

Deletion of Bobcat *Lynx rufus* from Appendix II.

Proponent: The United States of America.

Summary: The Bobcat *Lynx rufus* is a medium-sized, spotted cat. It is the most widely distributed native felid in North America, ranging from British Columbia, Canada to Oaxaca, Mexico. It is one of four currently recognised members of the genus *Lynx*, the others being the American Lynx *Lynx canadensis*, the Eurasian Lynx *Lynx lynx* and the Iberian Lynx *Lynx pardinus*. In 1981 a population of 725 000 to 1 017 000 Bobcats was estimated in the USA and this is likely to have increased during the past decade. No population figure is available for Canada, but the Bobcat is not considered threatened. A population assessment of the Bobcat in Mexico should be completed in 2007; anecdotal reports suggest it is relatively abundant in many areas. The Bobcat is currently classified as Least Concern (assessed 2002) in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Management programmes in the USA and Canada are considered the most advanced for commercial exploitation of feline furbearers and to result in sustainable harvests. The species was included in the general listing of the family Felidae in Appendix II in 1977. In 1983, the Parties agreed not to remove it from Appendix II for reasons of similarity of appearance to other spotted cats that were deemed threatened by trade. A proposal to delete *L. rufus* from Appendix II was considered again at CoP 13. As there were still concerns by some Parties about potential look-alike problems, it was agreed that the Animals Committee would carry out a review focussing on the *Lynx* complex to determine whether these species are actually confused in trade or whether look-alike problems are hypothetical. A subsequent TRAFFIC North America study found that, in the opinion of fur industry experts, distinguishing *L. rufus* parts, pieces and derivatives from those of *L. canadensis* (which shares part of its range with *L. rufus*) is not difficult, and can be accomplished with limited experience and/or training. However this study did not consider trade in Eurasian felid species and/or the risk of Eurasian cat species entering the trade by being misidentified as *L. rufus*. The study did not examine the ease or difficulty in distinguishing *L. rufus* from other genera of cats, or what level of identification training Customs and wildlife enforcement officers of all of the CITES Parties would require if *L. rufus* were removed from Appendix II. The possibility of confusing *L. rufus* pelts with skins from a number of Latin American spotted cat species had also not been considered. A consultation with the US National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory revealed that pieces of Bobcat skins cannot be distinguished from other *Lynx* species. However these were a relatively minor part of *Lynx* species trade between 1980 and 2004 when 78% of traded items consisted of whole skins. During the same period, the USA was by far the biggest exporter of *L. rufus* items (exporting or re-exporting 82% of items), followed by Canada (13%) and the remaining 5% by other countries, including less than 0.05% that were exported or re-exported by Mexico. During this period the *documented* volume of illegal trade in *Lynx* spp. was only 0.2% of total trade. This low figure suggests the illegal trade in *Lynx* spp. is not a major problem, although it is not possible to determine how representative these data are of the actual total global illegal trade. The legal and illegal trade in *Lynx* spp. was dominated by *L. rufus* between 1980 and 2004. A recent TRAFFIC North America survey of the fur industry found that international, European and Asian markets seem to prefer *L. rufus* and *L. canadensis* over other *Lynx* species. The proponent points out that the ready availability of legally acquired *L. rufus* in markets is a safeguard against the illegal take and trade of other *Lynx* species. In addition the USA survey of range countries for the Review of the Appendices by the Animals Committee showed that trade in *L. lynx* and *L. pardinus* is well controlled. The legal trade in *L. rufus* skins steadily increased between 1998 and 2004 suggesting there is a growing market for products made from the species. The fur industry survey showed that at the wholesale/manufacturing level, the demand for *L. rufus* has increased over the past five years. This survey also revealed that if *L. rufus* were de-listed, fur industry experts thought the demand and price of its fur might increase or remain the same.

The proponent seeks to delete *Lynx rufus* from Appendix II as neither domestic nor international trade threaten the species, it is very well managed, harvest and trade are well regulated, and inclusion of the species in Appendix II due to similarity of appearance to other felids is no longer warranted.

Analysis: The Bobcat is a widespread species with a large global population, currently classified as Least Concern by IUCN. There is considerable trade in Bobcat fur, but management programmes in the two main range States are believed to result in sustainable harvests. It therefore appears unlikely that deletion from Appendix II will result in the species qualifying for inclusion in the Appendices under Annex 2 a of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev CoP13) in the near future.

However there are still potential look-alike problems with some Eurasian and Latin American cat species, particularly other members of the genus *Lynx*, including *Lynx pardinus*, listed in Appendix I, which have not been considered by studies so far. In particular pieces of *L. rufus* skins cannot be distinguished from other

Lynx species. Although whole skins form the major part of trade items, the second most common items legally traded are skin pieces or scraps. *L. rufus* therefore appears to meet Criterion A of Annex 2 b of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP13), which provides for inclusion in Appendix II for look-alike reasons.

