

Deletion of Bobcat *Lynx rufus* from Appendix II

Proponent: United States of America

Summary: The Bobcat *Lynx rufus* is a medium-sized, spotted cat and is the most widely distributed native felid in North America, ranging from British Columbia, Canada to Oaxaca, Mexico. Its range is approximately 8.7 million km², of which 71% is in the USA, 20% in Mexico and 9% in Canada. The estimated population in the USA in 2008 was 1.4–2.6 million, a considerable increase since the previous estimate in 1981. In Canada, the status of the Bobcat is considered secure, with stable or increasing population trends in range provinces. Recent studies in Mexico revealed that the Bobcat was widespread with moderate densities varying from 0.05 to 0.53 per km²; however, historical data are not sufficient to assess how Mexico's populations have changed over time. Overall, the Bobcat population appears to be healthy and significantly greater than in the early 1980s. The species is currently classified as Least Concern (assessed in 2008) in *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. The Bobcat is widely harvested for its fur, used domestically and traded internationally. Management programmes in the USA and Canada are considered highly advanced for commercial exploitation of feline fur-bearers and result in sustainable harvests.

All Felidae spp. have been listed in the CITES Appendices since 1977. CITES taxonomy currently recognizes four members of the genus *Lynx*: *L. canadensis*, *L. lynx*, *L. pardinus* and *L. rufus*. *L. pardinus*, considered to be Critically Endangered, occurs in Portugal and Spain and was transferred to Appendix I in 1990. The other *Lynx* species are in Appendix II. *L. canadensis* and *L. lynx* are both currently classified as Least Concern by IUCN. *L. lynx* is widespread in Eurasia, occurring in around 50 range States. *L. canadensis* is widespread and abundant over most of its range in Canada and the USA.

In 1983, the Parties agreed not to remove the Bobcat from Appendix II for reasons of similarity of appearance to other spotted cats that were deemed threatened by trade. A proposal to delete *Lynx rufus* from Appendix II was considered again at CoP14, but was again rejected on the basis of continuing concerns about potential look-alike problems. There was concern about potential confusion of skins in trade with those of other *Lynx* species and also with the skins of other species, including a number of Latin American spotted cats such as the Margay *Leopardus wiedii* and Ocelot *L. pardalis*, both included in Appendix I.

CITES trade data indicate that between 1980 and 2008 reported trade in skins of *Lynx* spp. was dominated by *L. rufus*. For the period 2002–2008, trade data indicate gross exports of just under 350 000 skins of *L. rufus* and around 90 000 skins of *L. canadensis*. Recorded trade in other *Lynx* species was very small by comparison: 515 skins of *L. lynx* and one skin of *L. pardinus*. During the same period, the CITES trade database records just under 1000 confiscated and seized whole skins of *L. rufus* along with 37 skins of *L. lynx*, eight skins of *L. canadensis* and one skin of *L. pardinus*. These low figures suggest the illegal trade in *Lynx* spp. is not a major problem, although it is not possible to determine how representative these data are of total illegal trade. A 2007 TRAFFIC North America survey of the fur industry found that European and Asian markets seemed to prefer *L. rufus* and *L. canadensis* to other *Lynx* species. Recent demand from Asian countries with strong economies, such as China, has pushed up pelt prices of *L. rufus*.

Between 2002 and 2006, 95% of all legal trade in skin-related items of Bobcat was in full pelts, which the proponent states can be identified easily. The TRAFFIC survey 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*) was not difficult, and could be accomplished with limited experience and/or training. However, this opinion is disputed. Views of enforcement authorities are not known.

Recently, a web-based and hard copy *Lynx* identification manual has been prepared by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to aid CITES authorities and other enforcement officials in distinguishing full skins and skins lacking a head and tail of *L. rufus* and *Lynx* spp. At the time of writing, the guide is not

generally available; however it has been reviewed by State law enforcement inspectors at USA ports. The USFWS also sent the guide out for review to counterparts in the European Union (EU), Canada and Mexico in December 2009, and will be sending it to a broader audience in January 2010. A preliminary review of the manual by felid specialists indicates that it does not address all aspects of the look-alike issue, as it does not present the coat pattern variation seen in *L. pardinus* and *L. lynx*. In addition, the manual does not cover spotted cats other than *Lynx* species, notably some medium-sized cats from Latin America, Africa and Eurasia.

