



Hicks, Scott <scott_hicks@fws.gov>

Fwd: DNR lynx release

1 message

Siekierski, Sara <sara_siekierski@fws.gov>
To: "Hicks, Scott" <scott_hicks@fws.gov>

Mon, Apr 8, 2019 at 1:36 PM

FYI

Sara Siekierski
Refuge Manager
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Seney National Wildlife Refuge
[1674 Refuge Entrance Road](#)
[Seney, Michigan 49883](#)
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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Sara Siekierski** <sara_siekierski@fws.gov>
Date: Wed, Apr 3, 2019 at 1:13 PM
Subject: Re: DNR lynx release
To: Gibbs, Samantha <samantha_gibbs@fws.gov>
Cc: <cathy_nigg@fws.gov>, <patricia_heglund@fws.gov>

Hi Sam,

Thank you for your consideration and recommendation. I plan to follow your recommendation. I do not have specific details on why MN turned it away but I was told they were concerned about potential diseases it may have and if it had been in captivity prior to being trapped by the MI DNR. Admittedly not being an expert on the matter, the blood panel work to test for common infectious diseases and the genetic results I thought may have resolved these concerns raised by MN.

Thank you again.

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 3, 2019, at 1:01 PM, Gibbs, Samantha <samantha_gibbs@fws.gov> wrote:

Hi Sara,

Kelly Straka provided some more information to me regarding the lynx, she mentioned the history of domestic goose predation - this combined with the high percentage of ground nesting birds at Seney NWR and the onset of spring is a worry.

The presence of bobcats on the refuge also concerns me since they would be susceptible to any potential infectious diseases or parasites carried by the lynx.

Do you know what the reasons were behind the state of Minnesota turning down a request to release it there?

Based on the precautionary principle and the fact that the refuge does not likely serve as an important range for the species, my initial recommendation of not releasing the animal at Seney NWR still stands.

Kind regards,
Sam

Samantha E. J. Gibbs, DVM PhD

Wildlife Veterinarian

Wildlife Health office

Natural Resource Program Center

National Wildlife Refuge System

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Stationed at Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge

16450 NW 31st Place, Chiefland, FL 32626

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samantha_gibbs@fws.govFor DOI personnel - please see <https://sites.google.com/a/fws.gov/fws-wildlife-health/>

On Mon, Apr 1, 2019 at 8:37 PM Heglund, Patricia <patricia_heglund@fws.gov> wrote:

Hi Sara and Cathy,

Please see Sam's message below. Sara, feel free to give Sam a call if you have additional questions. She raises some good points.

Pat

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From: **Gibbs, Samantha** <samantha_gibbs@fws.gov>

Date: Mon, Apr 1, 2019 at 10:57 AM

Subject: Re: DNR lynx release

To: Heglund, Patricia <patricia_heglund@fws.gov>

Hi Pat,

Difficult to say without the full history of the animal and a thorough health exam. I can't tell from the email string how or where the animal was found and why it was taken to the zoo? It says below "the zoo has run blood panels to look for common infectious diseases and found none" but that doesn't really tell us much. Are there other wild felids on Seney that we need to think about? Are there other felids at the zoo where it's being held, what diseases might they carry?

Movement and release of wild animals is fraught with unknowns when it comes to diseases - as a general rule it's best not to move animals if at all possible. Both the welfare of the individual being moved and the health of the receiving population need to be considered.

In this case, since Sara mentions that "MI was likely a temporary home for dispersing lynx and would not contribute to the persistence and conservation of lynx in the future." I would lean towards not allowing release on the refuge since there are potential health risks but no obvious gain for the refuge wildlife populations. Maintaining it at the zoo would be a better option.

Kind regards,
Sam

Samantha E. J. Gibbs, DVM PhD

Wildlife Veterinarian

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On Thu, Mar 28, 2019 at 10:36 AM Heglund, Patricia
<patricia_heglund@fws.gov> wrote:

Hi Sam,

Do you have any health reasons we should be cautious about allowing
MI DNR to release this cat on Seney? See email string below.

Pat

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From: **Siekierski, Sara** <sara_siekierski@fws.gov>
Date: Thu, Mar 28, 2019 at 8:32 AM
Subject: Fwd: DNR lynx release
To: Cathy Nigg <cathy_nigg@fws.gov>
Cc: Patricia Heglund <patricia_heglund@fws.gov>

Hi Cathy and Pat,

It sounds like the ES office is allowing the MI DNR to decide where to release the lynx. With that said, they were supportive if Seney was chosen. I spoke with Dan Kennedy from the DNR, endangered species program. He's been working with Scott Hicks since day 1 on this. He said that it is a young female that is probably not even a year old yet. The zoo has run blood panels to look for common infectious diseases and found none. They are waiting on genetic work to see if it can tell us where it may have come from (MN, Ontario, Alaska, etc.) but aren't sure if it will be conclusive. It didn't eat for the first 5 days but has started to eat now. They would hope to release it the week of April 8th. The zoo keepers feel it's behavior is wild, although they have no experience with wild lynx. Dan said he's been getting lots of calls from reporters so I'd definitely need assistance from EA.

The DNR hasn't made a final decision where to release it yet. I told them I'd let them know my decision on whether to be considered or not ASAP.

Pat, do you have any other considerations or thoughts on the matter. As of now, pending the dna results, I'm considering allowing the release on Seney NWR.

Thanks.

Sara Siekierski
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