

LYNX CANADENSIS.—GEOFFROY.

CANADA LYNX.

PLATE XVI.—MALE.

L. magnitudine L. rufum superans; auribus triangularibus, apice pilis crassis nigris erectis barbatis; cauda capite brevior, plantis villosis; supra cinereus, maculis obscuris nebulosus, subtus dilutior.

CHARACTERS.

Larger than F. rufus; ears, triangular, tipped with an upright slender tuft of coarse black hairs; tail, shorter than the head; soles, hairy; general colour, gray above, a little clouded with irregular darker spots, lighter beneath.

SYNONYMES.

LOUP-CERVIER, (anaris qua,) Sagard Theodat, Canada, 744, An. 1636.

“ “ or LYNX, Dobb's Hudson's Bay, p. 41, An. 1744.

LYNX, Pennant, Arc. Zool., vol. i., p. 50.

“ or WILD-CAT, Hearne's Journey, p. 366.

CANADIAN LYNX, Buff., vol. v., suppl. p. 216, pl. 125.

“ “ Mackenzie's Journey, p. 106.

FELIS CANADENSIS, Geoffroy, An. du Mus.

“ CANADENSIS, Sabine, Franklin's Journey, p. 659.

“ CANADENSIS, Desm. Mam., p. 225.

NORTHERN LYNX, Godman, Nat. Hist., vol. i., p. 302.

FELIS BOREALIS, Temminck, Monographie, t. i., p. 109.

“ CANADENSIS, Rich., F. B. A., p. 101.

“ “ Reichenbach, Regnum Animale, sp. 551, p. 46, pl. 551, Lipsiæ, 1836.

LYNCUS BOREALIS, Dekay, Nat. Hist., N. Y., p. 50, pl. 10, fig. 2.

DESCRIPTION.

This species has a rounder, broader, and proportionably shorter head than (*L. rufus*) the Bay Lynx; nose, obtuse; eyes, large; teeth, very strong; whiskers, stiff, horizontal, arranged in three oblique series; ears, acute, thickly clothed with hair on both surfaces, tipped by a long and slender tuft of coarse hairs; beneath the ears commences a broad ruff



Drawn on Stone by R. Tremblay

Canada Lynx.
Male

Drawn from Nature by J.J. Audubon F.R.S. F.L.S.

Printed by Nagel & Weingartner N.Y.

formed of longer hairs than those on the surrounding parts; this ruff surrounds the throat and reaches the chin, but does not extend around the neck above. The female has the ruff much shorter than the male. Body, robust, thick, and heavy; and from the form, we are inclined to believe that this species is far less fleet than its congener the Bay lynx. The hair has a woolly appearance; under-fur, very dense and soft, mixed with hairs somewhat rigid and two inches in length. On the under surface, the hairs are thinner and a little longer than those above. Thighs, strong; legs, thick and clumsy, presenting a slight resemblance to those of the bear. Toes, thick, so completely concealed by the fur that the tracks made in the snow by this animal do not show distinct impressions of them, like those made by the fox, or the Bay lynx. Their tracks are round, leaving no marks of the nails unless the animal is running, when its toes are widely spread and its nails leave the appearance of slight scratches in the snow. Tail, thickly covered with hair, short, slightly turned upward. Nails, very strong, much larger than those of the Bay lynx, curved, and acuminate.

COLOUR.

Nose, flesh-coloured; pupil of the eye, black; iris amber colour; margin of the lips, and inner surface of the ears, yellowish-brown; face, and around the eyes, light-gray; whiskers, nearly all white, a few black; outer margin of the ear, edged with black, widening as it approaches the extremity, where it is half an inch broad; tuft of ear, black; the ruff under the throat is light-gray, mixed in the centre of the circle with long tufts of black hair. When the hairs on the back are blown aside, they exhibit a dark yellowish-brown colour. The long hairs on the back, black to near the extremity, where there is an annulation of yellowish-brown, finally tipped with black; general colour of the back, gray, with a shade of rufous, and slightly varied with shades of a darker colour; under surface, dull white, with irregular broad spots of dark-brown situated on the inner surface of the fore-legs and extending along the belly; these spots are partially covered by long whitish hairs in the vicinity. In one of our specimens these dark-coloured spots are altogether wanting. The legs are of the colour of the sides; upper surface of the tail, to within an inch of the tip, and exterior portion of the thighs, rufous; beneath yellowish-white; extremity of the tail black.

DIMENSIONS.

The Male represented on the Plate:—Recent.