In 2008, a meeting of Management Authorities and enforcement authorities of *Lynx* range States was held to discuss the degree of illegal trade in *Lynx* spp. and *L. rufus* look-alike concerns. In most cases, range States present reported that illegal poaching of *L. lynx* and *L. pardinus* was related to the protection of livestock and game animals. No documented incidents were reported of *L. lynx* or Appendix-I *L. pardinus* being illegally traded as *L. rufus*. However some *Lynx* range States were unrepresented at the meeting. It was acknowledged that much more information was needed on trade in *Lynx* species between the Russian Federation and China as well as other Asian range States of *Lynx lynx*, including enforcement problems encountered.

The proponent considers 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 US survey of range countries for the Review of the Appendices by the Animals Committee showed that trade in *L. lynx* was well controlled.

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 2a of *Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev CoP14)* in the near future.

However, although a new *Lynx* identification manual has been produced by the USFWS, the look-alike issue with other spotted cat species included in the Appendices appears still not to have been fully resolved. *L. rufus* therefore still appears to meet Criterion A of Annex 2 b of *Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14)*, which provides for inclusion in Appendix II for look-alike reasons.

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
<p data-bbox="170 1211 495 1241">Canada, Mexico and the USA</p> <p data-bbox="170 1323 954 1353"><i>Lynx rufus</i> is not listed in the 2003 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.</p>	<p data-bbox="1055 1054 1182 1083"><u>Taxonomy</u></p> <p data-bbox="1077 1142 1160 1171"><u>Range</u></p> <p data-bbox="990 1254 1247 1283"><u>IUCN Global Category</u></p> <p data-bbox="1137 1323 1973 1377"><i>Least Concern (Assessed 2008, Criteria version 3.1) (IUCN, 2009). Previously assessed as Least Concern in 2002.</i></p>

Biological and trade criteria for retention in Appendix II (Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14) 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 at the meeting of the Conference of the Parties that its continued listing was based solely on Article II, paragraph 2 (b) of the Convention text, 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.

A 2008 survey of *Lynx rufus* showed that its total North American range was approximately 8 708 888 km², including 6 186 819 km² (71% of range) in the USA, 1702 545 km² (20% of range) in Mexico, and 819 524 km² (9% of range) in Canada.

A 2008 survey in the USA showed that the population had grown considerably since 1981, from an estimated 725 000–1 017 000 Bobcats to 1 419 333–2 638 738 in 2008. In Canada, the status of Bobcat is considered secure, i.e. relatively widespread or abundant and with stable or increasing population trends (in Canadian range provinces). Recent studies in Mexico revealed that *L. rufus* was widespread with moderate densities ranging from 0.05 to 0.53/km² and within the range of results reported in the USA, 0.09–1.53/km². However, historical data are not sufficient to assess how Mexico's populations have changed over time. The current status of the *L. rufus* population and distribution in North America appears to be healthy and significantly greater than the early 1980s.

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 harvest is almost exclusively for pelt collection for the fur trade. There is also a small amount of trade in other Bobcat parts. The trade is controlled by provincial regulation. Canadian protections for Bobcat under provincial/territorial wildlife acts would remain in place if the species was de-listed from CITES. Canada is confident that current practices guard against potential threats from trade demand, and that the species in Canada is not impacted adversely by trade.

Breitenmoser and Breitenmoser (2009) recognize that Bobcat populations throughout the USA have increased and are far from being threatened; however they point out that only 27 States were able to present population estimations.

In Mexico, harvesting of *Lynx rufus* has been approved only for game hunting purposes and exports are mainly of trophies. *L. rufus* skins from Mexico are generally considered by the industry to be of low value and are not commercially in demand. Between 2005 and 2009, a total of 26 *L. rufus* were exported from Mexico, primarily as hunting trophies to the USA. The harvest is regulated nationally. It must be demonstrated that harvest rates are less than the natural renewal rate of the wild population affected.

