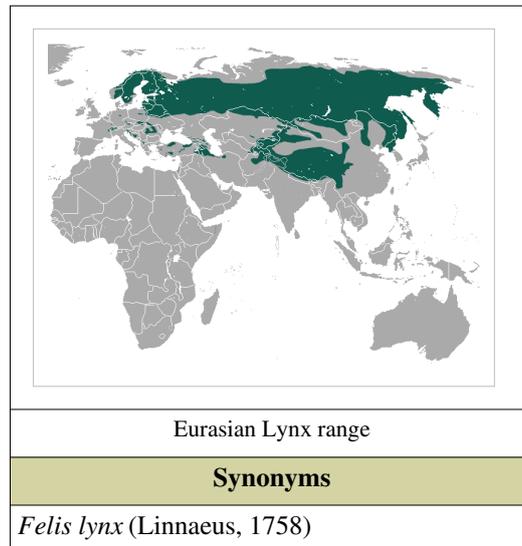


# Eurasian Lynx

Eurasian Lynx <sup>[1]</sup>	
	
Conservation status	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Extinct</p> <p>EX</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>EW</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Threatened</p> <p>CR</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>EN</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>VU</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>NT</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Least Concern</p> <p><b>LC</b></p> </div> </div> <p>Least Concern (IUCN 3.1)<sup>[2]</sup></p>	
Scientific classification	
Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Mammalia
Order:	Carnivora
Family:	Felidae
Genus:	<i>Lynx</i>
Species:	<i>L. lynx</i>
Binomial name	
<p><i>Lynx lynx</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)</p>	



The **Eurasian lynx** (*Lynx lynx*) is a medium-sized cat native to European and Siberian forests, South Asia and East Asia. It is also known as the European lynx, common lynx, the northern lynx, and the Siberian or Russian lynx. While its conservation status has been classified as "Least Concern", populations of Eurasian lynx have been reduced or extirpated from western Europe, where it is now being reintroduced.

### Physical characteristics

The Eurasian lynx is the largest lynx species, ranging in length from 80 to 130 cm (31 to 51 in) and standing about 70 cm (28 in) at the shoulder. The tail measures 11 to 25 cm (4.3 to 9.8 in) in length. Males usually weigh from 18 to 30 kg (40 to 66 lb) and females weigh 10 to 21 kg (22 to 46 lb).<sup>[3] [4] [5]</sup> Male lynxes from Siberia, where the species reaches the largest body size, can weigh up to 38 kg (84 lb) or reportedly even 45 kg (99 lb).<sup>[6] [7]</sup> It has powerful legs, with large webbed and furred paws that act like snowshoes. It also possesses a short "bobbed" tail with an all-black tip, black tufts of hair on its ears, and a long grey-and-white ruff.

During the summer, the Eurasian lynx has a relatively short, reddish or brown coat, which tends to be more brightly coloured in animals living at the southern end of its range. In winter, however, this is replaced by a much thicker coat of silky fur that varies from silver-grey to greyish-brown. The underparts of the animal, including the neck and chin, are white at all times of the year. The fur is almost always marked with black spots, although the number and pattern of these is highly variable. Some animals also possess dark brown stripes on the forehead and back. Although spots tend to be more numerous in animals from southern populations, Eurasian lynx with heavily spotted fur may exist close to others with plain fur.<sup>[8]</sup>

Eurasian lynx make a range of vocalizations, but are generally silent outside of the breeding season. They have been observed to mew, hiss, growl, and purr, and, like domestic cats, will "chatter" at prey that is just out of reach. Mating calls are much louder, consisting of deep growls in the male, and loud "meow"-like sounds in the female.<sup>[8]</sup>

Eurasian lynx are secretive, and because the sounds they make are very quiet and seldom heard, their presence in an area may go unnoticed for years. Remnants of prey or tracks on snow are usually observed long before the animal is seen.

## Behaviour



Eurasian lynx.

Lynx prey on hares, rabbits, rodents, grouse, wild boar, chamois, foxes, roe deer, and reindeer. As with other cats, taking on larger prey presents a risk to the animal, and so is only common during winter when food is less abundant. They will also feed on carrion when it is available. Adult lynx require 1.1 to 2 kilograms (2.4 to 4.4 lb) of meat per day, and may take several days to fully consume some of their larger prey.<sup>[8]</sup>

The main method of hunting is stalking, sneaking and jumping on prey, although they are also ambush predators when conditions are suitable. In winter certain snow conditions make this harder and the animal may be forced to switch to larger prey. Eurasian lynx hunt using both vision and hearing, and often climb onto high rocks or fallen trees to scan the surrounding area.