From nose to root of tail	- - - - -	33 inches.
Tail (vertebræ)	- - - - -	5 "
Tail, to end of hair	- - - - -	6 "
Entire length	- - - - -	39 "
From nose to end of skull	- - - - -	6 "
" " " root of ears	- - - - -	4 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
" " " end of ears laid down	- - - - -	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Breadth of ears in front	- - - - -	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Height of ears	- - - - -	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Length of tufts of hair on the ear	- - - - -	2 "
From nose to hind-foot stretched beyond tail	-	45 "
From do. to end of fore-foot stretched beyond nose	-	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Distance between roots of ears anteriorly	- -	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
" " tips of do.	- - - - -	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Spread of fore-feet, between the claws	- -	5 "
Breadth of arm	- - - - -	2 $\frac{5}{8}$ "
Height to shoulder from middle of fore-claw	-	13 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Weight 16 pounds; extremely lean.

A specimen in the flesh from the Petersburg Mountains, east of Troy:—

Male.

	Inches.	Lines.
From point of nose to root of tail	37	0
Tail (vertebræ)	4	4
Tail, to end of fur	5	4
Height of ear	2	2
Length of tufts on the ears	1	9
From shoulder to extremity of toes on fore-feet	17	0
From heel to end of hind-claw	7	5

Weight 22 pounds.

HABITS.

In some parts of the State Maine, and in New Brunswick, there are tracts of land, formerly covered with large trees but over-run by fires not many years since, now presenting a desolate appearance as you look in every direction and see nothing but tall blackened and charred trunks standing, with only their larger branches occasionally stretching out to the right or left, while many of them are like bare poles, half burnt off

near the roots perhaps, and looking as if they might fall to the earth with the slightest breath of air. Into one of these "burnt districts," let us go together. Nature has already begun to replace the stately trees, which the destroying element had consumed or stripped of all beauty and vitality, and we find the new growth already advanced; instead of the light, brittle, and inflammable pine, the solid and hard, maple, oak, or beech, are thickly and rapidly raising their leafy branches to hide from our view the unsightly trunks that, half-destroyed, charred, and prostrate on the ground, are strewn around in almost every direction. We must pursue our way slowly and laboriously, sometimes jumping over, and sometimes creeping under, or walking along a fallen tree, our progress impeded by the new growth, by brambles, holes in the ground, and the necessity of cautiously observing the general direction of our crooked and fatiguing march; here and there we come to a small open space, where the wild raspberry tempts us to pause and allay our thirst, and perhaps whilst picking its ripe fruit, a pack of grouse rise with a whirr-whirr, and attract our attention—they are gone ere we can reach our gun: but we are not alone;—see, under cover of yon thicket, crouched behind that fallen pine tree, is the Canada Lynx—stealthily and slowly moving along—it is he that startled the game that has just escaped. Now he ascends to the lower branch of a thick leaved tree, and closely squatted, awaits the approach of some other prey, to dart upon and secure it, ere the unsuspecting object of his appetite can even see whence the devourer comes. We move carefully toward the concealed prowler—but his eyes and ears are full as good as our own—with a bound he is upon the earth, and in an instant is out of sight amid the logs and brush-wood—for savage and voracious as he may be when pursuing the smaller animals, he is equally cowardly when opposed to his great enemy—man; and as his skin is valuable, let us excuse him for desiring to keep it whole.

The Canada Lynx is more retired in its habits than our common wild cat, keeping chiefly far from the habitations of even the settlers who first penetrate into the depths of the wilderness. Its fine long fur enables it to withstand the cold of our northern latitudes, and it is found both in the wooded countries north of the great lakes, and as far south as the Middle States, dispersed over a great many degrees of longitude; even occasionally approaching the sea-coast. The specimen from which we drew the figure of this animal was sent to us from Halifax, Nova Scotia. It had been taken in a wolf-trap, after having (as we supposed) destroyed several sheep. We kept it alive for a few weeks, feeding it on fresh raw meat; it ate but a small quantity at a time and like all predacious animals, appeared able to support a long fast with-

out inconvenience. The precarious life led by beasts of prey, in fact makes this a wise provision of Nature, but for which many would no doubt soon perish, as occasionally several days may pass without their being able to secure a hearty meal.

The Lynx we have just mentioned, when a dog approached the cage in which it was confined, drew back to the farthest part of it, and with open jaws spit forth like a cat at the intruder. We often admired the brilliancy of its large eyes, when it glared at us from a corner of its prison. When killed, it was extremely poor, and we found that one of its legs had been broken, probably by a rifle-ball, some considerable time previous to its having been captured, as the bone was united again pretty firmly; it was in other respects a fine specimen.