According to data in the CITES trade database, from 2002 to 2006, approximately 380 158 *Lynx* spp items were legally traded, of which 74% were *L. rufus*. The percentages are based on numbers of items and where skin items were recorded by weight or length, these units were converted to numbers of items, using the method described by TRAFFIC North America in Cooper and Shadbolt (2007). The USA exported or re-exported 61% of *L. rufus* items, followed by Canada (30%), and the remaining 9% by other countries, including Mexico (less than 0.05%). Full pelts accounted for 92% of all *L. rufus* items in legal trade between 2002 and 2006. Considering only the skin-related items (e.g. garments, leather products, plates, skins and skin pieces), skins accounted for 95% of legal trade in these *L. rufus* items. According to TRAFFIC North America, skins comprised 96% of *L. rufus* items legally exported from the USA from 2000 to 2004.

The proponent notes that a survey of North American and European fur representatives that deal with *Lynx* spp (Cooper and Shadbolt, 2007) suggested that international, European and Asian markets all seemed to prefer both *L. rufus* and *L. canadensis* over other *Lynx* species.

Fur industry representatives report that if *Lynx rufus* were removed from the Appendices, market demand might increase or remain the same, but would be unlikely to decrease.

The proponent believes that the ready availability of legally acquired *Lynx rufus* in the market is a safeguard against the illegal take and trade of other *Lynx* 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 *L. lynx* and *L. pardinus* is well controlled, especially by range countries.

In converting skin pieces to numbers of whole skins, the number of skin pieces and scraps that is traded as non-full skins, which may be more difficult to identify to the species level, is underestimated.

*At the wholesale/manufacturing level, over the past five years the demand for both *L. canadensis* and *L. rufus* has increased, but demand for *L. rufus* has increased the most. The increase in the number of *L. rufus* traded between 1998 and 2006, suggests there was a growing market for products made from the species during the period (Cooper and Shadbolt, 2007).*

Retention in Appendix II to improve control of other listed species

A) Specimens in trade resemble those of species listed in Appendix II under Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14) Annex 2 a or listed in Appendix I

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

*According to data in the CITES trade database, between 2002 and 2008 gross trade exports of skins of *Lynx rufus* were 347 543 (80% of total), followed by *L. canadensis* 89 850 (20% of total). Trade in other *Lynx* species was very small by comparison: 515 skins of *L. lynx* and one skin for *L. pardinus*. *L. pardinus* was transferred to Appendix I in 1990; all commercial trade in this species is illegal. The largest figure for confiscated and seized whole skins between 2002 and 2008 was also for *L. rufus* (993 skins),*

However, a survey of North American and European fur industry representatives found they were of the opinion that distinguishing *Lynx rufus* parts, pieces, and derivatives from those of *L. canadensis* was not difficult and could be accomplished with limited experience and/or training.

Although the USFWS Division of Scientific Authority's consultation with the USFWS National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory has revealed that some pieces of *Lynx rufus* skins cannot be distinguished from those of the other *Lynx* spp., according to data provided by the CITES trade database, between 2002 and 2006, the majority of trade (89%) in *Lynx* spp. items consisted of skins. Since skins are almost always auctioned as dry skins (prior to tanning) with fur out and are almost always complete, including the ears and tail, the skins should not present a look-alike problem because *L. rufus* can be reliably distinguished from other *Lynx* spp. by the ears and tail.

Trade data indicate that trade in *Lynx* spp. skulls is not significant.

Between 1980 and 2004, a total of 3568 *Lynx* spp. items was recorded as confiscated or seized, based on information in 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 confiscated or seized items, 87% were of *Lynx rufus*. Eighty-five per cent of these items were skins and 93% of the skins were from *L. rufus*. In 2005 and 2006, according to the CITES trade database, 193 items of *Lynx* spp. exported were confiscated or seized. Of these items, 93% were skins, all of which were of *L. rufus* exported from the USA. This small volume of confiscated or seized *Lynx* spp. items does not suggest a major problem with illegal trade in this genus.

To facilitate species identification, the USFWS has produced a web-based *Lynx* identification manual designed for use by CITES authorities and other enforcement officials. The manual has been designed as an aid in distinguishing full skins and skins lacking a head and tail of *Lynx rufus* and *Lynx* spp. and will also be available in

followed by *L. lynx* (37 skins), *L. canadensis* (eight skins) and one skin of *L. pardinus*.

Although the majority of trade (by number of items) is in skins, significant trade in skin pieces and scraps has also been recorded in the CITES trade database. Table 1 shows the countries with the highest recorded gross exports of skin pieces and scraps according to the database since 1998.

