need to be aware of this fact so that we can mitigate our impacts on these creatures and try to live in harmony with them.

Interacting with Urban Bobcats

Bobcats can seem scary to some, but they are not a real threat to humans. There have been very few bobcat attacks on humans in the past. Most of those were from rabid animals. Bobcats do not like to get close to humans and they will flee if you try to get too close to them. Bobcats can provide a glimpse of nature to people who would otherwise not normally see any (Riley et al 2010). Bobcats tend to be attracted to yards that contain food for them, which can include other wildlife, domestic birds and pets. Small pets will need to be kept safe from bobcats, as well as other urban predators. Protecting your pets can be easily accomplished by keeping your pets indoors, supervising them closely or putting them in an enclosed area when outside. Always use a leash when walking your pet outside. If you have domestic birds, make sure you keep them in a sturdy cage that is completely enclosed and includes a roof. Do not feed wildlife as this can attract bobcats to your yard to hunt these species (AZGFD Living with Bobcats).

If you have a bobcat living in your yard, there are a number of things you can choose to do. If the bobcat is not causing any problems to you or your neighbors, you can choose to leave it alone and enjoy watching it. If you have small pets or livestock that you want to keep safe, you should discourage the bobcat from your yard. You can discourage bobcats by removing the things that attracts them, such as any food items that you have in your yard, from pet food to birds or other wildlife that you attract to your yard. Water will also attract bobcats so getting rid of any pools, water bowls, fountains and other standing bodies of water or covering them up. You also want to make sure your yard is not providing any habitat or hiding spaces; including small spaces under your patio, under dense vegetation and even on your roof. Make sure to trim

back vegetation and block off the entrance to these areas to protect your yard (AZGFD Living with Bobcats).

If you are ever confronted by a bobcat, there are easy ways to scare it away. The first is to make loud noises to chase it away. If you have a hose nearby, you can also spray it with water. In the rare occasion that a bobcat does attack you, fight back and do whatever you can to get it off. Contact your local county animal control office as this animal is likely rabid and make sure to go to the hospital to get checked out. If you notice a hyperactive animal around your area, make sure to stay indoors and either call your local county animal control office or your local Arizona Game and Fish Department Office. If you do not have any of these numbers you can always call 911. Some symptoms of rabies include foaming at the mouth, hyperactive behavior such as approaching humans or fearful and paralyzed behavior. However, bobcats rarely get rabies and are rarely a threat to humans, so the simplest way to get rid of an unwanted bobcat is to remove attractants from your yard. If an animal does become a problem, removal is a last resort and can be taken care of by your local Arizona Game and Fish Department office by calling 520-628-5376 (AZGFD Living with Bobcats). As long as you take the proper precautions and learn to respect bobcats, you should be able to live in harmony with them.

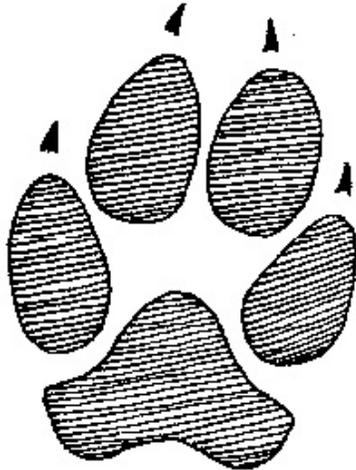
Workshop Details

Goals: The basic goals of this workshop are:

- To teach people basic facts about bobcats
- To make people aware that bobcats are becoming more common in urban areas
- To teach people how they can be safe around bobcats
- To teach people about the important role that bobcats play in the Sonoran Desert ecosystem

List of Supplies:

- Bobcat skull - can be obtained at the Tucson AZ Game & Fish Department Office [520-628-5376]
- Bobcat pelt - can be obtained at the Tucson AZ Game & Fish Department Office [520-628-5376]
- Imprint of bobcat footprint - can be obtained at the Tucson AZ Game & Fish Department Office [520-628-5376]
- Table for displaying props and poster
- Chairs (if needed)
- Image of a canine paw print and feline paw print (provided below)
- Candy for winner of quiz
- Poster [Example shown in the poster section]
- Poster of “What would you do if a bobcat...” [Example shown below]



Canine Print



Feline Print

(Kim A. Cabrera. <http://www.bear-tracker.com/caninevsfeline.html>)

Time: The first three activities should take 2-5 minutes each and the quiz should take 5-10 minutes. The total activity time will be 15-20 minutes.

