



Species Survival Network

CITES COP15 2010 • Doha, Qatar



Iberian lynx (*Lynx pardinus*)

Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)

Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*)

Bobcat *Lynx rufus*

CoP15 Prop. 2 (United States of America) Remove from Appendix II as the species no longer merits listing as per Article II, paragraph 2(b), in accordance with Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14), Criterion A in Annex 2b.

SSN VIEW: OPPOSE Adoption of Proposal

THE BOBCAT IS LISTED ON CITES APPENDIX II BECAUSE IT IS SIMILAR IN APPEARANCE TO OTHER FELIDS.

The bobcat was first listed on Appendix II under the higher taxon listing of the cat family Felidae in 1977. At CoP4, the Parties affirmed that the bobcat should remain on Appendix II because specimens in trade often cannot be distinguished from those of other lynx species and in order to ensure effective control of trade in these other felids (in accordance with Article II, paragraph 2(b) and Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14), Annex 2b, Criterion A).

THE PARTIES REJECTED A NEARLY IDENTICAL PROPOSAL AT COP14.

This is the fourth time that the U.S. is proposing to remove the bobcat from CITES Appendix II. The last attempt was at CoP14 where the proposal was soundly rejected by 28 votes in favor, 63 against, and 9 abstentions. Opposition to the CoP14 proposal was led by European range States of the Critically Endangered **Iberian lynx** (*Lynx pardinus*) and the **Eurasian lynx** (*Lynx lynx*) (of which there are Critically Endangered populations). Their concern was that bobcat specimens in trade cannot be distinguished from those of these lynx species; and that removing the bobcat from CITES Appendix II would facilitate illegal trade in these European lynx species.

INCLUSION OF THE BOBCAT IN APPENDIX II DUE TO SIMILARITY OF APPEARANCE TO OTHER FELIDS REMAINS WARRANTED.

Bobcat specimens are similar in appearance to skins, parts and products of other small spotted cats listed on CITES Appendix I (Iberian lynx) or on Appendix II (i.e. Eurasian lynx). There is tremendous variation in pelt color and spotting

pattern within and among lynx species; for example, the Eurasian lynx has at least four color morphs (grayish, rusty, yellowish and reddish) and four major coat patterns (large spots, small spots, rosettes and unspotted) (Thuler 2002).

The proposal states that listing the bobcat on Appendix II due to similarity of appearance to other felids is no longer warranted. In support of this claim, the proposal states that the U.S. has "produced a web-based *Lynx* identification manual designed for use by CITES authorities and other enforcement officials ... designed as an aide in distinguishing **full skins and skins lacking a head and tail of *L. rufus* and *Lynx* spp.** (emphasis added)." However, the manual is not a useful tool for distinguishing amongst *Lynx* species or between *Lynx* species and other spotted cats because it does not address the full range of fur patterns and colors. Furthermore, the proposal admits that skins (includes skins lacking a head and tail) comprise only 89% of *Lynx* specimens legally traded 2002-2006 (337,547 skins of 380,158 specimens total). This means that 11% of *Lynx* specimens legally traded in this period, or 42,611 specimens were not full skins or skins lacking a head and tail only, and would not be identifiable to the species level using the new *Lynx* identification manual.

The proposal further states that, "in the opinion of industry representatives, distinguishing *L. rufus* parts, pieces and derivatives from those of *Lynx canadensis* is not difficult and can be accomplished with limited experience and/or training"; however, this is irrelevant to distinguishing specimens of these species from those of the Iberian or Eurasian lynx. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Forensics Laboratory, skin pieces from these species are so similar that they cannot be distinguished even with forensic laboratory analysis.

THERE IS DEMAND FOR AND ILLEGAL TRADE IN THE PELTS OF IBERIAN AND EURASIAN LYNX.

The proposal claims that bobcat and Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) pelts are preferred by North American and European fur industries over those of other *Lynx* species; that trade in Iberian and Eurasian lynx is well controlled; that the level of trade in Iberian and Eurasian lynx is minor compared to that in bobcat and Canada lynx; that it is highly unlikely that pieces of *L. lynx* or *L. pardinus* could enter illegal trade in quantities significant enough to impact populations; that take from the wild of all *Lynx* spp. is highly regulated; and that the ready availability of legally acquired bobcat in the market is a safeguard against the illegal take and trade of other *Lynx* spp.