Taxon	Country	Total 1998– 2007	Av 1998– 2007	2008
L. C	CA	4793	479.3	189
L. R.	US*	2394 kg	239.4 kg	0
L. R	CA	1970	197	224
L. R.	US	682	68.2	13
L. C.	GR	178	17.8	10
L. R.	GR	169	16.9	212
L. C.	HK	121	12.1	2
L. C.	IT	120	12	0
L. R.	IT	118	11.8	3
L. C.	US	67	6.7	2
L. R.	GR	0	0	31kg
L. R.	GR	0	0	160 m

Table 1: Gross exports of skin pieces and scraps between 1998 and 2008 reported as number of items, except for US * exports combining kg of skin pieces and scraps, and GR re-exports in kg and m, as stated under 2008. L.C. = *L. canadensis*, L. R. = *L. rufus*. 2008 figures may be incomplete. Country codes used are ISO codes. Source: CITES trade database.

Trade has also been reported in garments, by range States and non-range States, of *Lynx rufus*, *L. canadensis* and *L. lynx*, nearly all reported as of wild origin with the country of origin also reported.

The illegal trade data in the CITES trade database are not likely to be complete and will not represent all CITES seizures internationally. It is not possible to determine how representative these data are of the actual total global illegal trade in *Lynx* owing to the unregulated and unrecorded nature of illegal trade (Cooper and Shadbolt, 2007).

According to Cooper and Shadbolt (2007), the results of their 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.

a hard-copy format.

The proponent considers it is highly unlikely that pieces of *Lynx lynx* or *L. pardinus* could enter illegal trade in quantities significant enough to impact populations.

Following a recommendation made in a Felidae working group of the Animals Committee and adopted by that Committee, a meeting was held in Brussels of the management and enforcement authorities of *Lynx* spp. range countries, in October 2008, to discuss possible problems of illegal trade of these species. Case studies of illegal trade in *L. lynx* and *L. pardinus* were also discussed. The primary impetus of the meeting was to address the look-alike issue with *Lynx* and to discern if the concerns about *L. lynx* and *L. pardinus* potentially entering in trade as *L. rufus* were actual or hypothetical. Discussions revealed that in most cases the illegal poaching of *L. lynx* and *L. pardinus* was related to predator control to protect livestock and game animals. No documented incidents were reported of *L. lynx* or *L. pardinus* being traded as *L. rufus*.

Cooper and Shadbolt (2007) found that, at the wholesale/manufacturing level, over the past five years, the demand for L. rufus had increased. At the retail level in North America, the demand varied. The demand for one Lynx species probably does influence the demand for another (Cooper and Shadbolt, 2007).

Lynx rufus pelts can also be confused with the skins of a number of small Latin American spotted cats such as the Margay Leopardus wiedii and Ocelot L. pardalis (IUCN/TRAFFIC, 2007).

The view has been expressed that the removal of Bobcat from the Appendices could potentially increase poaching and illegal trade in some small Latin American spotted cat species (Anon., 2006). Breitenmoser and Breitenmoser (2009) believe that one problematic aspect to consider is the potential risk for the illegal trade in other spotted cats beyond the genus Lynx, if the Bobcat were removed from Appendix II. Although agreeing that distinguishing Bobcat and Canadian Lynx was "not difficult", Breitenmoser and Breitenmoser (2009) still challenge the statement that it "can be accomplished with limited experience and/or training".

The recently prepared US online Lynx identification guide distinguishes between pelts (including heads and tails) of Bobcat and other Lynx species. The guide has been reviewed by State law enforcement inspectors at US ports. The USFWS also sent the guide out for review to counterparts in the EU, Canada and Mexico in December 2009, and will be sending it to a broader audience in January 2010 (Cogliano, USFWS, 2009). The manual is not yet available online but will presumably be located with their other mammal identification guides at: <http://www.lab.fws.gov/idnotes.php#Mammals>

According to Breitenmoser and Breitenmoser (2009), the online guide needs to be considerably improved and completed to reduce the risk of wrong identification. The draft version does not present the coat pattern variation of the species Lynx pardinus and L. lynx. For L. pardinus and L. lynx, only one coat pattern type is shown in the manual for each species but there are at least four different coat patterns for L. lynx and more than one type for L. pardinus. Other criteria mentioned, such as length of the tufts or white underside of the tail are not always easy to judge and can easily be modified on any cat pelt.