Activities:

What is a bobcat?

- This is an activity for all ages
- Set up poster, skull, pelt and imprint on table at the start of the workshop
- Use the skull to point out features of carnivores such as teeth (used for ripping meat apart) and eyes (at front of skull used to find prey)
- Use the pelt to point out characteristics that are key in identifying this species
- Use the paw imprint and image of a canine paw print to show the difference between a cat print and a dog print (Dogs have claw marks while cats do not since they have retractable claws)
- Point out the bob-tail on the pelt (where the bobcat gets its name)

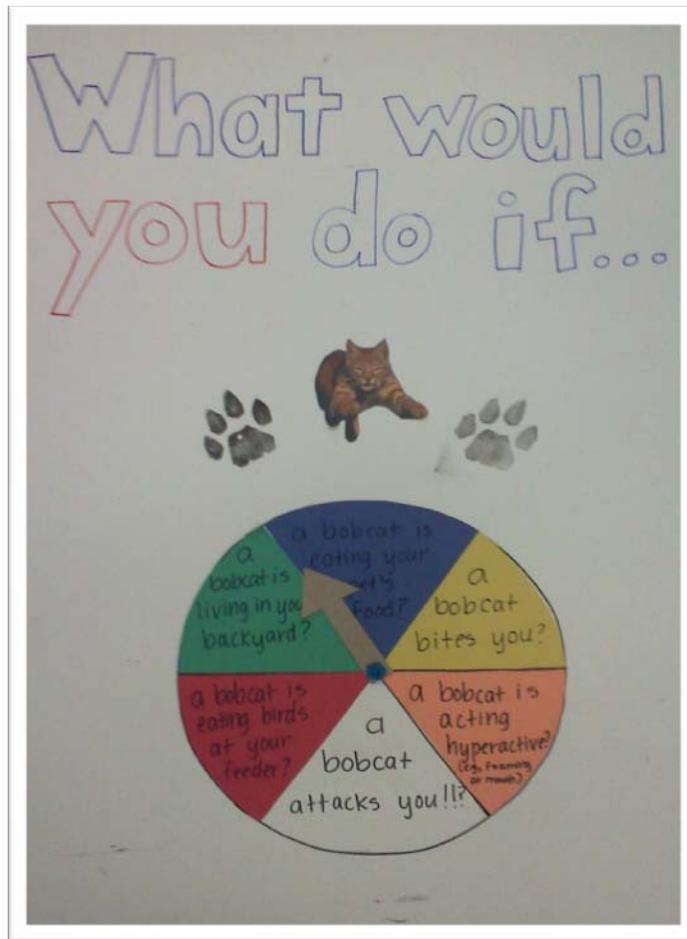
How do bobcats hunt?

- This is an activity geared more towards younger kids, although any age that is willing to participate is welcome to join in.
- Discuss how bobcats hunt their prey through stalking and ambush
- Ask for two participants from the audience to volunteer
- Have one person be the bobcat who will demonstrate hunting techniques
- Have the other person be a prey species of their choice (rabbit, deer, rodent, etc.)
- Have the 'bobcat' demonstrate the skills of the bobcat hunting by:
 - Stalking the prey stealthily
 - Pouncing or ambushing its prey when close