When alarmed, or when pursued, the Canada Lynx leaps or bounds rapidly in a straight direction from the danger; and takes to a tree if hard pressed by the dogs. It is very strong, and possessing remarkably large and powerful fore-legs and claws, is able to climb trees of any size, and can leap from a considerable height to the ground without feeling the jar, alighting on all four feet at the same instant, ready for flight or battle. If dislodged from a tree by the hunter, it is instantly surrounded by the dogs, in which case it strikes with its sharp claws and bites severely.

In crossing the Petersburg mountains east of Albany, more than thirty years ago, we procured from a farmer a male Lynx, the measurement of which was taken at the time, and has just been given by us, (see p. 138.) It had been killed only half an hour before, and was in very fine order. The farmer stated that in hunting for the ruffed grouse, his dog had started this Lynx from a thicket of laurel bushes; it made no doublings, but ran about a quarter of a mile up the side of a hill, pursued by the dog, when it ascended a tree, on which he shot it; it fell to the ground quite dead, after having hung for some time suspended from a branch to which it clung with great tenacity until life was extinct.

It has been stated that the Canada Lynx "is easily destroyed by a blow on the back with a slender stick;" this we are inclined to think a mistake, never having witnessed it, and judging merely by the activity and strength manifested by the animal, although we agree with the farther remarks of the same writer, "that it never attacks man." This indeed is a remark applicable to nearly all the beasts of prey in our country, except in extreme cases of hunger or desperation. It is said by Dr. RICHARDSON, that the Canada Lynx "swims well, and will cross the arm of a lake two miles wide"—this is a habit which is also shared by the more southern species, (*Lynx rufus*.)

The Canada Lynx, like all other animals of its general habits, breeds but once a year, generally having two young; we have heard of an instance, however, of three whelps being littered at a time.

The skin of this animal is generally used for muffs, collars, &c., and is ranked among the most beautiful materials for these purposes. It varies somewhat in colour, and the best are much lighter, when killed in good season, than the specimen from which our drawing was made.

We have been informed by the northern trappers that the Canada Lynx is usually taken in steel-traps, such as are used for the beaver and otter, into which he enters very readily.

The Indians, we are told, regard its flesh as good eating, which may perhaps be ascribed to the excellence of their appetites. HEARNE, (see *Journey*, p. 366,) who ate of it in the neighbourhood of York Fort, says, "the flesh is white, and nearly as good as that of the rabbit." We think we would give the preference, however, to a buffalo-hump well roasted, for either dinner or supper.

The stories told of the great cunning of this species, in throwing mosses from the trees in order to entice the deer to feed on them, and then dropping on their backs and tearing their throats, may as well be omitted here, as they fortunately require no refutation at the present day.

The food of the Canada Lynx consists of several species of grouse and other birds, the northern hare, gray rabbit, chipping squirrel, and other quadrupeds. It has been mentioned to us, that in the territories to the north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence they destroy the Arctic fox, and make great havoc among the lemmings, (GEORYCHUS.) HEARNE informs us, that in Hudson's Bay they "seldom leave a place which is frequented by rabbits till they have killed nearly all of them." They are said to pounce on the wild goose at its breeding places, and to destroy many marmots and spermophiles, by lying in wait for them at their burrows. At a public house in Canada we were shown the skin of one of these Lynxes, the animal having been found quite helpless and nearly dead in the woods. It appears, that leaping on to a porcupine, it had caught a Tartar, as its head was greatly inflamed, and it was nearly blind. Its mouth was full of the sharp quills of that well-defended animal, which would in a day or two have occasioned its death. We have heard one or two accounts of the Canada Lynx having killed a deer; we are somewhat sceptical in regard to this being a general habit of the species, although when pressed by hunger, which renders all creatures desperate at times, it may occasionally venture to attack a large animal.

HEARNE states that he "once saw a Lynx that had seized on the carcass of a deer just killed by an Indian, who was forced to shoot it before

it would relinquish the prize." (See HEARNE's Journey, p. 272.) Young fawns, as we have ourselves ascertained, are killed by these animals, and farmers in some of the wilder portions of our Northern States, and of Canada, complain of their carrying off their lambs and pigs. The Canada Lynx is, however, by no means so great a depredator in the vicinity of the farm-yard as the wild-cat or Bay lynx, as his more retired habits incline him to keep in the deepest recesses of the forests—and besides, for aught we know, he may prefer "game" to "pigs and poultry."

The slow multiplication of this species proves that it is not intended to be abundant, but to exist only in such moderate numbers as are necessary to enable it to play its part with other carnivora in preventing too fast an increase of many of the smaller animals and birds; if the hare, the squirrel, the rat, and all the graminivorous quadrupeds and birds were allowed to increase their species without being preyed upon by the owl, the hawk, the fox, the lynx, and other enemies, the grass would be cut off, and the seeds of plants destroyed, so that the larger animals would find no subsistence, and in time, from the destruction of the seeds by the teeth of the rodentia, the forest itself would become a wide desert.

