

Michigan DNR Wildlife Division

Lynx talking points

April 15, 2019

History with this lynx

- On March 16th the DNR was contacted about a potential lynx in Sanilac County that was depredating a farmer's domesticated geese.
- The farmer indicated that the lynx was easily approachable and wasn't spooked by his presence.
- Staff verified, from photos, that the animal was a lynx.
- Since the lynx was reportedly behaving oddly, the DNR and US Fish and Wildlife Service decided to capture the lynx to allow for an evaluation of its health.
- The DNR worked collaboratively with a local trapper to capture the lynx and it was caught the morning of March 17th.
- The DNR has authority to handle federally threatened species via their Cooperative Agreement with the USFWS.
- The Lynx was transferred to the Howell Nature Center wildlife rehabilitation facility on the morning March 18th.
- The Michigan state wildlife veterinarian asked the Detroit Zoological Society to temporarily hold the lynx for the health assessment.
- A Detroit Zoological Society veterinarian and mammal curator picked the lynx up from the Howell Nature Center on Wednesday and transported it to the Detroit Zoo.
- The lynx is a female that measures just over 4 feet long and weighs 18 pounds. Based on her size, teeth and other factors, she is believed to be less than a year old.
- She had a wound on her right rear foot which was cleaned and sutured closed.
- She is receiving fluids, antibiotics and medication to relieve any discomfort. She is also being treated for fleas.
- A blood sample was submitted to the U.S. Forest Service for DNA analysis.
- The US Forest Service National Genomics Center for Wildlife and Fish Conservation analyzed the DNA sample and said it is consistent with DNA from lynx in the Great Lakes region of the US and Canada.
- While the Michigan DNR was working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the next steps for the lynx, the animal received expert care from Detroit Zoological Society life sciences staff.
- The lynx was not viewable to the public while housed at the zoo for her health and safety and to minimize her exposure to people.
- An area in central Schoolcraft County was chosen for the release site as this area is remote with little human development. It also has large blocks of contiguous of public land that have high quality habitat and abundant food sources.
- The lynx was released on Friday, April 12, 2019 with minimal DNR staff present to reduce stress on the animal.
- The release of the lynx went smoothly with out any issues.
- DNR staff present were also able to capture video footage of the release.

History of lynx in Michigan

- The Canada lynx is a species adapted for hunting its primary prey, the snowshoe hare, in the snowy boreal spruce-fir forests of the north (mainly in Canada and Alaska).
- The best available information continues to suggest that resident lynx did not historically and do not currently occur in Michigan and that historical and potential future occurrences of lynx in Michigan most likely represent occasional dispersing lynx.
- In the Lower Peninsula, historical verified lynx records are exceptionally rare. The last known record was from the Au Sable River in Oscoda County in 1917.
- Lynx are most likely to be seen in the UP, where there were 39 verified records as of 1997, and the most recent verified sighting from Sugar Island in 2010.