A meeting was held in Brussels in 2008 between management and enforcement authorities of Lynx spp. range countries (Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Sweden, USA). The meeting highlighted that more information from Lynx range States not participating in the meeting was required. At the meeting an overview was presented of poaching and seizures of L. lynx and L. pardinus in the EU, based on information submitted by 14 EU Member States for the meeting. While discussions of countries participating in the meeting suggested that poaching of L. lynx was mostly for predator control and domestic animal protection, and that the fur was a "byproduct," it was not

known whether similar conclusions applied to Lynx range States not present in the meeting. It was acknowledged that much more information would be needed on trade in Lynx species between the Russian Federation and China as well as other Asian range States of Lynx lynx, including enforcement problems encountered. The meeting report states that the USA is committed to continuing discussions with the EU and the Russian Federation on the possible illegal trade in Lynx lynx furs (CITES Scientific Authority of USA, 2009).

Discussions at the 2008 meeting of Management and enforcement authorities of some Lynx range countries also revealed that incidents/seizures were reported where L. lynx were illegally harvested because of predator concerns or imported illegally from the Russian Federation to EU countries (CITES Scientific Authority of USA, 2009). Breitenmoser and Breitenmoser (2009) fear not so much the risk of unintentional wrong identification (which most likely will happen on a level that does not threaten any species), but the possibility of intentional wrong declaration of cats that are relatively similar to Bobcats. With an increase in the demand from Asia and rising pelt prices, the risk of similar looking pelts showing up on markets is considerable. This problem has not been addressed in the proposal at all.

B) Compelling other reasons to ensure that effective control of trade in currently listed species is achieved

Other information

There are no widespread threats to *Lynx. rufus* in the USA or Canada.

In Mexico some regions have undergone drastic change in vegetation, which has affected the conservation status of several species. *L. rufus* is still present in some regions with strong human influence, such as localized areas near Mexico City. Recent population studies do not support including Bobcat in the list of "Species at Risk" in Mexico.

Threats

In Mexico, threats to Lynx rufus are related to hunting by farmers because of alleged predation of livestock and habitat destruction. During the recent survey of the species in Mexico, populations found in the centre of the country were low compared with those reported at sites in the north. One possible reason for this is habitat destruction, since central Mexico has large areas of fragmented habitat and high anthropogenic presence (CITES Scientific Authority of Mexico, 2009).

Conservation, management and legislation

Lynx rufus management programmes in the USA and Canada are considered the most advanced for commercial exploitation of feline furbearers. The management programmes ensure long-term sustainable use of the species and support its conservation. Details are provided in the supporting statement.

In Mexico, Bobcat harvesting is regulated by the *General Law of Wildlife* and the *General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection*. Both these laws establish that, prior to harvesting, it must be demonstrated that harvest rates are less

Nowell and Jackson (1996) considered that North American management practices had probably resulted in sustainable harvests, i.e. they have prevented widespread and prolonged over-harvest. 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.

In the case of fur-bearing species in Canada, national co-ordination and communication occurs via the Canadian Furbearer Management Committee, which

than the natural renewal rate of the wild population affected. In general, the harvest rate is about one specimen per 4000 ha. Harvesting of the species has been approved only for game hunting purposes. The same legislation established measures for controlling problematic Bobcat individuals, and specimens are generally captured and relocated for recovery, research or environmental education purposes.

includes representatives of managers of fur-bearing species from all jurisdictions. In addition, the Fur Institute of Canada, of which all provinces/territories are members, acts as a national umbrella organization for the fur industry across Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service, 2009).

In all jurisdictions in Canada the management is through a combination of area-based systems (regions, management units, zones) and time-based systems (seasons) which are regulated by local conditions and can include quotas as necessary. Provincial and territorial governments' management of harvest is conducted with a goal towards long-term population sustainability (Canadian Wildlife Service, 2009).

Captive breeding/artificial propagation

In the USA, some States allow and regulate captive breeding of Bobcats for commercial purposes, but the current international pelt trade is dominated by wild fur harvests from North American countries.

Other comments

Reviewers:

C. Breitenmoser, U. Breitenmoser, TRAFFIC North America, TRAFFIC Europe.

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