

Telephone Conversation Record

To: Tamara Smith, Twin Cities Field Office
From: Shannon Barber-Meyer, USGS, Ely, MN
Date: November 15, 2011
Subject: Lynx incidental take 101

Summary of Conversation

Shannon called to discuss the recent trapping incident that occurred on October 30, 2011. She stated that there is a dog-musher near Isabella that runs dogs near wolf traps that had Shannon's contact information. The musher's employee (Peter McCullen?) called Shannon to report a lynx caught in a fox trap. Shannon called her supervisor, Dave Mech, to discuss the best techniques for releasing the animal. Dave cautioned against drugging the animal and suggested using a catch pole to release the animal. Shannon and two technicians drove to the site. On their way, a trapper passed them who stated he just was at the site and agitated the lynx. When Shannon arrived there were about 7 other people present, including 3 from White Wilderness Dog Sled Adventures and the trapper. The animal was visibly stressed (growling, etc.). The trap was a small foothold trap on a mound of dirt near a beaver dam. There were other traps (multi-purpose) nearby. The technician (Hans) with substantial catch pole experience worked the catch pole, while the other technician (Bob), who had experience with lynx in the west, was to get the trap off of the foot. As soon as they got the catch pole around the neck, the animal got extremely feisty. The animal flipped its body over the dirt pile, began twitching its legs and went limp. The animal had died. Shannon estimated the time to be about 15-30 seconds. Shannon called the MN Conservation Officer (John Velsvaag) and then suggested the trapper (Shawn) take the animal home to ensure that no one else stole the animal from the site. When the CO got to the trapper's house, the trapper turned in a claw that he said fell off of the lynx during the struggle. Ron Kramer (USFWS-LE) retrieved the animal from the CO.

Shannon followed up with a conversation with USDA Wildlife Services, and although they had never trapped a lynx, they discovered that with bobcat, there is a 5-8 second window before the animal suffocates because of the neck musculature. It is not clear if that 5-8 second window is after the animal collapses, or the time that the catch pole is on. Further discussions are needed, as this may have implications to the trapping-release protocol. There is no information in the MN trapping regulations on how to release an incidentally caught lynx.

Shannon suggested that a notched piece of plywood may be a better tool to release lynx in the future, and that perhaps that could be mentioned in the trapping regs.