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
<u>Taxonomy</u>	
<u>Range</u>	
<u>IUCN Global Category</u>	
Not listed in 2003 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.	<i>Least Concern (Assessed 2002, Criteria version 3.1)</i>

Biological and trade criteria for retention in Appendix II (Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP13) Annex 2 a)

A) Trade regulation needed to prevent future inclusion in Appendix I

B) Regulation of trade required to ensure that harvest from the wild is not reducing population to level where survival might be threatened by continued harvest or other influences

Lynx rufus was included in Appendix II in 1977 along with all Felidae species that had not already been listed. In 1983 it was agreed by the CoP that its continued listing was based solely on Article II, paragraph 2(b) to ensure effective control of trade in other felids. Monitoring of wild *L. rufus* populations since 1977 continues to show that the species is not threatened, and that harvest and trade are well regulated.

In 1981 it was estimated there were 725 000 to 1 017 000 Bobcats in the USA. Geographic expansion of range and increases in density during the past decade suggest that population size has likely increased since then. In Canada the status of the Bobcat is considered secure i.e. relatively widespread or abundant. Anecdotal reports suggest that Bobcats are relatively abundant in many areas of Mexico and can be found in developed areas. A population assessment in Mexico will be completed in 2007 and data may be available at CoP 14.

In the USA, harvesting levels have varied due to changes in pelt value and fur harvest intensity for other species. Hunting is regulated at the State level on the basis of adaptive management programmes. Managers generally consider 20% of the population per annum to be the maximum sustainable harvest rate.

In Canada, Bobcats are legally harvested in seven provinces resulting in 1 500 to 2 000 pelts per year, the majority from Nova Scotia (65–70%). The Canadian harvest is almost exclusively for pelt collection for the fur trade. There is also a small amount of trade in other Bobcat parts. The harvest is controlled by provincial regulation in Canada. There is a four-month harvest season. Quotas are in place in three provinces, based on harvest statistics and prey abundance surveys. Canadian protections for the Bobcat under provincial/territorial wildlife acts would remain in place if the species was de-listed from CITES, as they are not dependent on listing in the CITES Appendices. Canada is confident that current practices guard against potential threats from trade demand, and that the Bobcat in Canada is not impacted adversely by trade.

Bobcats can occur at high densities of up to 38 resident adults per 25 km². Reduced density is associated with harsher environments such as south-western deserts and the more northern parts of the Bobcat's range (Nowell and Jackson, 1996).

*A TRAFFIC North America survey of the fur industry found that at the wholesale/manufacturing level, over the past five years, the demand for *L. rufus* has increased. At the retail level in North America, the demand varies. The demand for one *Lynx* species probably does influence the demand for another (Cooper and Shadbolt, 2007).*

