

## Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*)



### Physical characteristics

After the bear and wolf, this cat is the largest predator that is native to Europe. With a length between 80 and 120 centimeters and a height of 50 to 70 centimeters the lynx is also the largest cat in Europe. The paws are large and prevent the lynx from sinking deep into the snow in the winter. The lynx weighs up to 25 kilograms. The tufts of hair on the acute, distinctly triangular ears are up to five centimeters long and strengthen the ability to locate sound sources. A lynx can still discern a mouse at a distance of 50 meters and hear a deer graze 500 metres away. The eyes are yellow or brown. They are the most important

sensory organ of the lynx and about six times more sensitive to light than the eyes of man, which allows them to hunt during twilight and at night. The lynx's fur on the top part of its body is reddish to yellow-brown during the summer and grey to grey-brown during the winter. In contrast, the underpart is grey and white. The winter coat is one of the densest in the animal kingdom.

### Habitat and territorial requirements

The lynx generally prefers large forest areas with dense undergrowth as its habitat. Forests with clearings, rocky slopes and swampy areas provide ideal conditions for hunting. Lynx chase most of their prey on the edge of forests, sometimes even entering agricultural land. During the day, they remain in their hiding places and tolerate the proximity to humans. The lynx marks its territory with its strong-smelling urine.



### Nutrition and reproduction

The prey spectrum includes practically all small and medium-sized mammals and birds available in the respective habitat, although the deer is the preferred prey. The lynx lives as a loner and hunts mainly at dusk and at night. Usually they rest during the day in hiding. A female lynx gives birth to two to five cubs after a gestation period of about 73 days, mostly in a quiet place such as a cave. They are suckled up to the age of five months. Juveniles remain with the mother until the following spring. They then try to find their own territory.

### Threats

The species as a whole is considered "not at risk"; however, hunting of lynx is prohibited or strictly regulated in countries such as Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The biggest problem for the animals is caused by poaching which has led to a dramatic decline in parts of the lynx population.

## **Task list: Green Belt**

1. 4 equally sized groups are formed, one for each of the 4 topics. These groups are considered as the experts for their special topic. After reading their material, 4 new groups are formed with at least one expert for each topic. Everybody presents the information on their topic to their new group. The group now thinks about which of these animals could or could not live in the Green Belt and presents arguments supporting their opinion. These group results should be presented and discussed in class and possibly also summarised as a class opinion. Furthermore it is possible to think about ways of creating individual biospheres to protect and conserve the Green Belt.

### **References:**

Without author (2014): Eurasischer Luchs

[http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasischer\\_Luchs](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasischer_Luchs) (access: 18.02.2014)

### **Pictures:**

1) Hilber, R. (2007): Luchsbaby mit Mutter

([http://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Datei:Europ\\_luchs\\_jungtier.jpg&filetimestamp=20100605180029&](http://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Datei:Europ_luchs_jungtier.jpg&filetimestamp=20100605180029&)) (access: 18.02.2014)

2) Gäbler, M. (2009): Eurasischer Luchs

([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lynx\\_lynx\\_%28Linnaeus,\\_1758%29.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lynx_lynx_%28Linnaeus,_1758%29.jpg)) (access: 18.02.2014)