The Eurasian lynx inhabits rugged forested country providing plenty of hideouts and stalking opportunities. Depending on the locality, this may include forest-steppe, boreal forest, and montane forest. In the more mountainous parts of their range, Eurasian lynx will descend into the lowlands in winter, following their prey, and avoiding the deepest

snows. They tend to be less common where wolves are abundant, and wolves have been reported to attack and even eat lynx.<sup>[8]</sup> In Russian forests, the most important predators of the Eurasian lynx are the gray wolf and the wolverine.<sup>[9]</sup> Wolves kill and eat lynxes that fail to escape into trees, and lynx populations decrease when wolves appear in a region.<sup>[9]</sup> Wolverines have killed and eaten lynxes and stolen their kills, and lynxes avoid encounters with wolverines.<sup>[10]</sup> Sometimes, Siberian tigers have also preyed on lynxes, as evidenced by examination of tiger stomach contents.<sup>[9]</sup> Lynx compete for food with the predators described above, and also with the red fox, eagle owls, wild boar (which scavenge from lynx kills), and in the southern part of its range, the snow leopard and leopard also.<sup>[11]</sup>

Although they may hunt during the day when food is scarce, the Eurasian lynx is mainly nocturnal or crepuscular, and spends the day sleeping in dense thickets or other places of concealment. It lives solitarily as an adult.

The hunting area of Eurasian lynx can be anything from 20 to 450 km<sup>2</sup> (8 to 174 sq mi), depending on the local availability of prey. Males tend to hunt over much larger areas than females, which tend to occupy exclusive, rather than overlapping, hunting ranges. The Eurasian lynx can travel up to 20 km (12 mi) during one night, although about half this distance is more typical. They patrol regularly throughout all parts of their hunting range, using scent marks to indicate their presence to other individuals. As with other cats, the scent marks may consist of faeces, urine, or scrape marks, with the former often being left in prominent locations along the boundary of the hunting territory.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Life cycle

The mating season for Eurasian lynx lasts from January to April. The female typically comes into oestrus only once during this period, lasting from four to seven days, but if the first litter is lost, a second period of oestrus is common. Unlike the closely related Canada lynx, the Eurasian species does not appear to be able to control its reproductive behaviour based on prey availability. This may be because, feeding on a larger range of prey than the Canada lynx, rarity of suitable prey is a less common occurrence.<sup>[8]</sup>

Pregnant females construct dens in secluded locations, often protected by overhanging branches or tree roots. The den may be lined with feathers, deer hair, and dry grass to provide bedding for the young. Gestation lasts from 67 to 74 days, and results in the birth of from one to four kittens. At birth, Eurasian lynx kittens weigh 240 to 430 grams (8.5 to 15 oz) and are blind and helpless. They initially have plain, greyish-brown fur, attaining the full adult colouration around eleven weeks of age. The eyes open after ten to twelve days. The kittens begin to take solid food at six to seven weeks, when they begin to leave the den, but are not fully weaned for five or six months.<sup>[8]</sup>

The den is abandoned two to three months after the kittens are born, but the young typically remain with their mother until they are around ten months of age (the start of the next breeding season). Eurasian lynx reach sexual maturity at two or three years, and have lived for twenty one years in captivity.<sup>[8]</sup>



Eurasian lynx kitten

## Status and range

### Asia

- Central Asia: The European lynx is native to the Chinese provinces of Sinkiang, Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, and Shaanxi, as well as to Iran, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan,
- Pakistan: The Northern Areas (Gilgit Baltistan)
- India: Kashmir's Ladakh area and most other Northern states.
- Russia: More than 90% of all Eurasian Lynx live in the forests of Siberia. They are distributed from the western borders of Russia to the Pacific island of Sakhalin.
- Turkey: As "the fate of Turkey's wildlife lies with various governmental bodies holding often conflicting agendas and handicapped by a lack of skilled personnel and funding" unfortunately "there are no estimates of the number" of Eurasian lynx living in Turkey and possibly their number is declining due to legal hunting of the animal from August to the end of March every year.<sup>[12] [13]</sup>

### Europe

Once the Eurasian Lynx was quite common in all of Europe. By the middle of the 19th century, it had become extirpated in most countries of Central and Western Europe. Recently, there have been successful attempts to reintroduce this lynx to forests.