However, there is demand for and illegal trade in the pelts of Iberian and Eurasian lynx. A 2008 survey of European *Lynx* range States (AC24 Doc. 10.3, Annex 3) demonstrated not only that there is illegal trade in Iberian and Eurasian lynx, but that this trade takes place at levels that are significant considering the low population sizes of the two species. Even one skin of Iberian lynx is significant to a population that is lower than 150 individuals; the same is true for Eurasian lynx populations with low numbers (i.e. the Critically Endangered Balkan population has about 80 individuals). According to the survey, at least 104 specimens (skins, coats, bodies, trophies) of Eurasian lynx and one specimen of Iberian lynx were reported to have been seized in recent years. This includes 74 whole skins of Eurasian lynx seized in Greece in 2001. Demand exists for these rare *Lynx* taxa. Furthermore, there is no evidence that delisting *Lynx rufus* will reduce illegal trade in other *Lynx* species as claimed in the proposal.

THE IBERIAN LYNX—A BOBCAT LOOK-ALIKE—IS THE MOST ENDANGERED FELID IN THE WORLD.

The Iberian lynx is a Critically Endangered species (IUCN 2008) that currently survives only in Spain and Portugal. Only between 84 and 143 adults remain in two breeding populations (ibid).

ILLEGAL SKIN TRADE IS THE LEADING THREAT TO EURASIAN LYNX—ANOTHER BOBCAT LOOK-ALIKE.

The Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*) is a species of Least Concern (IUCN 2009). However, 2 of the 9 recognized European subpopulations are Critically Endangered and 4 are Endangered (*Lynx* survey of Europe 2001). Illegal skin trade remains the leading threat to the species, together with habitat loss and prey base depletion (IUCN 2009).

EUROPEAN STATES HAVE RECENTLY CONFIRMED THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT DE-LISTING.

In October 2008, the U.S., Mexico and Canada met with eleven European countries that are range States of *Lynx lynx*, so as to better understand their concerns about removing the bobcat from Appendix II. The official report of the meeting (AC24 Doc. 10.3, Annex) states: "A concern by the EU is that illegally harvested *Lynx lynx* could end up in products of EU manufacturers and be sold as *Lynx rufus* or *Lynx canadensis* fur"; "even a small increase in poaching will have an important negative impact on populations, and hence any measure that makes it easier to enter skins into trade (e.g., through de-listing of *Lynx rufus* from CITES) may create an incentive to poaching and illegal trade in specimens of *Lynx lynx*"; and "a simple delisting could allow *Lynx lynx* to enter trade more easily if there is no document trail for *Lynx rufus* entering international trade." This clearly contradicts the notion that easier access to bobcat pelts would remove pressure from the European species.

DE-LISTING OF THE BOBCAT WOULD HAVE NO GREAT BENEFIT FOR THE U.S.

The report of the October 2008 lynx meeting stated, "Following a question to the U.S. whether delisting of *Lynx rufus* was considered in order to reduce the administrative permitting burden, the U.S. outlined that this was not the case. They said that the main problem is the considerable time and resources needed to make non-detriment findings (NDFs) for this look-alike species". In fact, the U.S. issues a single NDF to cover the export of bobcat pelts; therefore the claim that considerable time and resources are used in the U.S. to make NDFs for this look-alike species is questionable. If the bobcat population in the U.S. is as robust as is claimed, making an NDF should be relatively easy.

LISTING THE BOBCAT IN APPENDIX III WILL NOT SOLVE THE LOOK-ALIKE PROBLEM.

According to the report of the October 2008 lynx meeting, the U.S. suggested that if they listed the bobcat on CITES Appendix III and the EU maintained it on Annex B under EU regulation, then this would retain CITES documentation. However, the EU explained that the normal procedure would be to list Appendix III species in Annex C, under which there is no paper work and no proof of legal origin in internal trade required in the EU. The EU further remarked that it would seem inconsistent for the EU to retain the bobcat in Annex B for look-alike reasons, while CITES removed the species from Appendix II on the basis that there are no look-alike risks. In addition, since countries that are not members of the EU also trade in lynx, the U.S. suggestion would not provide a global solution to the look-alike problem, which can only be addressed by retaining the bobcat on CITES Appendix II.

The bobcat clearly satisfies the criteria for inclusion in CITES Appendix II based on Article II, paragraph 2(b), and in accordance with Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14), Criterion A in Annex 2b. An Appendix II listing is necessary so that trade in bobcat skins is subject to regulation to ensure that trade in specimens of species on Appendix I or II can be brought under effective control. SSN strongly urges Parties to reject this proposal.

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