

siderably smaller home ranges in the spring-summer months (16 km<sup>2</sup>) as compared to the fall-winter months (26 km<sup>2</sup>), which is likely due to behavior associated with denning and kitten-rearing activity. Intensive monitoring of female bobcats revealed that large brush piles and areas of dense understory are typically used as den sites. Bobcats are selecting forest habitat approximately twice as frequently as any other habitat class, including grassland and CRP, both at the landscape and the local scale. Bobcats are frequently relocated along river and stream corridors, which is where much of the forest habitat in Iowa is found. Habitat models indicate that home ranges are smaller in landscapes where forest and grassland habitat is less fragmented and larger in landscapes where forest and grassland habitat is more fragmented. Models also indicate that home ranges are more circular in landscapes with a few large

patches of forest. Researchers have recorded dispersal of 12 juvenile bobcats thus far, and have observed straight-line dispersal distances of up to 141 km.

### Reproduction and Population Growth

In addition to live-capture, bobcat carcasses are collected statewide in order to gather demographic information. To date, 352 bobcat carcasses have been collected and necropsied, most of which died from automobile collisions and incidental trapping. Carcasses provide researchers with standard measurements, age and diet information, reproduction estimates, and DNA samples. The average age of the Iowa bobcat population is 1.3 years and the oldest bobcat was aged at 9 years. Bobcats less than 2 years of age comprise 66% of the age distribution. Mean litter size, as determined from placental scars, ranges from 2-3 kittens. The preg-

nancy rate of 1-2 year old bobcats is 75%, whereas that of older females is approximately 97%. The observed pregnancy rate of the 1-2 year old bobcats is almost twice that of previous reports, which is consistent with the demography of an expanding population. A population projection model developed using all known demographic data indicates that the bobcat population in Iowa is growing at a relatively high rate.

While the information collected so far indicates that bobcats are doing well in south-central Iowa it is still unclear if they will be able to expand and persist in substantial numbers in the more highly agricultural areas of Iowa. Continued research will help to elucidate the ecological mechanisms enabling bobcats to recolonize Iowa.

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