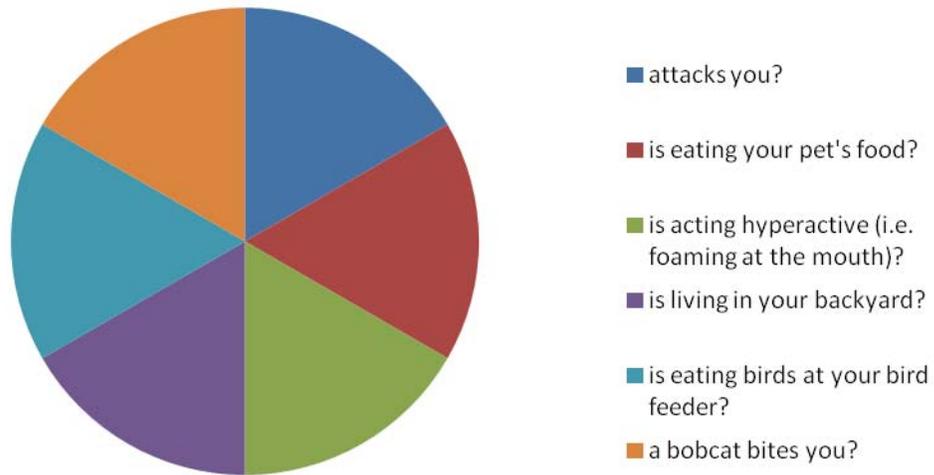
How to stay safe around a bobcat

- This is an activity geared more towards younger kids, although any age that is willing to participate is welcome to join in.
 - Discuss how to scare a bobcat away in a confrontation by making loud noises
 - Ask for two participants from the audience to volunteer
 - Have one person be a bobcat
 - Have the other person be themselves
 - Have the 'bobcat' confront the 'victim' and have the 'victim' demonstrate how to scare the bobcat away
 - Have the 'bobcat' run away
-

- We will also have another activity that is geared towards older audience members, although younger children can play as well
- We will have a poster board that has a spinner (made by cutting an arrow shape out of cardboard and attaching it to the poster board with a brass fastener) on it that will point to one of 6 options of what a bobcat can do to you
- A participant will spin the spinner and have to answer the question that the spinner lands on correctly
- A correct answer will earn a lollipop or other candy prize
- Images of the poster are shown below:



What would you do if a bobcat...



How much do you know about bobcats? Quiz

- Ask for participants for a quiz game
- Ask any of these questions in whatever order you would like to
- The first person to raise his or her hand and answer the question correctly receives a piece of candy
- Questions and answers are listed below:

Quiz Questions

1. What order of animals do bobcats belong to?
 - a. Carnivora
 - b. Pinnipedia
 - c. Insectivora
 - d. Marsupialia
2. To what family of mammals do bobcats belong?
 - a. Ursidae
 - b. Canidae
 - c. Felidae
 - d. Mustelidae
3. Bobcats eat all of these animals EXCEPT which one?
 - a. rabbits
 - b. rodents
 - c. seals
 - d. deer
4. How much bigger than a housecat is a bobcat on average?
 - a. They are the same size and weight
 - b. Bobcats are much bigger than housecats in size and weight
 - c. Bobcats are only slightly heavier, but larger in size
 - d. Housecats are much bigger than bobcats in size and weight
5. Which one of these animals is a predator of bobcats?
 - a. Coyotes
 - b. Mountain Lions
 - c. Wolves
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
6. Where are bobcats distributed?
 - a. Most of North America
 - b. Only in Arizona
 - c. Only in deserts
 - d. Mexico
7. What should you do in encounter with a bobcat?
 - a. Yell at it and throw things
 - b. Try to catch it
 - c. Run away
 - d. Stand tall and growl
8. What kind of habitat can bobcats be found in?
 - a. Any area with a supply of food
 - b. Rocky areas with vegetative cover
 - c. Urban areas
 - d. All of the above
9. Where does the bobcat get its name from?
 - a. A guy named Bob
 - b. The way that it bobs its tail
 - c. Its short bob-tail
 - d. The way it bobs its head when walking
10. How can you discourage a bobcat from coming to your yard?
 - a. Leave out pet food in your yard
 - b. Provide shelter
 - c. Provide water sources
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
11. Why are bobcats important to the ecosystem?
 - a. They regulate prey populations
 - b. They are enjoyable to see in the wild
 - c. They provide shelters for other animals to live in
 - d. They kill dangerous animals
12. True or False: Bobcats make good pets.
13. True or False: Bobcats are known to commonly attack humans.
14. True or False: Bobcats are important in maintaining healthy ecosystems and biodiversity.
15. True or False: Bobcats can be a danger to your pets.

Answers to Quiz

1. A
2. C
3. C
4. C
5. D
6. A
7. A
8. D
9. C
10. E
11. A
12. False
13. False
14. True
15. True

Discussion questions:

Younger audience members:

1. Why would a bobcat not make a good pet?
2. Why aren't bobcats a real threat to humans?
3. Why do you think bobcats are attracted to cities?
4. Can you think of any problems bobcats could face living in cities?
5. Why are bobcats better at living in cities than mountain lions?

Older audience members:

1. Why are bobcats becoming more common in urban areas?
2. What are some of the threats that bobcats are facing as they become more common in urban areas?
3. What are some animals that bobcats can hunt in urban areas that they wouldn't find in their native habitat?
4. What would happen to the ecosystem if bobcats were removed?
5. Why have bobcats persisted in the Sonoran Desert while other wild cats such as the jaguar and ocelot have not?
6. What are some traits of bobcats that allow them to have such an expansive range?
7. What makes a bobcat such an effective hunter?

