



Wildlife Window: BOBCAT

Stealthy, Secretive & Beautiful - Have You Caught A Glimpse?

By the Rivendell Ponds & Preserves Committee

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Florida is home to two predatory big cats: the wild **Bobcat** and the Panther. The Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) is the smaller of the two and is more likely to be spotted in the wild – or even in your Rivendell backyard. Have you experienced a sighting? Awe inspiring!

Appearance

Bobcats are about twice the size of a domestic cat. They are generally tan to yellowish brown with dark brown or black streaks. The under parts are usually white with black spots and the insides of the legs are marked with black bars. The ears are pointed with short, black tufts and the tail is short giving the appearance of being "bobbed" (hence the name "Bobcat"). The young have mottled or spotted fur with more distinct facial markings than the adults. A male weighs 20-30 pounds, females 15-25 pounds.



(Bob Frank photo)

Habitat

Bobcats thrive throughout Florida in deep forest, swamps, and hammock land – including our own community wetlands and preserves. Thick patches of saw palmetto and dense shrub thickets are important as den and resting sites. In Florida, squirrels, rabbits and rats are the primary prey species. They hunt at night using both ambush and mobile techniques. Very efficient hunters, they use their acute hearing and sight to detect prey at the slightest sound or movement. They can kill prey 10 times their own weight.

FUN FACT:

Bobcats are very patient hunters and will change their hunt strategy on the fly (i.e quickly go from "stealth" to "chase", as conditions demand). Some cultures believe that spiritually, the Bobcat can show us (humans) that we, too, must be patient in the pursuit of our goals. While it is important for us to have a strategy in our lives, it is equally essential that we be able to adapt to changing situations.

Protect their Habitats

Urbanization and toxic chemicals continue to threaten precious wildlife habitats. Let's keep our ponds and preserves healthy and attractive for these wonderful Bobcats and other wildlife friends. We can enjoy their beauty and enhance our quality of life, plus keep our property values strong. We remind you to view the amazing P&P Wildlife Photo Gallery at www.rivendellcommunity.com/ponds.