Activity Patterns of Urban Bobcats (*Lynx rufus*) in West Reno

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Abstract

Bobcats (*Lynx rufus*), who are wide-ranging North American felids, have adapted to a variety of environments including the urban and suburban environment. Anecdotally, bobcat sightings have increased in Reno in the last few years. To date, little to no research has been conducted on Nevada's bobcat populations, including the urban bobcats located in Reno. For the past year, we have used camera traps at 16 locations in West Reno to detect the presence and activity patterns of bobcats. Two cameras were set up at each location. Cameras were triggered to take a photo by movement and heat; cameras are set to take 3 photos per event with no delay between events. SD cards were collected monthly and photos were scanned for the presence of bobcats and notes were taken on their behavior. We documented time, date, and location for each photo. We have evidence of at least one bobcat at 9 of 16 locations. Most of the bobcat activity occurred at night between the hours of 10 pm and 6 am. Most of our locations caught the bobcats on both cameras, so we have since reduced to one camera at each location. We found that there was an increase in activity during the winter months. Currently our camera traps have remained out in 14 locations and we continue to document the activity patterns of these cats. We hope to expand this project by collaring cats to obtain more information about movement patterns, diet, sex ratios, and disease presence. This is the first study at TMCC that provides undergraduates with wildlife research experience.