

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
WILDLIFE DIVISION  
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909

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BOBCAT SURVEY - 1981-82

by

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Introduction

Pressure by concerned organizations and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) has caused the Fish and Wildlife Service to compile comprehensive data on some furbearers. This documentation is necessary to verify the stability of populations and to justify continued harvesting and exportation of pelts.

During the winter of 1981-82, the Wildlife Division undertook collection of hunter and trapper harvested bobcats (Felis rufus) in order to increase knowledge of this species and to evaluate possible field techniques for sex and age determination.

Skinned bobcat carcasses were obtained from collectors throughout Michigan and the following determinations made: sex, age, weight, skeletal and dental measurements, physical condition, stomach contents, parasites present and reproductive history. This information was tabulated and the data summarized for each region.

Materials and Methods

Each skinned bobcat carcass was weighed and the sex of the animal determined. Various skeletal and dental measurements were taken (Appendix I). A complete necropsy examination was performed with each organ system being examined and any abnormalities recorded. A lower canine was used to estimate age by cementum layer counts following the method of Crowe (1975). Physical condition estimates were made by examining kidney, mandibular and femur fat (Purol 1977, Riney 1955).

Reproductive history was established by ovarian inspection and by classification of corpora lutea (C.L.) condition (Crowe 1975). Female reproductive tracts were preserved in Mossman's AFA Fixative and the total number of C.L. determined by thin sectioning (1-3 mm) of the ovaries.

Adult parasites found during examination of the carcass were preserved in 10% formalin for future identification. A 2-4 gm fecal sample was preserved in 10% formalin and examined by the sugar flotation method for identification of parasites (eggs). Stomach contents were examined and identified.



## Results and Discussion

The material analyzed for physical condition estimates varied in reliability. Kidney fat (Tables 6 and 13) and femur marrow fat levels were significant and measurable whereas mandibular marrow fat levels were not. The mandible appears to be a poor location for fat deposition.

There appears to be a correlation between the sex and weight of the bobcats in both regions with males weighing more than females of the same age (Tables 3 and 10). There is, however, an overlap in the weights between age classes. The skeletal (Tables 4 and 11) and dental measurements (Tables 5 and 12) may also show this correlation, but the data will be analyzed at a later date.

### Region I

The sex ratio of the bobcats examined from Region I (Table 1) was 41:28, males to females, agreeing with the findings of Erickson (1955), Hoppe (1980), and Cooley et al. (1981). The young-of-the-year percentage was down slightly from last year, but the age groups 0 to 3 years again made up over 80% of the total animals harvested and submitted. The yearling age class was greatest in occurrence.

Because of the small sample size, the C.L. counts (Table 2) may not be reflective of the population. However, nearly 40 percent of the 1-2 year age class animals showed evidence of having cycled twice in one breeding season. This is the second year in a row that this phenomena has been seen in the Region I bobcats.

Only 1.4% of the bobcats examined were free from parasites (Table 7). Over three quarters of the bobcats had tapeworms of the genera Taenia and Spirometra and/or ascarids of the genus Toxocara. Both of these rates of infection are considerably higher than last year's collection (Cooley et al. 1981).

### Region II

The sex ratio of the bobcats examined from Region II (Table 8) was skewed heavily towards males (20:7). This is a much higher figure than has been reported before. Over forty percent of the animals were young-of-the-year, and nearly 75 percent were in the age classes 0-3 years.

Because of the small number of females submitted it is difficult to conclude much from the C.L. counts (Table 9), but it does not appear that there has been a heat period recycling.

Eleven percent of the bobcats from Region II were free of parasites (Table 14). As was seen last year, the highest incidence of infection (74%) was seen with the ascarids (Toxocara sp.), while the tapeworms (Spirocerca sp. and Taenia sp.) were next highest with 33%.

## Management Application

The collection and examination of bobcat carcasses provided additional baseline information. The development of new sexing and aging techniques may allow for easier

data collection in the future. This data, in conjunction with future information, will allow the Wildlife Division to develop a management model and hopefully assure Michigan trappers and hunters the opportunity to harvest and export this furbearing species in the future.

#### Acknowledgements

We thank the bobcat trappers and hunters for their voluntary cooperation and the biologists and technicians for gathering the bobcat carcasses and submitting them for examination. Thanks is also extended to Joyce Gooder and Jan Miller who assisted in the preparation of this report.

