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### UNH Research Finds N.H. Bobcats Roam in Different Areas than Ancestors

Lori Tyler Gula  
*University of New Hampshire*

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the region and a higher abundance of prey in developed areas, such as the squirrels that visit your bird feeder, also are likely impacting the movement of bobcats. Overall, bobcats are much more abundant today than they were in the 1950s and 1960s.”

Researchers also discovered that some highways aligned with barriers to bobcat movement while others did not. Carroll explained that the presence of subpopulations of bobcats suggests that there is less bobcat movement going between subpopulations than there is within subpopulations.

“There is some sort of an ecological or physical barrier between the subpopulations that makes bobcats reluctant to cross. Some borders between subpopulations aligned closely with the location of highways, especially parts of I-89. However, other parts of I-89 didn't appear to be a barrier, and some of the sharpest divisions between subpopulations did not correspond to the presence of a highway or any other obvious physical feature,” he said.

Broadly, Litvaitis and Carroll are investigating how humans can affect wildlife species, using bobcats as a case study. They hypothesize that an abundance of new food sources in human-dominated areas may make bobcats less likely to move away from those areas, even though they can.

“The large carnivores that used to roam across New Hampshire—mountain lions and wolves—have been eliminated,” he said. “Smaller predators like bobcats and coyotes are now the top predators in the region. Those species have a disproportionately large impact on wildlife communities so it's critical that we keep their populations healthy. The more knowledge we have about the biology and ecology of bobcat populations, the better we will be able to conserve and coexist with them.”

This research is presented in the journal *Conservation Genetics* ([https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A\\_\\_link.springer.com\\_article\\_10.1007\\_s10592-2D019-2D01170-2D8&d=DwMFaQ&c=c6MrceVCY5m5A\\_KAUkrdoA&r=gk49I-YqmOGbrtzX3HbAPq8XDfJkq7dTqtXuPwlyXo&m=W2FyROXZaSfqOI3QM8Ronx79Ca\\_vgeRPbB4DfWSNGXU&s=kLM0wH-wSGyyXFdq5778DUB4Cb0bXk9PbrhrULeHrw8&e=](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__link.springer.com_article_10.1007_s10592-2D019-2D01170-2D8&d=DwMFaQ&c=c6MrceVCY5m5A_KAUkrdoA&r=gk49I-YqmOGbrtzX3HbAPq8XDfJkq7dTqtXuPwlyXo&m=W2FyROXZaSfqOI3QM8Ronx79Ca_vgeRPbB4DfWSNGXU&s=kLM0wH-wSGyyXFdq5778DUB4Cb0bXk9PbrhrULeHrw8&e=)). This material is based upon work supported by the NH Agricultural Experiment Station, through joint funding of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under award number 233076 1009906, and the state of New Hampshire. This work also was supported by the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship program, UNH Graduate School Dissertation Year Fellowship, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Quebec Ministry of Forests, Wildlife, and Parks, and individual hunters and trappers.

Founded in 1887, the NH Agricultural Experiment Station (<http://colsa.unh.edu/nhaes>) at the UNH College of Life Sciences and Agriculture (<https://colsa.unh.edu/>) is UNH's original research center and an elemental component of New Hampshire's land-grant university heritage and mission.

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#### Editor's Notes:

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<https://colsa.unh.edu/nhaes/sites/default/files/media/images/bobcat.jpg> (<https://colsa.unh.edu/nhaes/sites/default/files/media/images/bobcat.jpg>)

A young bobcat at the Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina. Credit: Allie Stewart, USFWS.

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