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
<p>In Mexico, Bobcats are primarily harvested as game, and exports are mainly trophies. The harvest is regulated nationally. It must be demonstrated that harvest rates are less than the natural renewal rate of the wild population affected.</p> <p>Between 1980 and 2004, approximately 1 424 960 <i>Lynx</i> spp. items were legally traded, of which 78% were skins, according to data in the UNEP-WCMC CITES Trade Database. 62% of all legally traded items and 67% of legally traded skins were of <i>L. rufus</i>. The USA exported or re-exported 82% of <i>L. rufus</i> items, Canada 13%, and the remaining 5% were exported or re-exported by other countries including Mexico (less than 0.05%). Legal trade in <i>L. rufus</i> items includes bodies, carvings, claws, feet, hair, garments, leather items, plates etc; however skins account for 83% of items.</p> <p>Between 1980 and 2004, a total of 3 568 <i>Lynx</i> spp. items were recorded as illegal, based on the CITES Trade Database. This is an average of only 143 items per year, and represents only 0.2% of the total (legal and illegal) trade during the period. Of these illegal items, 87% were of <i>L. rufus</i>. 85% of illegal items were skins and 93% of the skins were of <i>L. rufus</i>. This small volume of illegally traded <i>Lynx</i> spp. items does not suggest a major problem with illegal trade in <i>Lynx</i> spp.</p> <p>The proponent notes that a survey of North American and European fur industry representatives that deal with <i>Lynx</i> spp. carried out by TRAFFIC North America suggested that international, European and Asian markets all seem to prefer both <i>L. rufus</i> and <i>L. canadensis</i> over other <i>Lynx</i> species. The proponent points out that the ready availability of legally acquired <i>L. rufus</i> in the market is a safeguard to the illegal take and trade of other <i>Lynx</i> species. The survey of range countries, conducted by the USA for the Review of the Appendices by the Animals Committee, as well as the trade data show that trade in <i>L. lynx</i> and <i>L. pardinus</i> is well controlled, especially by range countries.</p>	<p><i>In Mexico there is no large-scale commercial fur harvest of L. rufus. Hunting of L. rufus is allowed and each year the Secretaria do Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT) issues a number of hunting permits for the species; 17 permits were issued in 2005. Some delegations of SEMARNAT are decentralised and can therefore issue hunting permits for L. rufus without informing the Procuraduria Federal de Proteccion al Ambiente. This is possible because L. rufus is not listed in the Mexican list of species that are legally protected in the country (Cooper and Shadbolt, 2007).</i></p> <p><i>The legal and illegal trade in Lynx was dominated by L. rufus during the period 1980–2004. The numbers of L. rufus skins legally traded declined between 1987 and 1998, but have steadily increased between 1998 and 2004. This recent increase in the number of L. rufus skins traded, suggests that there is a growing market for products made from the species. Any change to the CITES listing of L. rufus could be expected to have a significant impact on this market (Cooper and Shadbolt, 2007).</i></p> <p><i>While the documented volume of illegally traded L. rufus does not suggest there is a major problem with illegal trade in Lynx, the data should be considered only a crude snapshot of illegal trade in Lynx, and not a summary of all illegal trade in the genus. It is not possible to determine how representative these data are of the actual total global illegal trade in Lynx due to the unregulated and unrecorded nature of illegal trade (Cooper and Shadbolt, 2007).</i></p> <p><i>The TRAFFIC North America fur industry survey also found that if L. rufus was de-listed, the demand and price of its fur might increase or remain the same, but not decrease (Cooper and Shadbolt, 2007).</i></p> <p><i>The results of the TRAFFIC North America study cannot be used to predict whether the illegal trade in Lynx or any other cat species, will increase if L. rufus is removed from the CITES Appendices. However, removal could be expected to have a significant impact on the global fur trade due to the reduced permitting requirements and on the associated workload for permit issuing authorities.</i></p> <p><i>The easing of restrictions on trade in L. rufus could be an incentive for increased trade while also removing the need for exporting countries to complete CITES non-detriment findings. De-listing L. rufus from CITES could therefore impact the conservation of the species unless all range states have scientifically sound, enforceable and actively enforced management plans for the species (Cooper and Shadbolt, 2007).</i></p>

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
---------------------------	------------------------

Retention in Appendix II to improve control of other listed species

A) Specimens in trade resemble those of species listed in Appendix II under Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP13) Annex 2 a or listed in Appendix I

In 1983 it was agreed by the CoP that its continued listing was based solely on Article II, paragraph 2(b) to ensure effective control of trade in other felids. Several species have been identified as similar in appearance to Bobcat, including the *Lynx canadensis*, *L. pardinus* and *L. lynx*. Characteristics of the pelage and skull can be used to clearly distinguish *L. rufus* from other members of the genus *Lynx*.

The proponent notes that a TRAFFIC North America study into the CITES-reported illegal trade in *Lynx* species found that in the opinion of fur industry representatives, distinguishing *L. rufus* parts, pieces and derivatives from those of *L. canadensis* is not difficult, and can be accomplished with limited experience and/or training (Cooper and Shadbolt, 2007).

The Division of Scientific Authority's consultation with the USFWS National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory revealed that pieces of Bobcat skins cannot be distinguished from those of the other *Lynx* species. However data held in the UNEP-WCMC Trade Database from 1980–2004 show that the majority (78%) of trade in *Lynx* species consists of skins. Since skins are almost always auctioned as dry skins with fur out and are almost always complete, including the ears and tail, the skins should not present a look-alike problem because the Bobcat can be reliably distinguished from other *Lynx* species by the ears and tail.

CITES taxonomy currently recognises four members of the genus *Lynx*: *L. canadensis*, *L. lynx*, *L. pardinus* and *L. rufus*. *Lynx pardinus*, considered to be Critically Endangered (IUCN, 2006) occurs in Portugal and Spain and was transferred to Appendix I in 1990. All other species are in Appendix II. *Lynx lynx* is widespread in Eurasia, occurring in around 50 range States. It is classified as Near Threatened (assessed 2002) by IUCN.

The TRAFFIC North America report states that their study does not provide a complete global picture of the use of the genus Lynx. In particular, there was no consideration of the trade in the Eurasian species of the genus e.g. for the production of Lynx fur plates. NB a plate is a term used in the manufacturing end of the fur trade, skins are made into 'plates' which are sold to high-end manufacturers and designers, see Shadbolt and Cooper (2007).

