

PRESS RELEASE – *For immediate release*
June 10, 2004

Contacts:

Ron Moen, UMD Natural Resources Research Institute
218-720-4372

Ed Lindquist, Forest Wildlife Biologist
Superior National Forest, 218-626-4380



CANADA LYNX MAKE MINNESOTA HOME

Kittens add depth to ongoing study

Biologists have located what may be the first Canada lynx den ever documented in Minnesota.

A visit to the den of female lynx “L07,” one of 13 lynx being tracked in a radiotelemetry study, turned up three healthy kittens. The kittens were measured, weighed, and fitted with a small ear tag. Canada lynx had been presumed scarce in Minnesota since 1984 and were listed as a threatened species in 2000 under the Endangered Species Act.

Scientists think that another radiocollared lynx, “L05,” located about 35 miles northwest of the den site in early June, is the father of these kittens. L05 was originally captured and fitted with a collar near Brule Lake in the BWCA in 2003. He has ranged from Grand Marais to Two Harbors, survived being inadvertently caught in a trapper’s snare, and then spent several weeks with L07 this winter. Blood and hair samples collected for DNA analysis may confirm whether or not L05 fathered these kittens.

“Finding a den with kittens is a milestone in our study because it documents once and for all that Canada lynx are reproducing on the Superior National Forest,” said Ed Lindquist, forest wildlife biologist for Superior National Forest.

Additional dens must be found before conclusions can be made about Canada lynx den habitat in Minnesota. Locating this den makes it possible to identify at least one type of Canada lynx den habitat. Further measurements and evaluation of the site will be completed after the mother and kittens move away from the den.

Radio-tracking the mother allows the lynx study team to monitor the three kittens to see how well they survive the coming months. The ear tags will identify these kittens if they disperse. Project biologists continue to encourage the public to report lynx sightings by calling 1-800-234-0054, or by sending an email to lynx@nrri.umn.edu.

The study is a collaborative effort of the UDSA Forest Service and the University of Minnesota Duluth Natural Resources Research Institute. More information about the Canada lynx study, along with additional photos of the kittens, can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.nrri.umn.edu/lynx/index.html>.

—more—

—ADDITIONAL INFORMATION—

Joining the list of threatened species under the Endangered Species Act in 2000 spurred a need for more information about the Canada lynx in Minnesota. A January 2002 study by the USDA Forest Service confirmed lynx presence in the Superior National Forest, and more intensive lynx studies began.

Last winter, the Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) University of Minnesota Duluth joined the study to establish where and how far the lynx range is in Minnesota. Using a combination of radio and GPS tracking systems on captured and released lynx, agency biologists confirmed that Minnesota is an established part of the Canada lynx range. But the biologists wanted to know much more about lynx distribution, residency, population density, dispersal and survival.

Lynx sightings occur where there are also signs of snowshoe hare—usually good conifer cover near shrub or new growth aspen. Lynx also frequent older coniferous forests of cone producing age, which is a preferred food for red squirrel.

The information from this research is being used on the Superior National Forest and other national forests in the Great Lakes region to plan projects to avoid adverse effects to lynx. Habitat needs of lynx are also considered in the analysis for revising the Forest Plans.

Sightings of live (or dead) lynx can be reported to the nearest office of the Forest Service, Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, or Department of Natural Resources. Reports can also be made directly to the Natural Resources Research Institute at 1-800-234-0054, or by email to lynx@nrri.umn.edu.

---End---

Photo files attached.