

THE PRESENCE AND DISTRIBUTION OF LYNX IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK^{TWS}

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During 2000, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) as a threatened species. Despite evidence that lynx were historically and are still found in Yellowstone National Park (YNP), no rigorous effort has been made to document their presence. This 3-year survey is providing important baseline information necessary to assess the status of the lynx and to manage human influences that are potentially adverse. We used a GIS-based analysis of YNP topography to identify prime lynx habitats and are conducting intensive surveys in prime habitats using ground-based and aircraft-based snow tracking during winter, hair snares to obtain DNA samples during the summer. During winter 2000-2001, we found 1 possible and 1 probable lynx track in YNP. During summer 2001, we installed a 32-transect hair snare grid in east central YNP and obtained 155 hair samples (results pending lab analysis). Basic information on lynx numbers and distribution is required by park policy and by the Lynx Conservation and Assessment Strategy, a guiding document for federal land management agencies. In addition, knowledge of lynx presence and distribution in YNP may further assist neighboring federal and state land management agencies in insuring that land management is conducive to lynx recovery efforts.