

Contribute part of your harvested bobcats to a study of dispersal in New England!

Greetings hunters and trappers,

My name is Rory Carroll and I am a graduate student at the University of New Hampshire studying wildlife conservation. For the past 6 years at UNH, we have been working on assessing the bobcat population in New Hampshire, which has rebounded very well since being protected in the state in 1989. We are currently using genetics to assess how the landscape affects movement of bobcats across New England. We are especially interested in how major highways impact the growing bobcat population's ability to disperse across the landscape.

To do this, we are collecting tissues from bobcats in New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Quebec, Canada. More specifically, we are requesting the tongues (or other muscle tissue) of bobcats harvested in the 2014-2015 hunting and trapping seasons. We are particularly interested in samples from Maine Wildlife Management Districts 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 - in general, anything harvested west of Highway 201 and Interstate 95.

The collection procedure is very simple.

1. Cut out as much of the tongue as possible
2. Place it in a sealed plastic bag (Ziploc or similar)
3. Label each bag with:
 - a. Township of harvest
 - b. Date of harvest
 - c. Sex of the bobcat
 - d. Approximate age of the bobcat (juvenile or adult)
4. Keep frozen until we can pick it up

DNA will be extracted from the tissues and used to assess how well bobcat populations are connected to one another across New England. **Studies have shown that a well-connected population is a healthy population, and areas where bobcats thrive also support many other wildlife species!** The information we gather from this study will be used to determine landscape factors that affect bobcat movement. In turn, we hope to pinpoint common dispersal routes and key areas for conservation efforts in the region. With your help, we can ensure healthy wildlife communities for generations to come!

If you wish to contribute your bobcat, please email or call me to let me know you plan on collecting samples for this study. I will be happy to talk with you and answer any questions you may have. Or just save your bobcat samples as outlined above and let me know where and when I can collect them. Your contributions are greatly appreciated – we can't do this important work without you!

Happy hunting!

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