

# EXPECTED DIFFERENCES IN TRACKS AND TRACK PATTERNS BETWEEN COYOTES, DOGS AND WOLVES IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

## Distinguishing Track Characteristics

Species	General Shape	Walking Stride	Print Size (Front Foot)	Track Pattern
Coyote	4 toes, oval shaped track. Front nails often close together. Side nails often do not register.	17½"-26"	Length: 2"-3½" Width: 1"-2½"	Trail pattern usually is in a straight line. Walking pattern is typically direct registering (track in track).
Dog	Similar to wolves and coyotes. Inner toes often splayed outwards.	Varies with breed	Varies with breed	Trail pattern sloppy, wandering, not usually in a straight line. Walking pattern is typically double registering.
Wolf*	4 toes, symmetrical track, longer than wide, more rounded than a coyote, nail marks not attached to toe mark (same as coyote), 4 nails register.	20½"-28½"	Length: 4"-4¾" Width: 2½"-3¼"	Trail pattern usually is in a straight line. Walking pattern is typically direct registering.

\*Measurements pertain to the subspecies of wolf most likely to enter New Hampshire.



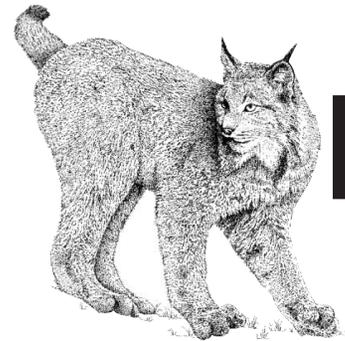
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New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

## Recommendations to Trappers:

# How to Avoid the Incidental Taking of



# LYNX

and

# WOLVES



**KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN: LYNX AND BOBCAT AND WOLF AND COYOTE**

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## HOW TO AVOID THE INCIDENTAL TAKE OF LYNX IN NEW HAMPSHIRE (USFWS, AFWA)

### **Recommendations to Avoid Catching Lynx in Trap Sets:**

- Do not set traps where lynx tracks are observed or lynx are known to be present.
- Use a #2 or smaller trap or padded #3 trap.
- Make fisher sets on leaning poles no larger than 4 inches in diameter and set at a 45 degree (or greater) angle with trap and bait placed at least four feet above the ground or snow level. Reposition your sets as snowfall accumulates.
- Do not suspend flags or sight-attractants near traps.
- Use tainted baits and avoid using parts of rabbits or hares as bait.
- Remove conibear traps if lynx tracks are observed in the vicinity of a set.

### **Preventing Injury and Releasing Lynx from Traps:**

- Always be prepared with a restraining tool to handle a lynx when trapping in lynx habitat.
- Stake the trap so that a lynx cannot get entangled around a solid object (even a small sapling) after being captured and keep the catch circle clear of solid objects.
- Trap attachment chains should be less than 9½” long and be equipped with at least two swivels.
- Use of padded traps or traps with offset jaws can reduce injury.
- Use a catchpole to release a lynx. Tighten the catchpole loop only sufficiently to restrain the lynx without cutting off its air supply. Then quickly remove the trap and release the catchpole loop.

### **Tracks:**

**In deep snow, lynx tracks** are generally less distinct than **bobcat tracks**, since lynx toe pads are not visible as a result of abundant foot hair. However, in wet or compacted snow, lynx toe pads are visible, which can be confused with bobcat tracks. In these situations, stride or track size will help discern lynx from bobcat. Back feet often follow in the front foot tracks of both species. When walking, the stride (distance between footprints of the opposite foot) is 6–14 inches for bobcats and 11–18 inches for lynx. Both bobcat and lynx track trails tend to “wander” compared with the more straight-line patterns of wild canids such as foxes or coyotes. Lynx and bobcats travel and hunt with a deliberate and methodical walking pattern, rarely bounding unless chasing prey.

**In dirt, lynx tracks** are approximately 3¼ - 3¾ inches long and 3 - 3⅜ inches wide; in snow, up to 5½ inches long and 5½ inches wide.

**In dirt, bobcat tracks** are approximately 1⅞ - 2½ inches long and 1⅞ - 2⅝ inches wide; in snow, up to 2½ inches long and 2½ inches wide. Both bobcats and lynx have 4 toe pads on the front and hind feet. Claw marks typically do not show as they do with foxes or coyotes.



LYNX



BOBCAT

More information can be found at: [www.fws.gov/international/animals/lynx.htm](http://www.fws.gov/international/animals/lynx.htm)

## HOW TO AVOID THE INCIDENTAL TAKE OF WOLVES

### **Wolves in New Hampshire?**

Wolves are known to travel great distances and are capable of dispersing from Canada to the Northeast United States. Wolves have been documented in Massachusetts, New York and Maine. With the return of moose and beaver populations, many believe it is a matter of time before wolves return to New Hampshire.

### **Is it a Wolf?**

Coyotes with body weights above 50 pounds are rare. Any canid (member of the dog family) 50 pounds or greater may be a wolf or wolf hybrid. If you have a canid in a trap that is unusually large, over 4.5 ft. in length (from tip of tale to nose) or in excess of 50 pounds, it may be a wolf. If you are unsure what kind of canid species you are dealing with, please contact the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department. Do not dispatch any canid in question. Similarly, hunters should exercise extreme care in distinguishing coyotes and wolves. Always err on the side of caution. The failure to do so could have significant ecological and legal consequences.

Wolves dispersing into New Hampshire are likely to be from the Laurentides Reserve of Quebec and range from 55–105 pounds in weight. Wolves have proportionately longer legs, frame, and larger feet than coyotes. Compared to coyote tracks, wolf tracks are larger and rounder. Wolf coloration ranges from black to very light beige. Many wolves are tan with grizzled black and gray; similar to coyotes.



CANID

*See the back of this brochure for comparison of canid track patterns.*

### **BOBCATS**

There is no open season for the taking of bobcats in New Hampshire. Trappers are urged to employ appropriate measures to prevent the incidental take of bobcats.

