
LYNX ECOLOGY IN NORTHWESTERN MONTANA: AN ONGOING FIELD STUDY AT SEELEY LAKE TM

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Since 1998, we collared over 61 lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) near Seeley Lake, MT. To date, we documented 18 (11 males, 7 females) mortalities. Primary mortality factors include starvation (38%), predation by cougars (31%), and trapping/shooting (25%). We have located 13 dens from 7 females and we are quantifying den-site selection at multiple-spatial scales. Abundant woody debris was present at all 13 dens, usually in the form of large diameter logs, but smaller logs are used when in “jackstraw” stacks. We study demography to the extent possible given our sample. Preliminary data suggest litters are small and about 50 percent of kittens survive to independence. We spent considerable effort documenting habitat selection during winter and summer within forest stands and we are just beginning initial analysis of these data. As we complete small-scale studies, we will refocus research to address the following issues: habitat use within non-managed landscapes, habitat selection of den sites, and demography. We are also especially interested in understanding lynx movements relative to landscape and habitat features, including putative corridors and linkage zones.