There is then a meaning in this arrangement of Providence; and the more we investigate the works of Him who hath created nothing in vain, the more we are led to admire the wisdom of His designs.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

The Canada Lynx is a northern species—it is known to exist north of the great Lakes eastward of the Rocky Mountains; it is found on the Mackenzie river as far north as latitude 66°. It exists in Labrador, and in Canada. It still occurs, although very sparingly, in some of the New England States. It is occasionally met with in the northern part of New-York. We heard of one having been taken some fifteen years ago in the mountains of Pennsylvania. Farther south, we have not traced it. It is not found in Kentucky, or in the valley of the Mississippi. Westward of that river it does not appear to exist. There are Lynxes between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean; these seem, however, to be the Bay lynx, or a species so nearly resembling the latter, that they appear to be no more than one of its numerous varieties. There is a specimen in the Museum of the Zoological Society of London, marked *F. borealis*, which is stated to have been brought from California by DOUGLASS, which we did not see, having somehow overlooked it. Its characters and history deserve investigation.

GENERAL REMARKS

The question whether the Canada Lynx is, or is not, identical with any species of the north of Europe, is by no means settled. PENNANT considered it the same as the lynx (*Felis lynx*) of the old world. BUFFON, after pointing out the distinctive marks of each, came to the conclusion that they were mere varieties. These naturalists, however, lived at a period when it was customary to consider the animals of America as mere varieties of those of the Eastern continent. GEOFFROY ST. HILAIRE named our present species, considering it distinct from the Lynxes of Europe; and TEMMINCK described it under the name of *F. borealis*, as existing in the northern parts of both continents, thinking it a species distinct from *Felis lynx* of the north of Europe.

We spent some time with Professor REICHENBACH, in comparing specimens of European and American lynxes which exist in the museum of Dresden. From the general appearance of these specimens, a great similarity between *L. Canadensis* and the Lynx (*Felis lynx*) of the north of Europe may undoubtedly be remarked, and they might be regarded as mere varieties of one species. The forms of animals, however, approach each other in both continents where there is a similarity of climate. Many of the genera of New-York and Pennsylvania plants are largely represented in Germany, and although nearly all the indigenous species are different, they are closely allied. In South Carolina, there are several birds, quadrupeds, and reptiles, which bear a striking resemblance to those found in Egypt, in nearly the same parallel of latitude. The black-winged hawk (*F. dispar*) resembles the *F. melanopterus* so nearly, that BONAPARTE published them as identical. Our alligator is a near relative of the crocodile, our soft-shelled turtle (*Trionyx ferox*) is much like the *T. Ægypticus*, and our fox squirrel (*Sc. capistratus*) has a pretty good representative in *Sc. Madagascariensis*. In a more northern latitude, we may point to the American and European badgers, to *Lepus Americanus*, and *L. variabilis*, and to *Tamias striatus* of Siberia and *T. Lysterii*, as examples of the near approach of distinct species to each other; to which we may add, that the wild sheep of the Rocky Mountains (*Ovis montana*) bears so striking a resemblance to the *Ovis Ammon*, another species existing on the mountains of Asia, that the two have been confounded; and our *Spermophilus Townsendii* is in size and colour so like the Souslik (*Sp. guttatus*) of the mountains of Hungary, that Dr. RICHARDSON published it as a mere variety. Taking these facts into consideration, after a careful examination of *Lynx Canadensis*, and after having compared it

with *Felis lynx* of Europe, we pronounce them distinct species without hesitation.

Although the *European* lynx varies considerably in colour, especially specimens killed at different seasons of the year, it is in all the varieties we have seen, of a deeper rufous tint than the Canada Lynx; the spots on the body are more distinct, and the hair, in some specimens from Russia and Siberia, is much shorter than in our animal, while the tail is longer and more tufted. TEMMINCK, a very close observer, and distinguished naturalist, thinks the Canada Lynx is found on both continents—in this he may possibly be correct; we, however, saw no specimens in the museums of Europe that corresponded with the description of *L. Canadensis*, that did not come from America. The name, *F. borealis*, which TEMMINCK bestowed on it, can, however, only be considered a synonyme, as GEOFFROY described the animal previously, giving it the name of *Felis Canadensis*. We have not been able to find in America the European species described by TEMMINCK under the name of *Felis cervaria*, which, as he supposes, exists also in the northern part of our continent.



Audubon, John James and Bachman, John. 1851. "Lynx Canadensis, Canada Lynx [Pl. XVI, male]." *The quadrupeds of North America* 1, 136–144.

<https://doi.org/10.5962/p.322478>.

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