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Table 1. Estimated age ratio of Region I bobcats

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Sex</u>		<u>Percent of Total</u>
		<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	
$\frac{1}{2}$	24	13	11	34.78
$1\frac{1}{2}$	25	12	13	36.23
$2\frac{1}{2}$	9	6	3	13.04
$3\frac{1}{2}$	2	2	0	2.90
$4\frac{1}{2}$	4	4	0	5.80
$5\frac{1}{2}$	0	-	-	-
$6\frac{1}{2}$	0	-	-	-
$7\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	0	1.45
$8\frac{1}{2}$	2	1	1	2.90
$9\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	0	1.45
Adult	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1.45</u>
TOTALS	69	41	28	100.00

Table 2. Reproductive data analysis of female bobcats in Region I

<u>Age</u>	<u>No. of Corpora Lutea/Set of Ovaries</u>
$\frac{1}{2}$	0
$1\frac{1}{2}$	3-10
$2\frac{1}{2}$	8-11
$3\frac{1}{2}$	---
$4\frac{1}{2}$	---
$5\frac{1}{2}$	---
$6\frac{1}{2}$	---
$7\frac{1}{2}$	---
$8\frac{1}{2}$	25

Table 3. Mean weight (lbs.) of Region I bobcats (skinned carcasses)

Age	Male	Female
0-1	10.6 (6.0-15.4)	8.2 (5.0-15.1)
1-2	23.5 (18.0-27.2)	12.7 (7.7-16.0)
2-3	22.0 (15.3-25.4)	15.4 (11.5-20.1)
3-4	26.2 (23.1-29.3)	---
4-5	26.3 (22.2-29.4)	---
5-6	---	---
6-7	---	---
7-8	22.7	---
8-9	17.5	17.6
9-10	21.5	---
Adult	26.5	---

Table 4. Mean skeletal measurements of Region I bobcats (skinned carcasses)

Age & Sex		Body Length (mm)	Skull Length (mm)	Skull Width (mm)	Hind Ft. Length (mm)	Mandible Length (mm)
0-1	M	616.16(550-650)	115.08(109-121)	77.62(74-83)	158.83(149-168)	73.54(69-78)
0-1	F	570.47(535-620)	107.30(100-113)	73.00(70-78)	142.44(125-157)	68.70(64-76)
1-2	M	712.43(685-810)	137.42(128-142)	93.42(86-97)	176.67(165-185)	88.83(82-93)
1-2	F	689.62(670-710)	121.77(119-127)	82.38(76-88)	157.55(144-171)	80.31(76-88)
2-3	M	763.28(740-810)	140.00(136-147)	95.67(92-100)	169.50(150-180)	90.67(86-94)
2-3	F	710.00(690-740)	126.00(122-131)	87.67(84-95)	163.67(157-170)	84.33(77-88)
3-4	M	805.00(800-810)	144.00(138-150)	99.50(95-104)	175.00(170-180)	92.50(88-97)
3-4	F	---	---	---	---	---
4-5	M	795.00(785-805)	141.25(136-144)	98.25(96-100)	172.50(160-184)	97.00(93-106)
4-5	F	---	---	---	---	---
5-6	M	---	---	---	---	---
5-6	F	---	---	---	---	---
6-7	M	---	---	---	---	---
6-7	F	---	---	---	---	---
7-8	M	775.00	133.00	96.00	155.00	89.00
7-8	F	---	---	---	---	---
8-9	M	760.00	NA	94.00	NA	NA
8-9	F	725.00	127.00	92.00	NA	86.00
9-10	M	765.00	140.00	101.00	170.00	93.00
9-10	F	---	---	---	---	---
Adult	M	800.00	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult	F	---	---	---	---	---

Table 8. Estimated age ratio of Region II bobcats

Age	Number	Sex		Percent of Total
		M	F	
0-1	11	9	2	40.8
1-2	6	3	3	22.2
2-3	3	2	1	11.1
3-4	1	1	0	3.7
4-5	3	2	1	11.1
5-6	0	0	0	0
6-7	2	2	0	7.4
Adult	1	1	0	3.7
TOTALS	27	20	7	100.0

Table 9. Reproductive data analysis of female bobcats in Region II

Age	No. of Corpora Lutea/Set of Ovaries
0-1	0
1-2	3-6
2-3	9
3-4	---
4-5	---
5-6	---
6-7	---
Adult	---

Table 10. Mean weight (lbs.) of Region II bobcats (skinned carcasses)

Age	Male	Female
0-1	12.78 (4.5-18.8)	10.35 (9.9-10.8)
1-2	22.07 (19.8-24.5)	14.33 (13.1-16.8)
2-3	21.65 (20.2-23.1)	15.10
3-4	28.40	---
4-5	26.60	10.10 (eviscerated)
5-6	---	---
6-7	---	---
Adult	25.10 (decapitated)	---



