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Lynx Attack on Man Carrying Hares in Newfoundland

On 1 November 1974 at 1620 hours a peculiar aspect of lynx (*Lynx lynx*) behavior was observed 4 km west of Port Union, Newfoundland (48°30′ N, 53°5′ W). Boyd Duffett, a trapper in that area, was walking through a 5- to 7-m high black spruce – balsam fir (*Picea mariana – Abies balsamea*) forest carrying 12 snowshoe hares (*Lepus americanus*) over his left shoulder when a medium-sized female lynx sprang 3 m from a balsam fir tree onto the man's back. A struggle ensued and the trapper succeeded in choking the lynx to death with his hands approximately 10 min later. The trapper was not seriously injured but suffered severe scratches on his hands and legs.

From the trapper's account it seems likely that the lynx's main intent was to obtain the hares, and that the attack was not a direct one upon the trapper. As the lynx hunts primarily by sight (Saunders 1963) and will usually attack at night from the ground rather than from a perch, it appears unlikely that the trapper was pursued by the lynx. Rather it would seem that this was a chance encounter between the man and lynx, precipitated by the dead hares on the man's back.

No evidence can be found in the literature that a lynx will intentionally attack man. Seton (1925) states: "the lynx has never yet been known to attack man openly, knowingly, voluntarily." He records only one similar incident when a lynx attacked a man, apparently mistaking the man for a deer because of the man's buckskin clothing. Goudie (1973) described a winter incident in Labrador when a lynx ran from a forest onto a frozen lake and charged directly towards her. This animal was shot by a friend before any physical contact was made.

From interviews with experienced Newfoundland trappers, there is a consensus that the lynx normally will not attack a man, but in fact is a wary animal and will back away when caught in a snare. Although this Newfoundland incident indicates a definite aggressive behavioral pattern by the lynx in the presence of man, it is not indicative of typical behavior by the species. Winter observations have been made by trappers of a lynx following at a distance in the tracks of a man, but this behavior probably facilitates travelling in the soft snow and does not necessarily denote predatory tendencies.

It is interesting to note that the attack occurred in a year when the lynx and its principal prey, the snowshoe hare, were at a low in their cycle, as indicated by Newfoundland fur returns. Further documentation of the low lynx population has been provided by Arthur Butt, a trapper in the central Newfoundland area. With equal trapping pressure each year he has recorded a catch of 50, 41, 30, 24, 19, and 11 lynx for the years 1969–70 to 1974–75, respectively.

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Photosynthetic Period Length for the Woody Plants of Two Deciduous Forest Sites

Abstract. The timing of leaf emergence and leaf discoloration, i.e., chlorophyll disappearance, was recorded for native woody deciduous plants at forest sites in North Carolina and southern Ontario. Leaf buds closest to the ground were the first to open at both sites. Leaf discoloration was first noted in understory plants and later in canopy and ground-layer plants. The difference between leaf discoloration and emergence dates, i.e., photosynthetic period length, was greatest for ground-layer species and least for canopy species. Photosynthetic period length ranged from 168 to 227 days at the North Carolina site and from 136 to 174 days at the Ontario site. Differences in the photosynthetic period lengths of species found at both sites resulted more from differences in leaf emergence dates than from differences in leaf discoloration dates.

The seasonality of leaf emergence and leaf discoloration, i.e., chlorophyll disappearance, is both distinct and obvious for deciduous-leaved plants native to forests of eastern North America. Trelease (1883) and Britton (1898a, b) were among the first to record the dates of leaf emergence and leaf fall for deciduous forest species. Neither they, nor subsequent investigators, however, have recorded the dates of leaf discoloration. Consequently, the length of the photosynthetic period is unknown for most woody deciduous-leaved plants. As part of a study investigating the relationship between photosynthetic period and landscape productivity (Reader 1973), the length of the photosynthetic period was estimated for some deciduous forest plants by recording the dates of their leaf emergence and discoloration. It was assumed that any photosynthetic contribution made by young branches was negligible compared to leaf photosynthesis. Following the preliminary study of Lieth and Radford (1971), detailed observations were made at two forested sites, one in North Carolina and the other in Ontario, to examine the effect of site location on the length of a species' photosynthetic period.

Materials and Methods

In 1973, leaf emergence and leaf discoloration dates were recorded for woody plants native to a deciduous forest site in the North Carolina