Assessment

We will know that our workshop is effective at engaging and educating our audience if they are able to take our quiz and answer at least most of the questions correctly. Also, our audience members should be able to play our “What Would You Do If…” spinner game and answer any of the questions that the spinner lands on accurately. Correct answers to both of these games will be rewarded with candy prizes. Our audience should learn some basic facts about bobcats such as what they eat, where they live and what they look like. Our audience members will also learn about why bobcats are coming to live in urban areas more and why they are so successful in cities. Participants will also learn about how to keep their families and pets safe around a bobcat. Finally, audience members should learn about the important role that bobcats, as predators, play in maintaining the health of the ecosystem. At the conclusion of our workshop, we will also ask the audience discussion questions. If members of the audience are able to answer these discussion questions accurately and thoughtfully, then we will know that we have taught them something. The quiz questions, discussion questions and “What Would You Do If…” game questions are all included in our workshop details.

Beyond the Activity

In our workshop, the audience is taught basic facts about bobcats, the increasing presence of bobcats in urban areas, how to stay safe around bobcats as well as the important role that bobcats play in the ecosystem. This information is taught verbally at our workshops, visually through our poster as well as hands-on through our “What Would You Do If…” game. By combining several different styles of learning in our workshop we hope to have reached a larger number of people in our audience than we would have if we had focused solely on one type of learning such as verbal communication. There are many other facts about bobcats that we could teach people in addition to our workshop, such as details about mating, raising young, different types of sounds they make, communication, and many other details about their physiology, morphology and ecology. We could also tell them facts about other cats that live or have lived in the Sonoran Desert such as the mountain lion, jaguar, and ocelot. Teachers could go on tangents about conservation issues regarding wild cats and other wildlife as well, as well as other hot topics such as the border fence impacts on wildlife. We hope that by doing this workshop we teach people to appreciate wild cats and that our audience members will develop a love for them

and want to help to preserve cat species. We can refer them to websites where they can learn more about wild cat species and websites where they can volunteer to help wildlife.

Further References:

Phillips Steven J, Wentworth Patricia. 2000. A Natural History of the Sonoran Desert. Arizona-Sonoran Desert Museum Press. Tucson, Arizona.

Website for information on all wild feline species:

<http://www.uawildcatresearch.org/>

Website for information on volunteering to help to preserve wildlife:

http://www.azgfd.gov/inside_azgfd/edits/volunteer_opps.shtml

Self-evaluation, Refinement, and Recommendations

Overall, our workshop was very successful in informing people about bobcats living around them. I feel we also informed a large number of children how to deal with a bobcat when one is encountered. The only things that changed over time were the hands-on items used in our workshop. I think the bone box from game and fish contained the most useful hands-on items. People loved seeing the bobcat pelt, skull, and paw prints compared to those of a mountain lion. The stuffed bobcat we received from the university mammal department was also good, but a lot of people were only interested in what had happened to it and why it was flat. I would recommend future users use the contents of the Arizona game and fish bone box.

Our bobcat paw print stamps worked very well with entertaining children while we talked to their parents. Although, many kids just wanted the stamp on their hand instead of a sticker. For future reference, use the stamp and make sure to have non-toxic ink for stamps on skin (ours was non-toxic). Our “What would you do if...” spinner activity was also a big hit with kids, but it had a few issues. First, it wasn’t put together strong enough to allow kids to spin it hard like they love to do. Having a sharp object go flying at eye level was definitely not good. So if a spinner game is used in the future, the spinning part must be attached very securely. The second problem with the spinner game was the redundancy of the questions. A couple of the questions were similar and had similar answers. It would be better to have completely different questions even if it meant having fewer total questions.

Nothing in our work shop just flat out didn't work. We kept things simple and had plenty of information to keep people interested for several minutes. Kids liked our activities and adults were interested in our poster and information. It was especially effective to talk with people about their personal bobcat experiences and have them tell us what they already knew. We could then fill in the gaps and answer any questions they might of had about bobcats. Adults liked the brochures we handed out and the research website they could send bobcat photos to. It's important to give people something to take with them to have something to think about after they leave. Our information was easy to digest (even for children) and I feel many people learned at least one thing they didn't already know about bobcats. I think the most important elements for a successful workshop are hands-on objects (skulls and pelts), an interactive activity for kids (with candy), and an easy to follow poster with interesting information for adults.