Status of the Eurasian lynx in various European countries and regions:

- Carpathian Mountains: About 2,800 lynx live in this mountain range in the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia.<sup>[14]</sup> It is the largest contiguous Eurasian Lynx population west of the Russian border.
- Romania: over 2000 lynx live in Romania, including most of the Carpathian population. However, some experts consider these official population numbers to be overestimated.<sup>[15]</sup> Limited hunting is permitted but the

population is stable.

- **Balkan peninsula:** The Balkan Lynx is found in Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Albania, and possibly Greece.<sup>[16]</sup> They can be found in remote mountainous regions of the Balkans, with the largest numbers in remote hills of western Macedonia. The Balkan Lynx is considered a national symbol of Macedonia,<sup>[17]</sup> and it is depicted on the reverse of the Macedonian 5 denars coin, issued in 1993.<sup>[18]</sup> The name of Lynkestis, a Macedonian tribe, is translated as "Land of the Lynx" It has been on the brink of extinction for nearly a century. Numbers are estimated to be around one hundred, and the decline is due to illegal poaching.<sup>[19]</sup> [20]
- **Britain:** It was thought that the lynx had died out in Britain either about 10,000 years ago, after the ice had retreated, or about 4,000 years ago, during a cooler and wetter climate change. However, carbon dating of lynx skulls taken from the National Museums of Scotland and the Craven caves in North Yorkshire show they lived in Britain between 80 and 425 AD.<sup>[21]</sup> [22] A native name for the animal, *lox*, existed in Old English.<sup>[23]</sup> There is interest in reintroducing the lynx to Britain.<sup>[24]</sup>
- **Czech Republic:** In Bohemia, the lynx was exterminated in the 19th century (1830–1890) and in Moravia probably at the turn of the 20th century. After 1945, migration from Slovakia created a small and unstable population in Moravia. In the 1980s, almost 20 specimens were imported from Slovakia and reintroduced in the Šumava area. In early 2006, the population of lynx in the Czech Republic was estimated at 65-105 individuals. Hunting is prohibited, but the lynx is often threatened by poachers.
- **Dinaric Alps and Julian Alps:** Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina are home to between 130 and 200 lynx.<sup>[14]</sup> [25] The Eurasian lynx had been considered extinct in these countries since the beginning of the 20th century. However, a successful reintroduction project was carried out in Slovenia in 1973, when three female and three male lynx from Slovakia were released in the Kočevski forest. Today, lynx can be found in the Slovenian Alps and in the Croatian regions of Gorski kotar and Velebit, spanning the Dinaric Alps and over the Dinara Mountain into western Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croatia's Plitvice Lakes National Park is home to several pairs of lynx. In the three countries, the Eurasian lynx is listed as an endangered species and protected by law. Realistic population estimates are 40 lynx in Slovenia, 40-60 in Croatia, and more than 50 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Croatian massif Risnjak in Risnjak National Park probably got its name from the Croatian word for lynx, *ris*.
- **Fennoscandia:** Fennoscandian lynx were close to extinction in the 1930s-1950s but increased again thanks to protection. In the meantime protective hunting for lynx has been legalized again. The numbers are still on a slow



The lynx (right) on the 5 Macedonian denars



Postage stamp from the Soviet Union, 1988



Lynx in the Numedal Zoo, Norway

increase. Lynx is the only non-domestic feline in Scandinavia.

