

FIRST RECORD OF A BOBCAT ON P.E.I.

When Carl Annand of Ellerslie was checking his rabbit snares in Foxley River in early December, he found they were being robbed, apparently by a fox. He therefore set fox snares as well and was surprised on the morning of December 10, 1980 to find he had garnered not a red fox, but a large cat, later verified to be a female bobcat. Although other bobcats have been reported from the west Prince area to the Fish and Wildlife Division, this was the first specimen presented for examination. It is thought that bobcats were introduced to P.E.I. by west Prince residents in the early 1970's; however, since it is illegal to introduce new species to the Island, it is not likely that the details of the case can be substantiated.

Mr. Annand's bobcat was pelted and the carcass examined by furbearer biologist Randall Dibblee and myself. The reproductive tract revealed that this female had not recently produced a litter and in fact the 'unstretched' uterus was characteristic of a barren female. The jaws were sent to Jerry Parker of the Canadian Wildlife Service in Sackville where canine teeth were extracted for aging purposes. Much as the rings on a tree do, annual increments of cementum in most mammals allow an accurate assessment of an animal's age. The P.E.I. bobcat was 9½ years old, not old compared to a 25 year old captive bobcat reported by Young (1958), but a respectable age for one in the wild.

The fact that the bobcat had reached breeding age but apparently had not produced a litter may have resulted from difficulty in finding a mate. Only time will tell whether bobcats have become established here, but for now this remains the only verified record of bobcats on Prince Edward Island. Lynx were here at settlement, but the bobcat is truly a new addition to our faunal records.

Reference: Young, Stanley P., 1958. The bobcat of North America. Wildlife Management Institute and University of Nebraska Press. Lincoln, Nebraska. 193 pp.

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