Glossary Terms

Ambush: a trap in which concealed persons lie in wait to attack by surprise.

Spanish: una trampa en la que las personas ocultas están al acecho para atacar por sorpresa.

Biodiversity: biological diversity in an environment as indicated by numbers of different species of plants and animals

Spanish: la diversidad biológica en un entorno como lo indica el número de especies diferentes de plantas y animales

Camouflage: behavior or artifice designed to deceive or hide.

Spanish: comportamiento o artificio diseñado para engañar u ocultar.

Carnivore: any animal that feeds on other animals

Spanish: cualquier animal que se alimenta de otros animales

Felidae: the biological family of cats

Spanish: la familia biológica de los gatos

Gestation: the carrying of young in the uterus.

Spanish: la realización de los jóvenes en el útero.

Habitat fragmentation: process by which habitats are increasingly subdivided into smaller units, resulting in their increased isolation and loss of total habitat area

Spanish: el proceso por el cual los hábitats son cada vez más dividido en unidades más pequeñas, lo que resulta en su mayor aislamiento y pérdida de la superficie total del hábitat

Mange: a disease of the skin causing inflammation and loss of hair

Spanish: una enfermedad de la inflamación de la piel que causan y la pérdida de cabello

Reproductive potential: the number of offspring an animal is capable of producing
Spanish: el número de descendientes de un animal es capaz de producir

Solitary: being, living, or going alone or without companions.
Spanish: ser, de vivir, o ir solos o sin acompañantes.

Population: the total of individuals occupying an area or making up a whole.
Spanish: el total de individuos que ocupan un área o que forman en su conjunto.

Predator: an animal that lives by preying on or eating other animals
Spanish: un animal que vive de aprovecharse de comer o de otros animales

Prey: an animal taken by a predator as food
Spanish: un animal adoptado por un depredador como alimento

Rabies: a virus affecting the nervous system of mammals transmitted by the bite of a rabid animal; symptoms include increased salivation, abnormal behavior, eventual paralysis and death if untreated
Spanish: un virus que afecta el sistema nervioso de los mamíferos transmitida por la picadura de un animal rabioso, los síntomas incluyen aumento de la salivación, alteraciones del comportamiento, parálisis y eventualmente la muerte si no se trata

Urban area: an area that has a large number of people and buildings making up at least one town or city
Spanish: un área que tiene un gran número de personas y edificios que, como mínimo, un pueblo o ciudad

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Spring 2011



Sagehen Snodgrass & Foss Creation



Bobcats in Your Backyard!

Bobcat Facts



Physical Description: Orange-brown medium-sized cat with black spots and a short bob-tail (2-8 inches) that is black on top and white underneath.
Body Length: 20-50 inches
Weight: 15-30 pounds
Life Span: 13-15 years in the wild
Diet: Mainly rabbits, but also birds, lizards, snakes, rodents, and even deer!
Predators: Mountain lions, coyotes, foxes, owls, wolves, and humans
Habitat: Rocky areas with vegetative cover
Range:



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- <http://www.usfws.gov/factsheets/fs0401.asp>

Bobcats in Urban Areas

- ❖ Becoming more common in urban areas
- ❖ Humans are encroaching on bobcat habitat and living where bobcats live.
- ❖ Bobcats are very adaptable and can survive wherever there is a food supply, including urban areas.



- ❖ Attracted to ample supplies of food, water and shelter that urban areas supply.
- ❖ Bobcats rarely cause problems
- ❖ Have been known to depredate small pets and livestock.

How to Keep Your Family and Pets Safe



- Bobcats rarely attack humans
- Observe and enjoy bobcats in your backyard if they aren't causing any problems to you or your neighbors.
- If a bobcat becomes a threat, you can scare it away by:
 - + Making loud noises
 - + Spraying it with a hose
- If you want to discourage a bobcat from your backyard:
 - + Do not leave pet food or water dishes outside
 - + Do not leave cats outside unattended
 - + Trim back vegetation and block crannies that bobcats could use for cover
- If all else fails, contact your local Fish and Game branch to remove the animal.



The Role of Bobcats in the Ecosystem



- Important predators that hunt smaller prey items such as rodents
- Help to regulate prey population sizes
- Without bobcats hunting, prey would increase in numbers and consume all the food available
- Prey species would then slowly starve to death
- Without predators, one prey species often outcompetes other species and reduces biodiversity
- Without predators like the bobcat, ecosystems crumble and eventually collapse
- Bobcats are important in maintaining a healthy, biologically diverse ecosystem!