- Estonia: There are 900 individuals in Estonia according to a 2001 estimate.<sup>[26]</sup> Although 180 lynx were legally hunted in Estonia in 2010, the country still has the highest known density of the species in Europe.<sup>[27]</sup>
- Finland: about 2200-2300 individuals, according to a 2009 estimate.<sup>[28]</sup> Lynx population in Finland have been increasing every year since 1991, and is estimated to be nowadays larger than ever before. Limited hunting is permitted. In 2009 the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry gave a permit for hunting of 340 lynx individuals.<sup>[29]</sup>
- Norway: The Eurasian Lynx is found in stable populations throughout Norway except for the southwestern counties, where they are only found sporadically. The national goal of 65 lynx births was reached in 2007, with 69 to 74 registered lynx born. The population was estimated at 409-439 specimens.<sup>[30]</sup>
- Sweden: Sweden had an estimated population of about 1400 lynx in 2006 and 1250 in 2011. The hunt is controlled by government agencies.<sup>[31]</sup> Hunters who wish to hunt for lynx must register for the so-called "protective hunt," which takes place in March. The hunt may only take place if the population has an annual increase of 300 animals 300 birth situations<sup>[32]</sup>. The government has allowed the requirement to fall to an increase of 250 lynx under "certain circumstances" and still permit the hunt. Even though the goal is rarely met<sup>[33]</sup>, the hunt is always approved. This has led to a steady decrease of the number of lynx in Sweden and protests from larger non-governmental organisations such as The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation<sup>[34]</sup>. Only a few animals are allowed to be shot in each region, depending on the size of the local lynx population and/or how the reindeer herding is affected. Every shot animal and shooting location is controlled by the County Administration, and the carcass is sent away for analysis to National Veterinary Institute<sup>[35]</sup>. The hunter may keep the skin, if a microchip or transponder is attached by the local police authority. The skull of the shot animal can be sent back to the hunter for a fee of about €70. No more than 75 animals in 20 regions were permitted to be shot in 2007, an increase from 51 in 2006 (always about 5 % of the population). In 2006 there were 41 lynx killed outside of hunting, 31 of which were killed in traffic accidents.
- France: The lynx was exterminated by about the year 1900, but was later reintroduced to the Vosges and Pyrenees.
- Germany: The Eurasian Lynx was exterminated in Germany in 1850. It was reintroduced to the Bavarian Forest and the Harz in the 1990s; other areas were populated by lynx immigrating from neighboring France and the Czech Republic. In 2002 the first birth of wild lynx on German territory was announced, following a litter from a pair of lynx in the Harz National Park. Small populations exist also in Saxon Switzerland, Palatinate Forest, and Fichtelgebirge.
- Latvia: According to a 2005 estimate, about 700 animals inhabit areas in Courland and Vidzeme.<sup>[36]</sup>
- Lithuania: Population is estimated at 80-100 animals.<sup>[37]</sup>
- Netherlands: The lynx has been extinct in the Netherlands since the Middle Ages. Although there were some sightings, they probably stem from captive-bred lynx which have escaped or were released to the wild, or may be lynx moving in from Germany, since several of the sightings reported during the 80's & 90's were around the Reichswald area.<sup>[38]</sup>
- Belgium: The lynx was extinct for about 300 years, but started to recolonize the eastern part of the country in the first decade of the 21st century (around Vielsalm and Voeren). These animals are probably individuals from the lynx populations in the Eifel region of Germany or the Vosges region of France, or possibly also illegal introductions by hunters.



*L. lynx* in Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald, Germany

- Poland: The Mammal Research Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences has information about "at least 128 lynx", observed in 2006/2007. The report suggests that the number is underestimated.<sup>[39]</sup>
- Slovakia: The lynx is native to forested areas in Central and East Slovakia. The lynx in Slovakia live mainly in mixed forests at altitudes from 800 to 1000 m. The feline can also be found in many national parks of Slovakia and other protected areas.<sup>[40] [41]</sup>
- Switzerland: The lynx became extinct here in 1915, but was reintroduced in 1971. Swiss lynx also migrated to Austria, where they had also been exterminated. A higher proportion are killed by human causes than by infectious diseases.<sup>[42]</sup>
- Italy: The Lynx was considered extinct since the early 20th century. In recent years, after some verified sightings of a very small population in the parks of central Italy, hopes are rising of having a native population still surviving.<sup>[43]</sup>
- Turkey: As "the fate of Turkey's wildlife lies with various governmental bodies holding often conflicting agendas and handicapped by a lack of skilled personnel and funding" unfortunately "there are no estimates of the number" of Eurasian lynx living in Turkey and possibly their number is declining due to legal hunting of the animal from August to the end of March every year.<sup>[13] [44]</sup>

## Subspecies

Precise classification of the subspecies of the Eurasian Lynx is still the subject of debate, but based on recent interpretation, the list includes:<sup>[45]</sup>

- *Lynx lynx lynx*, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, Western Siberia
- *Lynx lynx carpathicus*, Carpathian Mountains, Central Europe
- *Lynx lynx martinoi*, Balkans
- *Lynx lynx dinniki*, Caucasus
- *Lynx lynx wardi*, Altai Mountains
- *Lynx lynx wrangeli*, Eastern Siberia
- *Lynx lynx isabellinus*, Central Asia
- *Lynx lynx kozlovi*, Central Siberia
- *Lynx lynx stroganovi*, Amur region
- *Lynx lynx sardiniae*, Sardinia†



Scandinavian lynx (*Lynx lynx lynx*), mounted

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## External links

- Eurasian Lynx Online Information System for Europe (<http://www.kora.ch/en/proj/elois/online/index.html>)
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