Table 11. Mean skeletal measurements of Region II bobcats (skinned carcasses)

Age and Sex		Body Length (mm)	Skull Length (mm)	Skull Width (mm)	Hind Ft. Length (mm)	Mandible Length (mm)
0-1	M	623.33(490-700)	115.67(94-127)	77.33(69-81)	156.14(148-165)	72.00(58-77)
0-1	F	605.00(570-640)	113.50(110-117)	77.00(73-81)	140.00	72.50(69-76)
1-2	M	750.00(730-760)	136.33(131-139)	92.33(91-95)	171.00(165-177)	88.00(86-90)
1-2	F	690.00(670-720)	121.67(118-127)	82.00(80-85)	154.50(153-156)	78.33(76-81)
2-3	M	760.00	135.00(133-137)	91.50(89-94)	168.00(167-169)	90.00
2-3	F	680.00	114.00	84.00	NA	NA
3-4	M	790.00	145.00	99.00	172.00	97.00
3-4	F	---	---	---	---	---
4-5	M	810.00(790-830)	147.00	101.00	170.00	94.00(93-95)
4-5	F	690.00	124.00	86.00	155.00	84.00
5-6	M	---	---	---	---	---
5-6	F	---	---	---	---	---
6-7	M	762.50(760-765)	137.00(135-139)	94.50(94-95)	NA	90.50(90-91)
6-7	F	---	---	---	---	---
Adult	M	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA





## 1981-82 BIRCAT DATA

Region 11

Loc	County	Date Harvested	Sex	Age	Wt. (lbs.) (skinned)	Stomach Contents	Parasites	Fecal Examination	Kidney Fat Index	Mandibular Fat (g)	Femur Fat (g)	Corpus Uterus	Body Length (mm)	Skull Length (mm)	Skull Width (mm)	Mid Foot Length (mm)	Mandible Length (mm)	Casting Root Length (mm)	Maximum Casting Root Width (mm)	Casting Root Width (mm)	Pulp Cavity at Sighting (mm)	Pulp Cavity at Width (mm)
44	Alcona	01-02-82	243	44	13.7	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
46	Alcona	01-18-82	211	46	25.1	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
69	Alcona	02-28-82	332	69	28.5	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
47	Alcona	01-18-82	1015	47	28.5	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
77	Alcona	01-17-82	1095	77	9.8	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
64	Alcona	01-17-82	1091	64	28.4	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
70	Alcona	01-18-82	1037	70	12.9	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
81	Alcona	01-18-82	1038	81	12.8	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
67	Alcona	01-30-82	1014	67	NA	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
79	Alcona	01-01-82	344	79	11.2	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
40	Alcona	11-23-81	301	40	4.5	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
76	Alcona	01-02-82	1005	76	21.9	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
66	Alcona	01-03-82	1004	66	28.6	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
45	Alcona	01-13-82	345	45	10.1	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
49	Alcona	01-13-82	346	49	12.5	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
65	Alcona	01-13-82	1012	65	NA	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
66	Alcona	01-13-82	1012	66	NA	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
71	Alcona	01-13-82	1013	71	28.1	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
92	Alcona	02-23-82	1017	92	34.9	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
83	Alcona	02-23-82	1018	83	20.2	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
43	Alcona	11-18-81	3272	43	15.1	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
32	Alcona	10-10-81	Not sealed	32	13.1	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
80	Alcona	01-02-82	2705	80	10.8	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
94	Alcona	12-10-81	Not sealed	94	19.8	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00
93	Alcona	12-10-81	Not sealed	93	13.1	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00

## 1981-82 BIRCAT DATA

Region 11

Loc	County	Date Harvested	Sex	Age	Wt. (lbs.) (skinned)	Stomach Contents	Parasites	Fecal Examination	Kidney Fat Index	Mandibular Fat (g)	Femur Fat (g)	Corpus Uterus	Body Length (mm)	Skull Length (mm)	Skull Width (mm)	Mid Foot Length (mm)	Mandible Length (mm)	Casting Root Length (mm)	Maximum Casting Root Width (mm)	Casting Root Width (mm)	Pulp Cavity at Sighting (mm)	Pulp Cavity at Width (mm)
1	Alcona	12-10-81	Not sealed	1	23.3	Deer hair	Negative	Negative	106	15.61	---	---	650	119	80	160	77	15.10	6.11	6.00	5.90	4.00