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Bobcats in Your Backyard!



Have you ever seen a bobcat in the wild?
Are you interested in learning more about these cats?

Come to our workshop where we will discuss
fun facts about bobcats, their role in the ecosystem,
their presence in urban areas and how
you can be safe around them.



Identifying Bobcats

Bobcats are medium-sized cats, tan to gray in color. Some animals have dark spots, whereas others have a more uniform coat. Female adult bobcats in the Tucson area weigh 15-19 pounds and males can weigh up to 25 pounds. Adults stand about 16-18 inches high at the shoulders. The "bob-tail" for which they are named measures approximately 6 to 9 inches in length, but can appear longer in the summer when the cats have a shorter coat. You can see distinctive white "eye-spots" on the backs of the ears of both adults and kittens.

Some people mistake a bobcat for a mountain lion. Mountain lions are uncommon in urban areas. They are more than 3 times larger than a bobcat, are tan all over, and have long, thick tails that can touch the ground.

If you see a wild cat in your backyard or on a hike, it is likely a bobcat!



For more information:

UA Wild Cat Research and Conservation Unit

www.uawildcatresearch.org

AZGFD Living with Wildlife

www.azgfd.gov/urbanwildlife

Arizona Wildlife Rehabilitators

www.azgfd.gov/w_c/urban_rehab_relo.shtml

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Heritage Fund

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Artwork by Amanda Timmerman



Backyard Bobcats (*Lynx rufus*)

The University of Arizona
Wild Cat Research & Conservation Unit
Arizona Game and Fish Department

Bobcats in My Backyard

Bobcats (*Lynx rufus*) are found from Canada to Mexico and are common throughout Arizona. As urban areas expand, people living at the city's edge may find they have bobcats for neighbors.

Bobcats prefer the foothills environment of native desert areas that provide them with safe cover and habitat for prey. Favorite prey animals include packrats, rabbits, small rodents, and birds such as dove and quail. Bobcats use dry washes and drainages as travel corridors through the desert uplands. They are most active at dusk and dawn.

From late winter to late summer, mother bobcats will "den-up" to give birth to between 1-4 kittens. A mother bobcat will move her kittens by the time they are 2-3 months old, but may occasionally re-visit the denning area, since it remains part of her home range.

From a bobcat's perspective, block walls; dense, drip-watered ground cover; and a desert wash near-by for hunting packrats and rabbits provides everything they need: shelter, water, and food. City living comes easy for these remarkable animals.

Being a Good Neighbor with Bobcats ...

It is important to enjoy your bobcats when they visit, but equally important to remember they are wild.

Protect your pets:

- supervise all small pets outside
- let pets off-leash in enclosed, covered areas
- keep chickens, rabbits, and other small pets indoors or in a secure, covered outdoor enclosure
- feed pets indoors or remove uneaten pet food immediately to avoid attracting unwanted wildlife (bobcats, coyotes, skunks, javelina, etc.)

If you would like to discourage bobcats from entering your yard,

- remove bird feeders, bird baths, fountains, and other water features that attract prey animals
- trim vegetation around the house to eliminate hiding or resting places

... and Bobcats Will Be Good to You!

You have a unique opportunity to observe a wild and fascinating creature, hunting packrats, lazing in the shade, or raising young. Except in very rare cases of rabies or when they have been hand fed by humans, bobcats pose no danger to people.

Become a Citizen Scientist!

We are trying to document where we find backyard bobcats. If YOU have photographs of bobcats in the Tucson area, you can help biologists with our ongoing study!

To submit bobcat photos, learn more about wild cats and current wild cat research, or to learn about volunteering as a Wild Cat Docent, please visit:

www.nawildcatresearch.org



Wild Cat Research and Conservation in Tucson, Arizona

The School of Natural Resources and the Environment at the University of Arizona is developing a Wild Cat Research and Conservation Unit to conduct research and outreach related to wild cats. Researchers, with grants from the Arizona Game and Fish Department Heritage Fund, (1) work with citizens to solicit photos of backyard bobcats, (2) use genetic data to learn how bobcats move about the Tucson region, and (3) train citizens to conduct outreach and education on wild cats.

This work will help wildlife managers and city planners make informed decisions regarding urban bobcats, and help us learn how to better coexist with backyard bobcats.