In addition no consideration was given to the risk of Asian cat species or Lynx pardinus entering trade by being misidentified as L. rufus. It did not examine the ease or difficulty in distinguishing L. rufus from other genera of cats, or what level of identification training Customs and wildlife enforcement officers of all of the CITES Parties would require if L. rufus was de-listed from Appendix II (keeping in mind they would need to be able to distinguish L. rufus from all other cat species). These aspects were outside the remit of the TRAFFIC North America report (Cooper and Shadbolt, 2007).

In comments on the proposal to remove L. rufus from the Appendices presented to CoP 13, Ray (2004) considered that arguably the pelt of L. rufus could be confused with the skins from a number of Latin American spotted cat species.

The view has been expressed that removal of Bobcat from the Appendices could potentially increase poaching and illegal trade in the fur of protected small cat species, such as the Margay Leopardus wiedii and Ocelot Leopardus pardalis as their fur would be difficult to distinguish from Bobcat fur (Anon, 2006).

Other information

Threats

Loss of habitat to urbanisation is the current threat to populations in the USA.

There are no widespread acute threats to the species in Canada. Some possible threats include decline in prey populations, habitat loss and alteration, and climate change.

Conservation, management and legislation

Bobcat management programmes in the USA and Canada are the most advanced for commercial exploitation of feline furbearers. The management programmes ensure long-term sustainable use of the

Nowell and Jackson (1996) considered that it is probably safe to say that current North American management practices have resulted in sustainable harvests in that they have been sufficient to prevent

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
<p>species and support its conservation. In the USA, Bobcats are classified as game or furbearers and are subsequently harvested through regulation in 38 States. The species is further protected by continuous closed hunting seasons in nine States. It is classified as a State endangered species and thus fully protected in Indiana, Ohio, New Jersey and Iowa, and classified and protected as a State threatened species in Illinois. Four states use statewide harvest quotas to limit the annual harvest. States periodically review species harvest programmes to account for new findings and current advice from experts in their region. Sustainable harvest rates are most often determined by using population models or life table analyses based on population demographic data collected annually from harvested samples. Managers generally consider 20% of the population per annum to be the maximum sustainable harvest rate. Age structure analyses, such as adult-to-yearling ratios have been developed to estimate changes in harvest rates over time.</p> <p>In Canada, the Bobcat is legally protected through various provincial and territorial wildlife acts, under which certain wildlife uses are allowed under specific regulations and only with the provision of licenses or permits. Generally without such a license, the catch, possession, trade, disturbance or destruction of wildlife is prohibited. Mandatory trapper education and mandatory reporting of all take (intended or incidental) is a condition of licensing. Bobcat hunting is regulated in five States, and shooting livestock predators is permitted on a limited basis. The Bobcat is classified as a furbearer and is managed regionally by the provinces and territories. It is harvested in seven out of eight range provinces under provincial regulation; harvest is prohibited in Quebec. The harvest season ranges from 1 November to the end of February. Quotas are in place in British Columbia, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and are set based on harvest statistics and prey abundance surveys.</p> <p>In Mexico, Bobcat harvest is regulated by the General Law of Wildlife and the General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection. Both establish that prior to harvesting, it must be demonstrated that harvest rates are less than the natural renewal rate of the wild population affected. In general the harvest rate is about one specimen per four thousand hectares.</p> <p>Population monitoring</p> <p>Population size is difficult to estimate due to the Bobcat's cryptic and mainly nocturnal behaviour. Indices are used to monitor populations in the USA and Canada including data on vehicle-caused mortalities, hunter and trapper questionnaires, hunter sightings, and winter track counts. Scent station surveys are used to monitor populations in Mexico.</p>	<p><i>widespread and prolonged overharvest. Under such a management regime, the long-term viability [of Bobcat] is unlikely to be impaired, and the commercial use of Bobcat can thus be considered sustainable.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Captive breeding</u></p> <p>In the USA, some States allow and regulate captive breeding Bobcats for commercial purposes, but the current international pelt trade is dominated by wild fur harvests.</p>	

Reviewers:

C.Breitenmoser, U.Breitenmoser, K. Nowell, TRAFFIC North America

References:

- Anon. (2006). Defeat US Government efforts to deregulate the international trade in bobcat fur. <http://animalwelfare.meetup.com/boards/view/viewthread?thread=249532>. Viewed 6 February 2007.
- Cooper, E. and Shadbolt, T. (2007). *An analysis of the CITES-reported illegal trade in Lynx species and fur industry perceptions in North America and Europe*. Technical report commissioned by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. TRAFFIC North America, Washington, USA.
- IUCN. (2006). *2006 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. <http://www.iucnredlist.org>. Viewed on 13 February 2007.
- Nowell, K. and Jackson, P. (Comps and Eds). (1996). *Wild Cats Status Survey and Action Plan*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.
- Ray, J. (2004). *in litt.* to IUCN/TRAFFIC Analyses Team, Cambridge, UK.